

Policy Launch Speech: Bob Hawke, Opposition Leader (ALP)

Sydney, 16 February 1983

“My fellow Australians, today we set out together on a task much greater than winning an election. The task is to win the future for Australia and all Australians.

And the first pledge I now make, a commitment which embraces every other undertaking, is that everything we do as a Government will have the one great goal – to reunite this great community of ours to bring out the best we are truly capable of, together, as a nation, and bring Australia together to win our way through the crisis into which the policies of the past and the men of the past have plunged our country.

My fellow Australians, let me from the very beginning of this campaign and to the end of this campaign, sound a note of caution and realism.

We offer no miracles. We offer no overnight solutions for the immediate problems we face or the deep-seated problems we must face together.

I believe the Australian people have had enough of election promises made only to be broken. I offer no fistful of dollars to be snatched back after the election. What I do offer is a program to produce growth and expansion in the economy, achievable goals for the rebuilding and reconstruction of this nation.

This is not a time for grandiose spending proposals of the kind Mr Fraser has drummed up in recent weeks - \$6,000 million worth in the space of just three weeks in January.

But it is a time for controlled, responsible stimulations of the Australian economy. We will not be able to just spend our way out of the mess we must work our way out of it, work our way out of it together.

I believe the Australian people have had enough of election promises made only to be broken. I offer no fistful of dollars to be snatched back after the election. What I do offer is a program to produce growth and expansion in the economy, achievable goals for the rebuilding and reconstruction of this nation.

The new path for Australia after March 5, 1983, will be national reconciliation, national recovery, national reconstruction.

For let there be no mistake – there can be no economic recovery, there cannot be a beginning towards recovery, until there is a national effort towards national reconciliation. And that effort must begin with the national leadership and the national Government.

The problems we face together are now deep-seated, complex and challenging. They cannot be solved by election gimmicks. And just let me give you a measure of the size of the problem.

More than 130,000 jobs have to be found each year just to absorb new people coming on to the workforce – that is, just for unemployment levels to mark time.

So Australia needs long-term national solutions and above all, we need a genuine cooperative approach between governments, business and unions.

That is why we undertake, immediately on assuming office, to convene a national economic summit conference, fully representative of Australian industry, the Australian workforce and the Australian people through their elected governments.

Let me stress, that the proposal for a national economic summit – as I have stressed all along – is not a substitute for our positive policies.

Its purpose is to create a climate for common understanding of the scale and scope of Australia's present crisis, to explore the policy options, and to ensure that the relevant parties, governments, business and the unions clearly appreciate the role that each of them will have to play in pulling the country out of its present economic mess.

Our call for a national summit is the same call made for months past by the leading industry groups of Australia, by the ACTU, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sydney, church leaders throughout Australia and by most of the State Premiers – the first act in the process of national reconciliation.

We of the Labor Party have already established the firmest possible basis for the necessary three-sided co-operation between governments, business and unions. We have already established the basis for firm co-operation with leading industry groups and representatives.

As a result of the months of painstaking consultation, discussion and work, we have reached an historic accord with the trade union movement which will form the basis for a firm, genuine and workable prices and incomes policy for this nation.

The whole thrust of our policy is to attack the twin evils of unemployment and inflation together – to get growth back into the economy while ensuring that Australian living standards no longer continue to be eroded by inflation. And the purpose of our prices and incomes policy is to ensure that the benefits of recovery, the benefits of growth are not wasted by inflation through another bout of the wage price spiral, or the erosion of our international competitiveness. All involved in the far-reaching accord are in absolute agreement that our long-term goal for Australia must be the restoration of genuine full employment, and the maintenance of real living standards in Australia.

Let there be no mistake – our opponents stand for the exact opposite. The inevitable result of their policy is an increase in unemployment and a continued reduction in the living standards of every Australian. The wage freeze itself was explicitly designed to cut ordinary family income and ordinary Australian living standards by 10 per cent. But the agreement which will form the basis of our prices and incomes policy equally recognises that these great goals cannot be achieved overnight, or without real equality of sacrifice.

It would be unrealistic to pretend otherwise and it would be dishonest for me to promise otherwise.

And in these great matters, as in everything else in this campaign and beyond, I am not in the business, and the Labor Party is not in the business, of making promises that cannot be fulfilled.

To underpin an effective prices and incomes policy, we will: Establish, after full consultation with industry, a streamlined pricing-surveillance authority to assess price

rises sought by the strategic price setters and public authorities within the national jurisdiction.

Strengthen the trade-practices legislation to promote more effective competition.

Restore a centralised system of wage fixation.

Establish, after consultation and in co-operation with the States, direct and indirect mechanisms to ensure that the same restraint expected to wage and salary earners is exercised by other non-wage income earners.

In short we shall ask all sections of the Australian community to show the common restraint and share the common burden for the common national purpose. The process of co-operation and consultation must be a continuing one. The momentum of the mod for national reconciliation, national recovery and national reconstruction generated by the national economic summit must be maintained. The prices and incomes policy itself will require for its success mechanisms by which consultation and co-operation can become as normal and readily accepted as part of the Australian way and the Australian system as confrontation and division have become under the impact of Fraserism.

Further, there is an urgent need to replace the existing chaos and unpredictability in economic policy-making with orderly, rational and consistent economic planning to promote the achievement of agreed national goals.

Accordingly, a Labor Government will establish an Economic Planning Advisory Council, representing all governments, business, unions, farmers and consumers. A tripartite group of government, employer and union representatives from within the Economic Planning Advisory Council will have responsibility for advising on the prices and incomes policy. This group will monitor implementation, and help solve problems as or before they arise.

A national prices and incomes policy is only one element in the program for national reconciliation, recovery and reconstruction. The overwhelming need for Australia in its present crisis is for a Government with policies to make a combined attack on unemployment and inflation.

The aim of the incoming Labor Government is to restore growth to the Australian economy. Recovery can only be achieved and sustained by a change to national economic policies which life and sustain demand. There can be no lift in profits or a lift in growths unless there is a lift in demand.

And that cannot be done by taking money out of the weekly pay packet or the pensioner's cheque. And it certainly can't be done by squeezing the public sector even further. Under the Labor Government, increased growth will be restored by:

Building desperately needed public capital works and services. Tax reductions for low and middle – income earners. Widening of opportunities for borrowing by business, farmers, and homebuyers. Providing support for private sector investment.

The process of recovery and reconstruction will involve an accelerated capital-works program. In close consultation with the States and local government, we shall embark upon a range of projects carefully selected to provide the maximum quick boost to employment, the maximum benefit to the private sector and the maximum value for the long-term advantage to this nation for the money spent.

It is vital that we are now to get our young people off the dole queue – to give our young men and women an alternative.

To improve community facilities and services, as well as to increase employment opportunities, Labor will start a community works program.

This program will be designed to reach to the local community level. The criteria for projects under the program will be that they would provide community facilities or services otherwise unlikely to be available; that they are labour intensive; and that they would provide training opportunities better to enable participants to enter the normal workforce.

An estimated 70,000 new full-time jobs will be created for an average duration of six months. The community works program will particularly benefit those most disadvantaged in the labour market who will be least affected by a general improvement in employment opportunities.

We shall also introduce a private sector program which will provide a real incentive to employers to provide actual new jobs for young people, in contrast with the existing Special Youth Employment Training Program.

We shall establish a jobs on roads program under which additional money would be granted to local-government bodies for construction and maintenance of local roads. Proposed allocation of \$70 million dollars in 1983-84 will create a total of nearly 8,000 jobs.

Labor's program of tax relief and tax reform is a crucial element in our program for recovery. The present economic crisis cannot be separated from the operations of the tax system under the Fraser Government. Labor's tax-reform program will have these objectives.

To increase the real value of the pay packet and stimulate demand in economy. To restore equality in the tax system. To redress the tax burden, on the principle of ability to pay. To prevent the erosion of after-tax income by inflation, and so support the prices and incomes policies. To end the loss of untold millions of dollars through the tax evasion and avoidance industry.

We will wipe out the tax-evasion and avoidance industry in the country.

Under the Fraser Government it has become Australia's main growth industry. To quote the Costigan Report: "This industry has developed in Australia, particularly over the last five years, at a rate far in excess of any other industry and has brought with it profits comparable only to the heavy days of the Victorian gold rush."

And the blame lies not so much with individuals, but with the Government that allowed it to happen. Our Government's total income-tax package is being released concurrently with this speech. Its key elements include immediate reductions in income tax for almost six million Australian taxpayers, with the greatest tax cuts going to those on the lowest incomes who have suffered most under Mr Fraser's policies. A taxpayer without dependents earning \$225 a week, for example, will get a tax cut of \$4.76 a week.

The major points of Labor's tax reform will be:

A new six-step tax scale to restore the progressive nature of the tax system.

A list in the tax thresholds to \$5,000 which will free tens of thousands of low income earners from all tax.

A list in the tax threshold for pensioners of \$465 to \$5,893.

Increases in the spouse rebate and sole-parent rebate, resulting in additional tax cuts of \$2 a week to families.

Increases in zone allowances by 25 per cent for tax payers in remote areas.

We shall legislate to allow up to 100 per cent retention of profits by small business where these funds are to be used for genuine business operations.

And here let me make one point so that even our opponents can understand it: and let me make it beyond all their powers of misrepresentations and distortion. There will be no new capital gains tax.

But we will not be deterred, and no Australian Government worthy of the name should ever have been deterred, from upholding and using the existing laws of the Commonwealth of Australia, interpreted in the spirit in which these laws are now being interpreted by the High Court to tax speculative gains and prevent tax evasion and tax avoidance. All that is needed is a government with the will and determination to apply to law.

And one last point on taxation matters. The present Prime Minister secured consent to this election on the grounds that the Senate one year ago rejected legislation of crucial importance to the economic policies of his Government. Those rejected policies would have imposed a 2.5 per cent tax on the necessities of life in this country. Mr. Fraser now seeks your mandate to impose sales taxes across the board. Either that, or he has procured this election by constitutional and political fraud.

As part of Labor's anti-inflation package and in recognition of the burden of extra taxation levied by the Government on people afflicted by the wage freeze, Labor will reduce the price of petrol by cancelling the January 1 oil-price increase of \$3.23 per barrel. This will have the effect of reducing the price of petrol by the order of 3c a litre. It will also reduce the consumer price index by half of one point.

We will call upon the housing and construction industry to make a major contribution to the recovery program. Our target is to increase housing commencements by 18,000 in our first year and to bring total commencements to 160,000 within three years. To provide a stable and adequate flow of funds for housing at affordable interest rates, the Labor Government will:

Maintain interest-rate controls on bank mortgage interest rates and extend those controls to building societies.

Require the savings bank, and building societies to lend a set proportion of their funds for housing.

Establish an Australian Housing Fund in the Reserve Bank made up of deposits by non-bank financial institutions and channelled through the banks and building societies.

We will assist first-home buyers to bridge the deposit gap which prohibits many moderate-income earners from obtaining home ownership. A grant of \$5,000 will be paid to eligible buyers in such a way that they can obtain an extra \$14,000 loan. Labor

will assist people renting their homes by extending supplementary rent assistance of up to \$10 a week to all social-security beneficiaries, including the unemployed.

The role of private industry will be of paramount importance, both for the immediate recovery, and the long-term reconstruction of our economy.

The Labor approach is based on a recognition of the interdependence between the private and public sectors. The health of one requires the health of the other. Private industry stands to benefit most from increased activity in capital works and infrastructure. We cannot satisfactorily rebuild our workforce unless at the same time we rebuild our manufacturing base. This requires both measures to deal with the immediate crisis, and measures for long-term reconstruction.

Until this crisis is overcome there will be no reduction of existing protection levels.

We recognise the current crisis facing many industries where import competition is threatening their very survival. We will immediately review the need for additional short-term assistance in selected industries to provide a necessary breathing space until steady growth is restored.

The Industries Assistance Commission will be required to play a more positive role in preparing for growth, rather than managing the decline of manufacturing. It is unthinkable that Australia should abandon its steel-producing capacity – yet every day of delay makes that outcome more likely. Australia has all the necessary raw materials, the workforce, the expertise and the basic infrastructure for an efficient and healthy steel industry.

It is incomprehensible, not only in terms of Australia's economy but in terms of Australia's defence and security, that this nation is on the verge of being the only significant industrialised nation in the world without a steel industry. The Labor Government gives an unequivocal commitment to the maintenance of a viable and efficient steel industry in this country.

We shall maintain the current long-term plans for the footwear, clothing and textile industries.

We shall retain current plans for the motor-vehicle industry but we shall restrict the export-credit scheme to 7.5 per cent.

We will encourage those many small industries in the producer goods sector which have good prospects for replacing imports and expanding exports.

We will select new intermediate and high-technology industries in which Australia has special skills and opportunities, and support their establishment.

The new Australian Industry Development Bank will provide new sources for finance for our industry reconstruction plans.

The Commonwealth Development Bank will be given a wider charter to finance small business investment. The current accelerated depreciation allowance will be retained to promote private investment. Grants for research and development will be increased and made tax free.

Recognising the importance of tourism to the Australian economy and the prospects of employment it can offer to the young, semi-skilled and unskilled, the Labor Government will double the current expenditure on tourism, tourist promotion and low-cost tourist accommodation.

The Australian Labor Party has clear priorities and will develop our communications system with paramount regard to the public interest. We will:

Immediately plan or a second ABC regional network to be installed by the third year of government, to provide additional choice to the four million Australians living outside capital cities.

Increase ABC funding by 5 per cent to enable a further development of Australian programming.

Establish an independent foundation to assist the financing of public broadcasting stations.

Proceed with the extension of multicultural and ethnic broadcasting throughout Australia, but insist on greater ethnic community involvement in the management of this service.

Labor rejects the recommendation of the Davidson report on the Australian telecommunications system. That system will remain in the hands of Telecom, and will continue to provide a service which takes into account the public interest in the determination of charges for all Australians. There will be no fragmentation of the system by the admission of private networks, the Telecom will continue to cross-subsidise country and suburban services.

Telecom will be permitted to raise adequate capital for expansion, and will be the base provider for all new information systems. It will continue as a major supporter of the Australian electronics industry, and of employment in that industry. Telecom's "Buy Australian" policy will be maintained.

Labor's program to provide relief for the drought-stricken areas of Australia will be outlined when I deliver our rural policy speech in Griffith on Sunday – the most comprehensive set of policies ever put together by any party for Australia's agricultural and fishing industries.

Our young people need to be better prepared for their own future and for the future of the country. We cannot continue to waste the talents and destroy the hopes of our young people in the dole queues. We cannot afford to lose so many able students from our high schools, colleges and universities.

The learning gap between Australia and the rest of the world is widening. Our proposals to reverse this disturbing trend in the longer term include:

An increase in full-time enrolments in secondary schools and in the TAFE sector of a total of 30,000 in three years.

An increase in enrolment in universities and CAE's of 25,000 by 1990.

The importance of doing this is threefold: Australia has a low retention rate of young people in the 15-to-19 year-old age group in education.

Too many young, unskilled, Australians are looking for jobs, and by doing so are increasing the size of the workforce when insufficient jobs are available. Australia must improve its education and training standards if it is to compete in a world of rapidly changing technology.

In dealing with the general question of unemployment in the longer term, we will have to face up to reducing the length of the working life of the average Australian.

A substantial impact will be made on this problem by policies designed to encourage young people to remain in education longer, and by offering them a comprehensive youth policy which offers the alternative of education, or a range of employment outside the conventional labour force, providing opportunities for constructive community work, training and experience.

We will, in consultation with the State Government which are already developing constructive programs in this area, seek to develop a comprehensive youth policy which will have short-term benefits for the young unemployed, and long term benefits for the Australian workforce.

Labor will institute a new program for primary schools to provide special help to children suffering difficulties in their basic learning. The full-year cost of this new program will be \$9 million.

We will provide \$24 million over three years to equip secondary schools with computers. All government schools and needy non government schools will benefit from a grant of up to \$20,000 for this equipment.

Labor's objective is to provide equal educational opportunities for all Australian children. In addition we shall encourage reasonable diversity in education both within the government sector and by facilitating a healthy private sector.

Above all, we will restore the confidence of the Australian community by showing that our national government is concerned about the educational opportunities available to all children in all schools.

If all Australian children are to enjoy equal education opportunities, the funding of all schools, government and non-government, must be based on fairness and need. We believe that Australian Schools Commission is right when it says that to so-called State-aid debate is a distraction from the far more important concerns which many Australians have about schools.

In addition a contribution of \$37 million to government schools, we shall provide a further \$16 million to the most needy non-government schools in the first year. Consistent with funding according to needs in a time of limited financial resources, we will reduce only 5% per year the direct Commonwealth grant going to a very small number of wealthy private schools endowed with resources far above those of and other schools.

Under these proposals 98 per cent of children in the Catholic Education system will be better off in terms of Commonwealth assistance, and in saying that I am mindful that the Catholic, and the Government systems cater for children from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

I will ask our Education Minister to confer immediately with the Schools Commission and with representatives of the various sectors, with a view to establishing a common understanding of the resources claims of all types of schools.

We are committed to raising over a three-year period the basic pension rate from the 22 per cent available male earnings to which has fallen under Fraser to 25 per cent. Once we reach that goal we will maintain that 25 per cent proportion by indexation until it is possible to take the pension higher. Pensions will be adjusted on the basis of the immediately prior six-month CPI movement to cut the present lag of four months to one month. Pensioner fringe benefit levels will be indexed.

Zone allowances will be paid to social security beneficiaries living in remote areas where costs are high. Unemployment benefits will be progressively increased until adult beneficiaries reach equality with single pensioners.

Young unemployed will be paid an additional \$5 a week and given greater access to training. All adult unemployed will be eligible for a \$10 a week rental assistance after six weeks on benefit. Junior beneficiaries will also be eligible if they are living away from home.

While Labor is committed to the maintenance of family allowances, our first priority must be to low-income families. The most immediate need here is for reform of the absurdly restrictive family income supplement proposed in the last Budget. This will be done by relaxing the income test so that the supplement is reduced by only 25c for each extra dollar of family income, rather than the present 50c. This will ensure that eligibility is extended into a much wider range of lower and middle incomes.

Our children's services program will provide for the varying needs of children, and is essential to enable parents to play a fuller part in society. Labor would allocate \$20 million extra for child care in its first Budget, equivalent to \$30 million in a full year. These funds, which will finance 400 new child-care projects, will be directed into areas of pressing need.

The Labour Government will return to the basic principle of the right of all Australian to health services according to their medical needs. Labor's new Medicare program involves simply the replacement of the present crippling health-fund contributions by an income-related levy of 1 per cent of taxable income. It will mean that nine out of 10 Australians will pay less for the health needs of themselves and their families.

The change in Labor's health-funding arrangements is also an important element of Labor's anti-inflation package. It will have the effect of reducing the consumer price index by 2 percentage points.

The last thing the Labor Government wants to do is to create more unnecessary bureaucracy, in the health field or anywhere else. One piece of wholly unnecessary red tape which we shall abolish immediately on coming to Government is the pharmaceutical declaration form which has been imposed by the Fraser Government on non-pharmacists, pensioners and the poor.

It is not only through our Medicare plan that a Labor Government will contribute to the health and fitness of Australians. We will ensure, through substantial funding increases, that sport, physical fitness and recreation facilities will be available to all Australians seeing to enjoy them whatever their wealth, ability or level of aspiration. Particular priorities for increased funding will be the National Institute for Sport, sports education in schools, the building of family leisure centres in or near schools, and surf life-saving associations.

A long overdue system of tax-averaging will be introduced for sportsmen with short careers in high-body-contact sports.

Our main priorities in government will be to: Restore over our term in office spending on all arts programs to the level achieved in 1975-76.

Provide low-interest development aid to independent Australian publishers.

Abolish admission fees to the new National Gallery.

Proceed with the construction of the Museum of Australia. Closely monitor, and adjust where necessary, film-industry tax incentives to ensure the stability and expansion of quality Australian film production.

Environmental issues have become more prominent in this campaign than in any previous election, through the bitter and diverse controversy over the proposed Gordon-below-Franklin dam, the building of which will irreversibly damage a key part of Australia's and the world's natural and cultural heritage.

A Labor Government will use all the powers at our disposal to ensure that the dam is not proceeded with, but at the same time ensure that Tasmania is not economically disadvantaged in any way.

It's not a matter of having to choose between environment and development. With sensible policies, and a willingness to resolve problems through negotiation and consensus, Australia can have both.

Our Labor environment priorities are: The preservation of Moreton Island by prohibition of mineral sand exports; The declaration of the whole of the Great Barrier Reef area as a marine park; Developing with the States a massive national reforestation and tree regeneration campaign especially in the catchment areas.

[inaudible] pre-eminently about values – competing values to some extent, but above all values we share. Labor believes that one of the most important tasks is Australia today is to restore values to Australian politics. We need to think through the kinds of shared values that are necessarily involved in building a firm foundation for Australian's future. And of the most fundamental tasks of all in this respect is to think again about some of the values built into the Constitution under which we have as a nation lived and worked for over 80 years.

A widespread consensus is emerging that while the basic structure of the Australian Constitution may still be sound, a good deal of it needs major renovation. The 1988 Bicentennial year is an ideal target date to work towards for really major, systematic review. Labor will seek to put in place machinery – involving the establishment of the Australian Constitutional Convention on a more regular and professional basis, and the direct election by the people of a proportion of its delegates – to make that review process a reality.

Labor recognises that, because of the realities of the referendum process, there is little point in seeking constitutional change in matters which have no significant support across regional and political lines. We do not see constitutional amendments as an occasion for political stunting or grandstanding: we will be adopting a consensus-seeking approach in all our endeavours in this area.

Our most immediate constitutional reform priority is the achievement of fixed term four year Parliaments. This will stabilise the election cycle, make possible rational business planning and public administration, and rule out the kind of cynical opportunism that has forced Australians to the polls six times now in the last 12 years. The concept of fixed-term Parliaments has received widespread support on both sides of politics, and we believe it will be warmly welcomed by the great majority of Australians.

We will update the Electoral Act with proposals recommended by the Electoral Office but shelved for years by the Fraser Government. Voting will be made simpler to

reduce informal wasted votes. Voters will not find they have been taken off the rolls and disenfranchised whenever they move home or go overseas.

Labor will also establish an independent, public and permanent Electoral Commission to oversee the whole electoral process. We will seek the support of Parliament for the public funding of election campaigns, the disclosure of donations to political parties and for the regulation of unfair political advertising.

Labor has a comprehensive program of law reform, based on the principles of equal access to the law, the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and liberties, and the speedier and more sensitive reaction of the law to social change. Among the measures we will vigorously pursue are:

Additional and more cost-effective legal-aid funding.

A national Bill of Rights and major improvements to the law of discrimination and criminal investigation.

Upgrading of the role and effectiveness of the Human Rights Commission.

Rewriting of the Freedom of Information Act to implement fully the principles of open government.

Progressive establishment, in co-operation with the States, of a national no-fault accident compensation scheme.

Updating of the Family Law Act to ensure that it operates in the best interest of all the parties involved, especially children.

Creation of a National Law Reform Advisory Council (with representatives from law reform agencies and both sides of politics in every Parliament) to co-ordinate uniform law-reform developments.

Labor has a comprehensive women's affairs policy, developed in recognition of the fact that Australian women do not yet experience total equality with men, or enjoy full participation in all aspects of our society. We are particularly concerned at the implications of the evidence from all relevant overseas countries that women in the workforce are most susceptible to the adverse effects of rapid technological change.

Our most immediate priority will be the enactment of Commonwealth Sex Discrimination legislation covering employment, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation [inaudible]

[inaudible] involves the Aboriginal people of this country- the first Australians. As a group, they continue to experience the worst conditions – the worst health, housing, employment, education, and the greatest poverty and despair. While this situation persists, we can never truly bring this country together.

Central to this question is the issue of land rights. A Labor Government will not hesitate to use, where necessary, the constitutional powers of the Commonwealth to provide for Aboriginal people to own the land which has for years been set aside for them. Through the Aboriginal Development Commission, we will assist communities to develop enterprises, build schools, and operate health services in a way which implements to the full the common ambition of self determination within a framework of national unity.

Labor in Government will approach business-regulation issues according to clearly stated principles. We will maintain and promote business regulation only where its

social or economic objectives are clearly identified and where the benefit to the community outweighs the cost of the regulations.

Priority activity will include: Strengthening the Trade Practices Act in relation to mergers, price discrimination and abuses of market power designed to prevent proper competition.

Ensuring genuine reform of company and securities law and better resources for the National Companies and Securities Commission.

Enactment of legislation in relation to insurance agents and brokers, and insurance contracts, of the kind recommended by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

A review of the structure and operation of the Petroleum Products Pricing Authority to ensure adequate Commonwealth supervision of the petroleum pricing and that the authority operates as an effective pricing body for the industry.

Labor in Government will aim to replace, following consultation with the States, overlapping laws with single common codes.

We will support education programs to advise consumers, particularly members of ethnic groups, of their rights as consumers, and establish joint industrial consumer councils to advise the government on consumer policies.

Even in times of an economic crisis of such proportions as the present, the defence and security needs of Australia must remain paramount. The foundations laid after 1972 established for Australia a more independent and self-respecting international role than ever before. The essential elements of Australian defence and foreign policy have taken on a quality of bipartisanship inconceivable before then.

The great questions of Australia's relationship with the United States, the with People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, The European Economic Community, Indonesia, our special relationships with the Commonwealth of nations, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Japan, and our conduct on Southern African questions now possess a continuity, consistency and consensus.

We will maintain Australia's commitment to the ANZUS Treaty. Australia should never forget that the American Alliance was forged by an Australian Labor Government, the Curtin Government, at a time when the conservatives of Australia had failed to meet the challenge of our greatest crisis.

We will seek even closer relations with our ASEAN neighbours and in particular, seek to widen trade opportunities in this region.

Labor is committed to the re-establishment and maintenance of a well-equipped, highly trained and mobile defence force to ensure the security of Australia's sovereign territory, particularly in the vulnerable north and west, its economic zones and its areas of vital interest.

We will continue programs now under way, but will review the Five Year Defence Plan and adjust priorities when this becomes necessary. We will not squander \$1.4 billion of resources on the purchase and equipment of an aircraft carrier which will make no credible improvement to our strategic position, will divert resources from much more cost-effective equipment purchases, and is not wanted by most of the defence establishment.

Nor will we prejudice defence effectiveness by ill-conceived short-term enlistment programs which will not make a significant contribution to your unemployment, not result in any effective craft training in the time available, which are not wanted by defence processions, and which will divert funds from badly needed equipment purchases.

Labor will immediately cancel projected retrenchments in government defence industries and carry out a full examination of current programs to ensure full employment of the present workforce or retaining where required.

The Labor team will come to office with a deep commitment to restoring the quality of Australian Government and better prepared than we have ever been to do so. The extraordinary series of scandals which broke last year demonstrated just how deep the malaise now runs in Australia's public administration, and how much of it has been due to failure of ministerial leadership and performance at the top.

Labor in office will be committed to restoring probity in government, cutting away extravagance and self-indulgence in public office, and establishing clear-cut decision-making procedures.

Labor in office will work within the existing public-service structure, developing new procedures to make it more efficient, flexible and accountable, but not by passing or undermining it in any way. Labor in office will stay deeply committed to the democratic conduct of the parliamentary system, and in particular to the constructive and creative committee processes which have operated so successfully in the Senate in recent years.

And Labor office will put to a referendum within our first months of government a constitutional-amendment proposal for fixed-term parliaments, which will do more than anything else to introduce stability and predictability into our political process.”

Source: Compiled from the Sydney Morning Herald, The Canberra Times, 17 February 1983, page 10 -11 and The Age.