

Policy Launch Speech: Gough Whitlam, Opposition Leader (ALP)

Sydney Opera House, November 17, 1977

“The task before us is to get Australia back to work, to give our young people, our unemployed, our small business people, our migrants a new hope - hope for decent jobs, hope in their future and the future of their country. The deepening economic crisis, the deliberately created unemployment call for bold, decisive measures. I shall be putting forward proposals to cut through, once and for all, the knot which ties unemployment and inflation.

We reject the defeatism and despair which says to Australia's young people that their lives must be ruined if inflation is to be beaten. Our proposals will call for Australia's resources of co-operation, good faith, maturity and responsibility - co-operation from the States, good faith from business and maturity and foresight on the part of the people of Australia. Given those things, we can get Australia working again.

The task before us is to restore Parliament as an instrument for progress and reform. The task before us is to unite Australia and the Australian people. The task before us is to end rule by division, by confrontation; the setting of class against class, section against section, region against region; to end the rule of the great divider. He has broken promise after promise to the Australian people. He is breaking up his own party. He must not be allowed to break up our nation.

This election itself is only the latest in a series of damaging and divisive upheavals brought on by those who used to claim to champion stability. Hundreds of small businesses have been further hit by the deliberately created uncertainty and confusion. The reason for this rushed election is plain: the economic mess will deepen even further next year unless policies are changed. And there can be no change of policies unless there is a change of Government, a change to a Labor Government.

Ask yourselves this: if they believe anything they say about Australia's economy, why are they having an election now? Not by accident, but by deliberate design, Australia has had inflicted on her the worst unemployment since the Great Depression. Our first task is to get Australia working again.

Under existing policies and because of these policies, half this year's 200,000 school-leavers will not be able to find jobs. Thousands of others are being forced to take jobs below their training and qualifications. This is the best-educated generation Australia has produced - the first fruits of the transformation of Australian schools after 1972. This generation must not be thrown on the economic and social scrap-heap. This new unemployment is different from any we Australians have previously experienced. It cuts across the classes, the sections, the regions. No family can be certain that it will remain exempt. There is a whole new range of unemployed - the middle-aged unemployed, fathers who lose their jobs, mothers who can't get jobs. And the most serious threat of this new unemployment is its threat to family life. The

humiliation, the rejection, and the discouragement among young people on the threshold of their working lives threaten to break up families throughout our nation. We pledge ourselves to reverse the deepening trend to higher and higher unemployment. And we shall end the use of unemployment as a weapon in the war of industrial confrontation.

The Fraser Government and the Hamer Government prolonged the Victorian power dispute. The last thing they, the men who promised to turn on the lights, wanted was light to be turned on Australia's record and deepening unemployment, or light on the Liberals' land scandals! Who turned the lights on in Victoria? Not Fraser, not Hamer: it was Bob Hawke, committed to industrial order and justice by negotiation and arbitration, committed against industrial anarchy through confrontation. And that is the commitment I make again for the whole Australian Labor movement. Since April 1975, the level of industrial disputes has been falling. It has fallen to its lowest level for a decade because employees have overwhelmingly abided by the wage indexation guidelines, established by the last Labor Government, undermined by this Government - yet another broken promise.

Our wage indexation promoted industrial peace. We will restore integrity to the wage indexation guidelines. Equally, the success of wage indexation was the only way the inflationary effects of the disastrous devaluation of November 1976 have been partly contained. Inflation in the year to September was one percent higher than in 1975. Only the legacy of Labor's wage indexation has stopped the Fraser-style inflation being even higher.

Unemployment is being used to divide our country. Industrial laws are being used to divide our country. And so is the great question of the future of Australia's uranium being used - deliberately, deceitfully, needlessly - to divide our country. The plain fact is there is no need for Australia to take an irrevocable decision in 1977 - a decision to lock Australia into the plutonium economy and the most hazardous industry in human history. There is just no need to make a final decision before there are safe methods of disposing of nuclear waste which stays poisonous for a quarter of a million years. There is just no need to make a final decision before there are adequate safeguards against the spread of weapons for nuclear war.

And there is just no need for an irrevocable decision, an irrevocable commitment for years to come. There is no moral justification for it. Even on the most cynical level, there is no economic justification for it. Why the rush to a decision? Who benefits? Where's the pressure coming from? Where's the money coming from? The manner and timing of the decision - the deception by which it has been defended - is yet another example of Government through division.

The Fraser/Lynch policies have plunged the Australian economy into ever-deepening depression. Because of these policies, unemployment will reach 7 to 8 percent of the workforce early next year. Unchecked, it will top the half-million mark - an unthinkable level under any previous Government, Liberal or Labor, since the war. This, under a Government whose Leader promised the Australian people just two years ago: "Only a Liberal/National Country Party Government will provide jobs for all who want to work".

The last Labor Government held office during the world's deepest economic downturn since World War II. Yet in those years, Australia was able to achieve growth even when the rest of our partners experienced falling production. Now, industrial production has been falling every month this year. Economic activity is lower than at any time since 1972. Every important indicator - production, retail sales, the collapse of small businesses, building approvals, motor vehicle registrations - point to an economy bludgeoned to its knees.

Yet, despite the immense economic and social cost - jobs lost, careers blighted, young people alienated, families disrupted, the waste in lost production, small businesses ruined, the human waste - the fight against inflation has not been won.

Let this simple fact be grasped and never forgotten by the people of Australia: in the year to September 1975, Australia's inflation rate was 12.1 percent; in the year to September 1977, it was 13.1 percent. And, unlike Australia's economic performance two years ago, our position has now worsened sharply in comparison with our trading partners, the other developed countries and most comparable countries; the member-countries of the OECD. That is why Australia, under Fraser and Lynch, faces a balance of payments problem and has a weakened dollar. Australia's tragedy is that the longer these policies continue, the longer it will take to solve them. Australia's opportunity is that we can change these disastrous policies, now - by changing the Government, now.

The immediate, the urgent task is to get Australians back to work again. For the next nine months every resource of the next Labor government, its resources of talent, its resources of experience and, above all, its resources of compassion and concern for plain Australians, will be turned unremittingly towards this first fundamental task. Until we get the Australian economy back on its feet, every proposal, each part of our program, will be rigorously tested against the double test: is this the best way to get more jobs and get prices down? Is this the best way to get Australia working again? That has to be Australia's priority in the months to come; no other program can make up for the social disruption, the stresses on family life, the destruction of hope which follow the economic and social upheaval to which this Government has brought Australia.

Any policy which places the whole burden of the fight against inflation on the weakest and on the youngest in the community is no policy at all. Yet this is what the Fraser/Lynch policies are all about. There is now a complete difference between Australia's economic difficulties two years ago and the economic crisis. It is now a crisis made in Australia, by the present Australian Government. Therefore, its solution calls for Australian solutions, by a new Australian Government, a Labor Government. From the beginning of this campaign, let me be quite precise about our program for recovery.

The only additional spending we propose before the 1978 budget is for the direct creation of jobs, overwhelmingly in the private sector. And the amount is precise: additional spending of \$800 million. The net cost will be \$500 million - as more and more Australians go off the dole and onto the payroll. It represents a 1.5% increase in Australia's money supply. Let there be no misrepresentation on this matter. Australia's economic recovery depends on the private sector which provides jobs for three-quarters of the workforce.

We now make a proposal which calls for a national effort of co-operation, on the part of all governments, federal and state, employers and taxpayers. We propose that employers should no longer be penalised for providing jobs. In this way, business can be galvanised, jobs created - and inflation brought down.

We shall seek to end the tax on jobs - the payroll tax. It discourages employers from engaging more staff. It raised the cost to employers of each employee by an average of \$10 a week. It stops people getting jobs. It increases prices.

We therefore propose to ask the Premiers to agree to forgo the collection of payroll tax. In return we would give the States an indexed general purpose grant equal to the revenue they forgo. We would then, in order to make up the loss of revenue, ask the Australian taxpayers to trade-off the changes in personal taxation proposed in the last Lynch budget in return for this job-creating, inflation-cutting, confidence-restoring tax concession.

Our proposal would directly and immediately relieve the private sector of one of its greatest burdens, give a boost to jobs and help business cut costs.

The Lynch proposals represent the most massive redistribution of wealth away from lower and middle-income earners - the vast majority of Australian taxpayers who earn less than \$15,000 - in favour of the highest income earners ever attempted in Australia. They were proposals that would give a person on my income \$40 a week, but the average wage earner only \$3 a week.

We ask the overwhelming majority of Australians to forgo nothing.

For the impact of our proposal on reactivating the economy, restoring employment and reducing prices will, in real, direct and lasting ways more than compensate for the illusory, temporary and inequitable proposal proffered in the last Lynch budget. What we ask of the Australian taxpayer is not an act of sacrifice but an act of maturity.

And for its full success, it requires an act of national co-operation. Freed of the burden of the payroll tax, with its added labour costs, employers would have the incentive not only to employ more labour, but to hold prices down. Given good faith on the part of business, the abolition of the payroll tax can mean the end of the slide towards massive unemployment and a reduction in the Consumer Price Index of up to two percent a year. At one blow, we can cut the upwards prices spiral and the downwards jobless spiral.

We propose a further new initiative to make an immediate impact on unemployment.

The next Labor Government will introduce an employment subsidy scheme. Net additions to employment after the last pay day in November will be subsidised at the rate of \$49.30 a week. The subsidy will be paid from the beginning of 1978 for six months. It is a proposal to pay employers for providing jobs and to relieve the taxpayers of the burden of paying the jobless.

The scheme means that all enterprises will be encouraged to increase their employment, because nearly \$50 a week to the cost of engaging additional people will be paid by the Government. The cost to Government and the taxpayer will be slight. Most of those newly recruited to the workforce would otherwise be on the dole.

The scheme is simple. I shall give an example: if an enterprise has 100 employees on the last pay day in November and 110 employees at the end of January, it will be

eligible to receive the subsidy for ten people for the month of January. As long as its employment does not fall during the six months to the end of June, the enterprise will continue to receive the subsidy. If its employment increases in February and March its subsidy will increase. Payment of the subsidy will remain at the level at the end of March until June, unless its employment falls. This will enable and encourage business - small and large - to increase employment quickly. The effect of the scheme is clear. Rather than paying people while they are unemployed, the Government will pay employers to increase recruitment.

Further, Labor will implement the programs announced in August, increasing spending on capital works, expanding apprenticeship and job training and offering funds for local employment advancement programs. In August, before the budget, Bill Hayden and I presented the A.L.P. proposal to get Australia working again. Yet the budget drove the economy even further along the downward slide. Our proposal is needed now more than ever. It will cost a net \$500 million. To revive Australia's construction industry, part of this amount will be directed to urgently needed improvements to increase the safety and efficiency of public transport and the road system; for urgently needed housing; on health facilities and schools in under-privileged areas; for the national sewerage program and national water projects abandoned or deferred by the Fraser Government.

These projects are already on the drawing board - ready to go. They were already in operation when the Fraser Government slashed them. They were operating in every case in co-operation with the States and Local Government. Australia faces serious future shortages of skilled tradesmen, unless apprenticeship and other training programs are expanded. Labor will immediately increase support for apprenticeship and other training and make special provision for increasing positions for apprentices in departments and authorities. With co-operation and planning between Federal, State and Local authorities, high labour content levels can be achieved on projects of lasting benefit to the community without any loss of efficiency. With a bias in favour of regions worst hit by unemployment, local initiative programs will produce both immediate benefits and opportunities for longer-term employment. The employment-creating program initiated by the Labor Government in 1974 was responsible for some of Australia's finest community amenities. A quarter of the new spending under our proposal to get Australia working again will be allocated to local employment advancement programs next year.

These programs will quickly stimulate employment. They will reverse the downward slide of the economy. But it is not only a plan for less unemployment; it is a plan for less inflation. The immediate crisis demands immediate action. A responsible Australian Government, however, must plan now for longer term structural adjustment of our industry. We will establish a Department of Economic Development to develop an over-all economic strategy to achieve Australia's national economic goals. It will be led by the architect of the recovery of 1975 - the recovery which was underway until it was stopped dead in its tracks in 1976 - Bill Hayden.

The last Labor Government was concerned about the future of manufacturing industry. So I appointed the leading industrialist, Mr Gordon Jackson, to lead an Inquiry. The principal recommendation of that committee was that manufacturing "needs to export to grow".

In the last full year of office, the Labor Government provided export incentive grants and tax rebates totalling \$93 million. The present Government has budgeted for \$32 million for export incentives and grants this financial year. A Labor Government will provide assistance to industry for structural change. We will act on the major recommendations of the Jackson Committee. Labor will adopt an export-oriented strategy for manufacturing industry. Let us get Australian industry working. The next Labor Government will provide additional assistance during the next year to help firms locate markets, organise distribution and provide incentives for improved export performance.

The challenge of the last third of the twentieth century requires that Australia must concentrate on her strengths - the development of her vast natural resources and above all, the richest resource of all, the skills and abilities of her people. Far from nurturing these resources, we are wasting them. The waste must stop. We cannot afford to lose half a generation - our best and brightest. We cannot afford to waste the contribution women can make at all levels. Forty-seven percent of the unemployed are women. We cannot afford to waste the contribution migrants can make, the contribution that they came here to make, not only in enriching our material wealth, but in enriching the cultural and community life of the nation - our nation, their nation - our home, their home.

Migrants have been hit worse than any other section of the Australian community by the Fraser Government's deliberate creation of unemployment. The Australian Bureau of Statistics puts the number of unemployed migrants, last month, at 100,000 - a rise of forty percent in a single year. The Bureau says that for every two Australians who lost their jobs in the past 12 months, three migrants lost theirs. Labor's job restoration program will immediately benefit most those industries on which most migrants depend for their jobs. Our retraining programs will give special emphasis to the needs of migrants, particularly of migrant women, with their added burden of language, loneliness and isolation. We shall adopt the two reports, which the Fraser Government received last February and shelved, that interpreter and translator services be made available in Government offices, especially the Commonwealth Employment Service. The indirect discrimination against migrants through the national economic crisis is the most urgent form of discrimination to end; but all forms of discrimination must be removed.

The next Labor Government will continue the work it began in 1973 towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against migrants; open migrant education centres in all capitals and large provincial centres. The last Labor Government established these offices in Adelaide, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane; ask the Education Commissions, as a matter of priority, to make positive recommendations on the recognition of overseas post-secondary qualifications and the provision of post-secondary education for migrants; provide ethnic radio stations and ethnic television channels in the capitals, initially Sydney and Melbourne, to augment existing ethnic and community radio pioneered by the last Labor Government; and, reduce the residential qualification for citizenship from three years to two years.

There are an estimated 50,000 illegal migrants in Australia. Labor will grant them amnesty and, unlike the Fraser Government, honour it completely.

The nation's most precious resource is its children. There are hundreds of thousands of Australian children with special problems and needs which are not being met, adequately or at all, by existing government or volunteer services. Many families, because of isolation, poverty, illness, special handicaps, are unable to provide the proper environment for their children. Social and economic difficulties facing many migrant families and most aboriginal families create life-long disadvantages for their children. Not only the child, but the whole community pays a permanent price. The children are diminished, the society is diminished.

Further, the majority of Australian children are inadequately served by existing television programs, library services, community facilities and recreation amenities. Governments and churches have provided schools but the community has done too little, in a positive way, for children before they go to school or during the hours, weekends and holidays when they are not at school and when their families do not always have the time and resources to safeguard and encourage a full range of interests and activities for them, to promote their physical, social and mental development. We therefore propose to establish a Department of Children's Services to develop special programs, to encourage the use of existing resources and to assist community projects designed to improve and enrich the environment for our children.

The last Labor Government transformed the outlook for education in Australia. For the first time, Australia achieved a continuing national commitment to schools, all schools, Government and non-Government alike. For the first time, the principle of genuine equality of opportunity for all Australian children was established. For the first time, we established the right of every child, whatever his parents' income, creed or locality, to have the best education the child was able to absorb. For the first time, we established a framework for co-operation between and within the systems and among all interested groups, teachers, parents, Federal and State Departments and educationalists; we established co-operation in place of conflict. And at last we buried the sectarian division over schools which had disfigured our country for more than a century. The lynchpin of our program was the independence of the Education Commissions and particularly of the Schools Commission.

All that has now been placed in jeopardy by the prejudices and the elitism of the present Prime Minister. More important even than adequate national funding to implement the recommendations of the Schools Commission is the independence of the Commission itself. The Fraser government is undermining the independence of the Commission. It is undermining the needs principle which is the basis of creating equality between the systems and within the systems. It has coerced the Schools commission into reallocating funds to a handful of the very top private schools at the expense of needy Government and non-Government schools.

The next Labor Government will restore the independence of the Schools Commission. We will preserve free tertiary and technical education - a principle bitterly opposed by the present Prime Minister as Minister for Education in the earlier Liberal Governments. In the years ahead, it will become increasingly important to strike a balance between the numbers of students in technical institutions and the number of trained teachers. A greater effort must be mounted to upgrade the general standards of technical training in Australia. The Labor Party is committed to a greater

emphasis in this area. Many problems beset technical education at the present time. There is a shortage of skills, inadequacies of training, growing needs for retraining. It is essential that the whole of the technical education sector continues to work in partnership with industry and the employers and this relationship must constantly improve. A Labor Government will use the recommendations of the Williams Committee on Education and Training, due to report early in 1978, to set clear guidelines for the future of technical education in Australia.

There is a new and urgent reason why we must now begin to make the most of the human resources of our children and our youth. There is a new and urgent reason why we must stop wasting the skills of half this generation. We must now prepare and plan for a tremendous economic and social shift in the balance of the population which, late in this century and early in the next century, will profoundly affect our whole way of life, in Australia and in most comparable countries. We must now anticipate the gradual aging of our population and develop programs to ensure security for the older half of the community.

The next parliament must begin planning for this fundamental change in the balance of our society and must begin preparation of a national superannuation plan. In the next three budgets we will maintain the principle established in the last three Labour budgets - to protect pensions against inflation and to ensure that pensioners share in national prosperity. We ended the humiliation whereby pensions were varied according to the economic or political pressures existing at each budget time. By making twice yearly adjustments, tied to the value of average weekly earnings, we ensured that all pensioners would share in any improvement in the general standard of living. Social security dependants' allowances will be indexed against inflation. We will end the discrimination against lone fathers and make the lone parent benefit equally accessible to all lone parents.

We will re-establish the Australian Assistance Plan, the pioneering initiative which enabled local authorities and voluntary agencies to take part in suggesting and administering a wide range of projects based on special community and regional needs. Mr Don Chipp, when Liberal spokesman on welfare, described it as one of the most important innovations for twenty years. He has since described it and the Children's commission Act 1975, which the Fraser Government has failed to bring into operation, as two Labor policies that were superb and, he added, they were also Liberal philosophy.

Of all the promises broken by the Fraser Government, none has been so blatant as the present Prime Minister's pledge to maintain Medibank. The changes to Medibank, introduced in October 1976, have disadvantaged most Australians. In its first full year of operation, Medibank cost \$50 million to provide full cover for every person living in Australia. It now costs \$54 million to provide cover for one-third of Australians. We will not, however, merely reverse all these changes since we do not wish to disadvantage the few who benefited or cause renewed confusion by further charges. Our basic aim will continue to be to provide the best possible health care irrespective of people's ability to pay. We are committed to the restoration of Medibank. It has, however, been so mauled by the men who promised to maintain Medibank that the task of restoration will be long and difficult.

The great problem confronting Australia in the provision of health care is escalating costs, with little or no improvement in the health of the population, or the quality of care it receives. The nation's approach to health care must be changed to place more emphasis on preventing illness and treating the sick, not in institutions, but, as far as possible, in their own community.

The Labor policy accepts the unanimous view expressed by the National Advisory Council for the Handicapped last June that it is imperative for the Federal Government to retain and expand its direct involvement in the provision of services to the handicapped. As the chairman, Mr Justice Meares, stated: "Handicapped persons constitute upwards of 10 percent of the population. Most of them are neither sick nor ill and they rightly resent having to look for help from the traditional medical-based health services".

The urban and regional programs of the next Labor Government, again under Tom Uren, will be placed firmly in the context of economic priorities - above all, the priority of job creation. The abandonment of the national sewerage program, with all the jobs and private contracts it provided, is a typical example of the damage done to the quality of Australian life and the health of the private sector itself by the Fraser Government's doctrinaire hostility to the public sector. We will once more give its proper place in national priorities to the Department of Urban and Regional Development which piloted the creation of the growth centres at Albury-Wodonga - Australia's first major new inland centre since Canberra - Bathurst-Orange and Macarthur. We will honour the growth centre agreements we entered into with the States, agreements dishonoured by the Fraser Government.

As part of its special \$500 million net job program, Labor will move to reduce the growing backlog of projects awaiting funding under the Aged Persons Hostels Act and the Aged and Disabled Persons Home Act. We will renegotiate the Housing Agreements with the States to provide funds to begin to meet the housing needs of the 100,000 families on the waiting lists of the Housing Commissions. We will re-establish the Australian Housing Corporation. As national priorities and economic conditions allow, we shall restore our original scheme for the tax deductibility of mortgage interest, which Mr Fraser promised two years ago would continue. A Labor Government will make grants to the Land Commissions in each State to buy substantial tracts of land for housing blocks to enable them to be sub-divided, serviced and sold at cost. We shall bring into operation Part IV of the Financial Corporations Act 1974 which was intended to safeguard deposits with permanent building societies and to encourage advances by them.

The next Labor Government will continue to seek reforms in the working of Australia's federal system. The first requirement is that the national Government should accept its proper national responsibilities and cease goading and grinding the States into having to impose double income tax. In any true system or federalism, the role of local government is crucial. The Constitution as it stands completely ignores the two key factors in making local government a genuine partner in our federal system - the need for a national approach to offset regional inequalities and the need to free local government from its serfdom under State governments. We shall seek an amendment of the Constitution to permit the Federal Government to take over local government debts, as it took over State debts 50 years ago.

Meanwhile, we shall ensure that local government receives sufficient finance to maintain essential community services and to restrain rate increases. This finance will be provided both on a needs basis and on a basis that takes into account the respective population densities of local government bodies. Not less than 30 percent of the total amount allocated under the Local Government (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act will continue to be provided on a per capita basis. In addition, Labor will restore the direct access of local government to the Grants Commission so that the Commission can again make recommendations to the Federal Government about the allocation of the remainder of the amount under the Act and about any additional assistance for local government.

The Commission will consult and co-operate with the State Grants Commissions which have now been established. These measures will ensure that local government's status as a genuine partner in our federation is restored. Without it, local government will continue to be subject to the dictates and whims of State Governments. The restored Australian Assistance Plan will operate through local government. If we are to concentrate upon and maximise our strengths, we must plan for a proper balance between the great sectors of the economy - rural, mining, manufacturing and services.

Many current problems in primary industry stem from the way in which former coalition governments encouraged Australian farmers to produce goods for which markets were fundamentally insecure, in the belief that Britain could be indefinitely deterred from joining the European Economic Community. This was irresponsible - even cruel. In December 1974 I arranged in Brussels to have discussions on a framework agreement for commercial and economic co-operation between the European Economic Community and Australia as soon as such an agreement had been made with Canada. The Canadian Treaty was concluded in July 1976. The Minister for Overseas Trade, Mr Anthony, said, however, on 15 September 1976 that the Fraser Government had not seen the advantage to Australia in such an agreement. By 27 May 1977 he had come round to the view that there would be advantage to Australia in having it. In an attempt to make up for the lost opportunity Mr Fraser displaced Mr Anthony and brought in a Liberal to the Minister for Special Trade Negotiations. Alas, not all the blood of all the Howards can redeem the mistakes of Anthony in the market place, whistling to the air. Labor has shown that only a Labor Government can secure harmonious trade relations with Europe, Japan, North America and ASEAN.

Labor established, for the first time, the principle of Australian ownership and control of Australia's resources. The next Labor Government will encourage the growth and expansion of the Australian capital market so that Australian companies can mobilise the capital required to take part in new resources ventures. We shall promptly establish an inquiry to examine the options and make proposals. We shall seek a minimum of fifty percent Australian equity in new resource development projects and seventy-five percent Australian equity at the development stage of existing resource discoveries. Mining and petroleum companies with access to Australia's resources sometimes make enormous profits as a result of rich deposits of high world prices. Since the resources they are extracting belong to the Australian community, such excess profits should be taxed so that the benefit can be shared by everyone.

Labor will introduce a secondary profits tax on excess profits. The secondary profits tax will only apply to companies which make excess profits. Normal profits will be untouched. The costly investment allowance has failed as a measure to achieve economic recovery. It will be phased out. Enterprises already eligible for the allowance because of commitments already made will continue to receive the tax deduction to which they are entitled.

The next Labor Government will insist that all new mining projects satisfy the requirements of the Environment Protection (Impact Of Proposals) Act 1974. We shall proceed with the Environment Protection (Marine) Bill, which was awaiting the High court judgement on the Seas and Submerged Lands Act - a judgement reserved on 16 April 1975 and delivered on 17 December 1975. The Labor Government will not permit the killing of the whales assigned as Australia's quote by the International Whaling Commission and we will use all our influence to end the indiscriminate slaughter of whales by Japan and the Soviet Union.

The next Labor Government will establish a National Energy conservation program in co-ordination with the States. The National Fuel and Energy Commission will be responsible for the development of the program with emphasis on Australia's future transport needs, the development of solar heating, the proper use of Australia's vast coal deposits for both home use and export and their conversion into oil and the future of natural gas. The next Labor Government will give wholehearted support to the development of the North-West Shelf gas field to ensure that adequate supplies will be made available to Australian homes and industry by the end of the next decade. The next Labor Government will act on the reports of the Royal Commission on Petroleum appointed by the last Fraser government. The Royal Commissioner, Mr Justice Collins, was most caustic on the absence of any national involvement in the location of refineries and the distribution of their products. As early as 12 February 1976 Mr Fraser said that his government had decided to take no action on such matters as it thought they were primarily for the State Governments and companies concerned.

Petrol prices in the Northern Territory, where Federal laws apply to sale and distribution, are the highest in Australia. We shall pay a subsidy to ensure that nowhere in the Territory is the cost of petrol more than 2 cents a litre above the cost in Darwin, at present 20 ½ cents. We shall make a grant of half the cost of setting the same maximum in any State where the State Government co-operates with the Federal Government in ensuring the economic sale and distribution of petrol and in paying the other half of the cost. For Australia, there can be no national fuel and energy conservation program without a national transport policy. We use a greater proportion of our energy for transport than any comparable country. We alone, of all federal systems, lack a national railway system. Great economies in operation and great savings to State budgets would be achieved if the non-metropolitan railways in New South Wales, Victoria and southern Queensland were part of a single system. The Labor Government will accept the transfer of those railways as it accepted the transfer of South Australia's non-metropolitan railways in 1975.

The Government will carry out the intention of the constitution by bringing into operation the Inter-State Commission Act 1975 in order to co-ordinate all forms of inter-state transport by rail, road, air, water and pipelines.

Telecom, the highly successful Crown corporation established by the last Labor Government, will correct an injustice suffered by telephone subscribers in the western parts of Sydney metropolitan area. People in the Windsor, Penrith, Camden and Campbelltown zones are charged at trunk rates for calls to the Sydney telephone zone, because the centre of that zone is not situated in the centre of the metropolitan area. By moving the centre of the Sydney zone westwards to the centre of the metropolitan area, all residents in the metropolitan area will be able to make metropolitan calls at the local rate, as is the case in the other State capitals. Those at present charged at the local call rate will retain that right.

The Fraser Government has eroded the new hopes given Australia's aborigines by the Labor Government that at last they could achieve their full rights as Australians. The Aboriginal Councils and Associations Bill and Aboriginal Land (Northern Territory) Bill was passed by the House of Representatives in November 1975, but not by the Senate. The Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976 has not yet been brought into operations. Mr Fraser succumbed to Mr Bjelke-Petersen's request that it not be proclaimed. Mr Fraser over-ruled his own Minister for Aboriginal Affairs when the Bjelke-Petersen Government objected to the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission buying land in Queensland. He also agreed with the request of Mr Bjelke-Petersen himself to stop the trachoma program among Queensland aborigines. The Western Australian Premier, Sir Charles Court, attempted to change the law before the by-election ordered by the Court of Disputed Returns, following the harassment of aboriginals, who had enrolled, by Liberal lawyers who deterred them from voting. Liberal and National Country Party MLA's in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory are getting bolder in frustrating Federal efforts to safeguard Aboriginal rights to land, health and the vote. In the light of the 1967 referendum no Federal government should tolerate these assaults on the rights of Aborigines. The Labor Government won't tolerate them.

In 1961 a House of Representatives Committee was appointed to consider the voting rights of aborigines. It recommended that, for the time being, the enrolment of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders should be voluntary but that voting should be compulsory for those enrolled. It is now time to reconsider what the committee described as the temporary provision for voluntary enrolment. We shall ask the new parliament to appoint a new Committee to inquire into and report on extending and guaranteeing aboriginal voting rights for the Federal, State and Territory parliaments.

A Labor Government will end the unprecedented pressures to which the Fraser Government has subjected the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The independence and quality of the ABC involves not just the minority who view or listen to the ABC programs; the quality of all television and radio is enhanced by the standards and initiatives of the ABC.

We shall proceed with the Electoral Bill passed by the House of Representatives in February and August 1975 but twice rejected by the Senate which provided for government subsidies to political parties and candidates in Federal election campaigns and the limitation and disclosure of the amount and nature of assistance by corporations and individuals to these parties and candidates.

Australian Election campaigns are now probably the most expensive in the world. Government subsidies are paid for campaigns in the United States, Canada, Britain, Austria, West Germany, France, Italy and throughout Scandinavia. In Australia, public assistance is limited to ABC time.

Australia in one of the few democracies where party donations are neither disclosed nor restricted. Donations are supervised in the United States, Canada, Britain, India, New Zealand and Japan. We shall ask the House of Representatives and Senate to implement the recommendations of the report which was tabled on 30 September 1975 from the Joint Committee on Pecuniary Interests of Members of Parliament which was chaired by the Hon Joe Riordan. The relevance and necessity of this action are emphasised by the family companies of the Deputy Leaders of the Liberal and National Country Parties. Their pecuniary interests concern not just the Prime Minister but the Australian people. The Prime Minister even refused to say whether he considers it appropriate for his ministers to make investments or hold interests in companies in such a guise that the public cannot discover them.

I emphasise that we present a three-year program and seek a full three-year term in which to carry out that program. It is not we, but our opponents, who have destabilised and disrupted Australia's political and economic system by putting Australia through the turmoil of elections every 18 months or 2 years. The only spending we will initiate before the next budget will be on the urgent creation of jobs. And the rest of our program is a three-year program - a responsible, careful, three-year program to get Australia working again.

Men and Women of Australia: Our message is one of hope and faith - hope for the young, the anxious, the uncertain, the deprived; and faith in the future of Australia's parliamentary democracy. Working together, we can get Australia working again, we can get the Australian parliamentary democracy working again.

For nearly eleven years now it has been my privilege to lead Australia's greatest party. There is one great and continuing theme throughout the seven national election campaigns it has been my honour to present - the program of the Australian Labor Party to the people of Australia. That theme is a profound and unshakable belief in the Australian parliamentary democracy as a mighty instrument for progress, reform and national unity. We come before you as a team matured by experience wiser through adversity, yet reinvigorated by bright new talents in our ranks, touched with the idealism of youth. We present a new team - a new program. We seek a new mandate - not a mandate for a mere restoration, but for a true renewal, for a new beginning for Australia.

Our task in 1978 will be very different from the task you charged us with five years ago. In 1972 we responded to your overwhelming demand to clear away the backlog of 23 years. That is what we promised; that is what we performed. And at the same time we had to grapple with the world's worst economic crisis since the war. Now, in 1978, we must seek Australian solutions for the Australian-made crisis of the past year and a half.

Despite the savage doctrinaire destruction of so many of our programs, in breach of the solemn pledges given to you only two years ago, there are fundamental changes

we made which must never be set aside - the new standing and independence we gave Australia among the nations; national responsibility for schools and the end of class and sectarian division about schools; national involvement in the affairs of the places where most of our people live, the capitals and provincial cities and towns; a national commitment to Aborigines, and their right to land; the preservation and enhancement of the national estate and the national heritage; the Australian demand for a greater control of our own national resources; the guaranteed protection of pensions; the rights of migrants; the rights of women; the enrichment of our arts and culture; and above all, the continuing drive towards more equal opportunities, true equality, for all Australians.

These must endure as part of the Australian way. These are the things we want to secure for Australia. We offer new policies in place of stagnation, in place of division and confrontation. We offer a Government which will strive, once again, to unite the Australian people for the great tasks ahead - a true Government of the people for all the people.”

Source: Compiled from The Sydney Morning Herald, November 18, 1977, p. 10 – 11 and audio from Australian Politics Online