

Election 2019 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

WHAT ARE THE PARTICULAR ISSUES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN?

- The worsening in health and wellbeing and their determinants among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples clearly shows that current strategies are failing, and that the directives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have not been supported.
- Potentially the women experiencing the greatest vulnerabilities are those in prison. They now comprise 34% of all female prisoners compared to 2% of the overall Australian population ([ALRC, 2017](#)). Although the majority of people in prison are male (97%), Aboriginal women are the most rapidly growing population of prisoners, with rates increasing by 150% since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, twice the rate of other females and double the rate of Aboriginal males from 2000-2016 ([The Guardian, 2017](#)). These women have often experienced poverty, grief and loss, violence, racism and poor mental health.
- Further, the trajectory from juvenile detention to adult incarceration is clear; Aboriginal youth aged 10-17 years are 20–26 times more likely to be in detention than others, and Aboriginal adults in prison are more likely to have been in juvenile detention than others ([AIHW, 2018](#)). There has been no commitment to gender- and culturally-informed programs to reduce or prevent incarceration and re-incarceration. Instead, international evidence also shows the damaging impact of parental incarceration and poor maternal health and wellbeing.
- In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health organisations (ACCHOs) have been reported as more effective, timely and appropriate and as having greater reach, although demand outstrips supply, for all populations including female prisoners. They also have episodes of care and better outcomes than mainstream health care. ACCHOs are a vital element of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s action to self-determine, a right articulated in Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to which Australia is party.

ELECTION COMMITMENTS

The table below sets out how fully parties' current election commitments address NFAW recommendations: **Full implementation** **Partial implementation** **No or negative response**

Note that the parties may have presented relevant policies--including in social services, employment and housing which do not refer specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Strategies to remove impacts of farming and mining on environmental health including river systems, water sources and sites of cultural heritage directly affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will establish and allocate \$30 million over five years for a research hub to improve the understanding and application of First Nations' land management and traditional ecological knowledge. Research will include fire management, conservation and biodiversity outcomes, agriculture and aquaculture and programs such as the Indigenous Protected Areas program and will be in accordance with agreed protocols and based on Traditional Owner consent.</p> <p>Labour will create an Australian Environment Act, and establish a Federal Environmental Protection Agency, and ensure all stakeholders – including the States and Territories, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives– have a seat at the table.</p> <p>Labour will establish a National Indigenous Water Committee to support Indigenous participation, autonomy and self-determination in our water management systems, ensure Indigenous water rights are properly managed and drive policy change that guarantees cultural objectives for water access are achieved.</p> <p>Labour will double the number of full-time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rangers, providing</p>	<p>\$3.5 billion for Climate Solutions – working with farmers and Indigenous communities but no detail. Hopefully this is for Indigenous peoples' knowledge and influence on design rather than strategies to close Indigenous communities and avoid repairing infrastructure. Private industry is not mentioned in its role in climate solutions. Minimally more funds appear allocated for example to the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation however over future years a decline is projected overall. Investment to the Torres Strait Authority is minimal and will not address threats to communities from rising sea levels.</p>	<p>Landholders, including First Nations peoples, will have the right to say no to gas mining on their land</p>

<p>the required funding over five years. More than a third of Indigenous Rangers are women.</p> <p>Government will provide \$4.5 million to reinvigorate the World Indigenous Network (WIN), which brings together Indigenous Rangers from around the world to share knowledge</p> <p>Labor will double the funding available for Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) over five years and provide ongoing funding in to the future, providing security for Indigenous Rangers and IPAs by committing to six year contracts and contract extension negotiations beginning in the third year of the contract.</p> <p>A Labor Government will support traditional owners to determine what they believe the appropriate boundaries for World Heritage listings should be. Depending on Traditional Owner consent, Labor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress a World Heritage nomination for Cape York Peninsula. • Progress a World Heritage nomination for the West Kimberley. • Progress a World Heritage listing for the Murujuga. • Expand the listing of the Daintree Rainforest to include Indigenous heritage values. • Add cultural values to all World Heritage and National Heritage listings that are not currently listed for these values. 		
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NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Address social determinants of health accounting for 39% of the health inequity gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others, including income security and employment.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will provide \$20 million for two Indigenous Education First Youth Foyers to provide up to two years' accommodation and support for at-risk young people so they have the support to properly engage in education and employment.</p> <p>Labor will invest \$5.5 million per year to roll out a national Deadly Choices campaign empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make their own healthy life choices to improve health outcomes.</p> <p>Labor will invest \$33 m across 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for on-the-ground action to prevent and eliminate rheumatic heart disease, including education and awareness campaigns, improved health hygiene programs and school-based health promotion.</p> <p>Labor will invest \$20 million in sexual health promotion, restore funding to the Northern Territory Aids and Hepatitis Council, and put in place a workforce plan to make sure there are resources to deal with sexual health issues, including the syphilis outbreak across Northern Australia.</p> <p>Labor will invest \$13 m to finally close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vision loss, including \$8.5 m in funding for national implementation of regional eye health coordinators, improved case-management and population-based outreach services. Labor will also provide \$4.5 million for the establishment of an eye health centre.</p>		<p>The Greens recognise that social factors like income, education and employment affect people's health. And for First Nations people, there are additional cultural determinants of health which must be considered. The Greens will reinstate the focus on preventive health, investing \$196m in the next four years, and \$54m per year ongoing, to establish an independent Preventive Health Commission with a clear focus on rolling out evidence-based prevention programs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy to combat obesity, including banning all advertising and sponsoring of junk food, alcohol and gaming/betting companies at sporting events and during sports broadcasts; and • Tackling the harms of alcohol including a dedicated campaign to raise awareness of the harms of alcohol and drinking during pregnancy, in order to prevent foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). <p>More than a third of remote area residents and an appalling 57% of First Nations Australians live with untreated tooth decay. The Greens will invest \$3.5b over the next four years to make Medicare-funded dental available to all Australians by 2025. In the next four years we will make it available to: all children under 18 years; all aged pensioners; all people on the full rate of benefits including Newstart, youth allowance, carers payment and the disability support pension and all other concession card holders.</p>

<p>Labor will provide \$30 m to address the national crisis in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth suicide in highly vulnerable communities, using best-practice trauma-informed approaches.</p> <p>Labor will provide more opportunities for First Nations people to go to TAFE or do an apprenticeship, waiving upfront fees for 100,000 TAFE students and provide additional support for 150,000 Australians to do an apprenticeship.</p> <p>Labor will deliver funding for the University of Sydney’s Poche Centre to coordinate delivery of 1,300 TAFE qualifications and 1,000 jobs across regional and rural Australia for First Nations people at risk of long-term unemployment.</p>		
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Address impoverished conditions particularly of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and invest in local economic development.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will abolish and replace the Community Development Program (CDP) and co-design a new Remote Development and Jobs Program to increase economic opportunities and jobs in remote communities and reduce the role that Centrelink plays in people’s lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate changes will be made to the CDP so discriminatory impacts are mitigated while the new program is designed. <p>Labor will continue the Indigenous procurement policy, while maintaining vigilance to ensure the risk of fraud or anti-competitive behaviour is mitigated.</p> <p>Labor will ensure that adequate training and business development programs are in place to enable Indigenous communities to maximise the value of their cultural water resources.</p>		<p>Greens will provide \$100 million in an Indigenous and remote communities power fund, administered by ARENA, to support the shift to renewable energy, storage and the creation of microgrids in remote indigenous communities.</p>

<p>Labor will provide funding to improve remote Indigenous telecommunications and broadcasting to help address digital literacy, improve access to basic services and address the digital divide in remote communities.</p> <p>Elements of commitments to promote First Nations Art and Culture (see 'Other Election Commitments, below) apply.</p>		
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NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Build the evidence base about effectiveness in health service delivery for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor recognises the need for First Australians to lead and control their research priorities, including the translation into policy and practice. Labor is committed to maintaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as a research priority through the Medical Research Future Fund.</p> <p>Labor will reinstate the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equality Council (NATSIEHC), abolished in 2014.</p> <p>Labor will task the National Indigenous Health Equality Council to work with the National Mental Health Commission to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Plan undertaken in partnership with Indigenous people and with the participation of Indigenous health experts.</p>	<p>\$160 million has been allocated for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research initiative. Whilst the initiative is led by two Aboriginal academics, only a very small proportion is allocated to the National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research, the Lowitja Institute. Allocation of the further \$150m should take into account the need for governance by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Boost the funding, role and evidence base about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations, which to date have been found to deliver more culturally-safe care, with greater reach and follow-up and result in fewer hospitalisations than mainstream health care.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor is committed to ensuring Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations have the primary role in delivering culturally appropriate and regionally specific Primary Health Care Services to</p>		

<p>First Australians. and commits to reviewing the new Commonwealth funding agreement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations with a genuine commitment to co-design.</p> <p>Labor will also work towards increasing the appointment of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations staff or community representatives on Primary Health Network boards to ensure First Nations people have an active role in decision-making.</p> <p>Labor will continue to work in partnership with First Nations' peoples and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to progress the third iteration of the Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-23, together with a parallel National Workforce Implementation Plan.</p>		
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Repair existing government housing and deliver new, more climate-sensitive housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will invest \$1.5b over ten years to address housing shortages in remote communities, providing a decade of funding certainty to the Northern Territory by committing an additional \$550 million over five years from 2023-24, double the commitment offered by the Liberals. It will also provide \$251 million in funding across Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia in 2019-20.</p>		
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Targeted, age-appropriate, culturally and gender-informed legal services and support for those in the criminal justice system.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor Government will deliver a \$107m package to address disadvantage experienced by First Nations peoples in the justice system by providing</p>	<p>The Indigenous Legal Assistance Program was cut entirely in the budget, and the budget failed to deliver required funding for Legal Aid Commissions (LACs),</p>	<p>The Greens will adopt the Change the Record campaign recommendations to reduce the rate of incarceration of First Nations Peoples as well as</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$40 m over four years to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services for services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4 million over four years to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services to build its capacity. <p>Labor will work with the states and territories to adopt justice targets under the Closing the Gap framework and to grow and sustain alternative sentencing mechanisms such as Koori Courts and mediation forums to reduce pressure on the overburdened justice system.</p> <p>Labor will Invest \$21.75 million over four years into progressing the justice reinvestment project currently underway in Bourke, New South Wales; and introduce the trial to sites in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory in a major city, regional town and remote community.. Through COAG, Labor will establish a national coordinating body, to build the evidence base, collect data and measure progress as the new targets are implemented.</p> <p>Labor will work in partnership with First Nations women to address unacceptably high rates of violence against Indigenous women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a dedicated First Nations’ stream of the \$60 million Community Prevention and Frontline Service Grants program to support community-led and culturally-appropriate prevention programs. • investing in Aboriginal-controlled frontline services, including at least \$20 million for refuges and safe houses and a \$21.5 million boost to Family Violence Prevention Legal Services over four years. 	<p>Community Legal Centres (CLCs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. LACs, CLCs and ATSILS will likely be forced to compete with each other for funding from 2020 onwards. An additional \$16.7 was allocated to ATSILS; however this does not meet need.</p>	<p>promoting a Justice Reinvestment approach that prioritises the services that we know keep people out of jail.</p>
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
<p>Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in caregiving roles; many have responsibility for both older and younger generations.</p>		

PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
	\$84 million to enable carers to leave a loved one in safe hands and get a much-needed break – no announcement of allocations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations for culturally-safe care. Unlikely to be centres for respite for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in regional and remote communities.	

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled disability services and support schemes.

PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equitable access to the NDIS, ensuring the roll out includes adequate resources to address the complex social circumstances affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability.</p> <p>Labor has made broad commitments to addressing service delivery issues, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the centralised, ad-hoc and non-transparent funding processes of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy • Facilitate local and regional decision making • Require mainstream departments and agencies to deliver on, and be accountable for, improving outcomes for First Nations’ peoples • Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations in the development and delivery of new funding guidelines • Ensure that First Nations people have a strong voice in selecting, managing and evaluating the services and programs delivered in their communities • Replace blanket competitive tendering with consultative, 		

<p>community needs-based processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure longer term funding certainty for organisations • Prioritise investment in capacity building and support for smaller, Indigenous community-controlled organisations • Ensure that where it is appropriate for a mainstream service to receive funding to deliver an Indigenous program or service, demonstration of cross-cultural competency is required. 		
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NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community calls for residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation for women.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
	<p>Funds have been allocated for alcohol and drug rehabilitation, but details are too scant to assess whether they will meet community action for a female, Aboriginal community-controlled centre. In line with current directions for other health funding, funds are likely to be open for tender beyond and in competition with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services.</p>	

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Invest in First 2000 Days and other early childhood supports to prevent health and social issues emerging.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will continue the expansion of the Nurse Family Partnership Program from 8 to 19 sites, to ensure better access to quality antenatal and postpartum care, resulting in improved health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and babies.</p> <p>Labor has committed to ensuring every Australian child will receive 15 hours a week of subsidised early learning in the two years before they start school.</p> <p>Labor will provide a pay rise for Early Childhood Educators and provide 200 fee-free places for</p>	<p>Allocation for early childhood education noted but with very limited, if any, focus on improving early life determinants. Funds are allocated to a National Office of Child Safety but decrease over subsequent budgets with no clear allocations for family support programs particularly to reunite removed children with family.</p>	

<p>Indigenous people to study Early Childhood Education at TAFE.</p> <p>Labor will develop, in partnership with First Nations people, especially First Nations women, a National Strategy on First Nations' Children to tackle First Nations child removal and incarceration.</p> <p>Labor will invest an additional \$14b loading for First Nations' students in public schools.</p>		
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Invest in early life determinants including education from culturally-relevant perspectives including languages as central to identify and wellbeing.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will provide \$4.5 million for the establishment of the Carrolup Research, Education and Engagement Centre at Curtin University dedicated to truth telling and supporting survivors of the Stolen Generations.</p> <p>In recognition of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, Labor will allocate \$4 m to community organisations to support recording, maintenance, and development of materials in First Nations' languages.</p> <p>Labor will provide \$9 million for the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students transition from high school to university.</p> <p>Labor will provide \$19.5 million on top of existing investments to create almost 8,000 new places in the Stars Foundation's programs to tackle educational disadvantage of First Nations' girls and young women.</p> <p>Labor will develop a new closing the gap target aimed at increasing First Nations' people's participation in higher and further education.</p>	<p>Women and girls' inclusion in STEM welcome but likely to reinforce mainstream assimilative directions rather than privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' sciences including those that have occurred for environmental protection since time immemorial, representing a net loss to Australia as a whole.</p>	

<p>Labor will help double the number of First Nations’ students at the University of Technology Sydney by investing \$20 million towards a new landmark Indigenous Residential College.</p> <p>Labor will invest \$2 million over four years to boost the number of Indigenous PhD and postdoctoral students in health, in partnership with the Poche Centre.</p> <p>Labor will restore the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative, providing \$8 m over four years to increase the number, retention and professional and leadership capacity of Indigenous teachers.</p> <p>Labor will provide \$14 m for establishment of a world class teaching hub at Charles Darwin University’s Palmerston campus to lead research and deliver teaching designed to lift student achievement in outback areas and Indigenous communities.</p>		
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NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Allocate funds for family support programs, particularly for families with children in foster care, to achieve reunification and healing.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will convene a national summit on First Nations Children in our first 100 days. The summit will bring governments, experts and First Nations community leaders together to determine the different factors that lead to child removal and to work with communities on solutions to reduce the rates of out-of-home care.</p>	<p>Allocations are variably reported and are not likely to achieve healing required across generations, or to prevent violence of non-Indigenous men toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.</p>	<p>The Greens will fund a system that focuses on keeping children out of the care system in the first place and focuses on early intervention and support for children and their families, including trauma and healing services.</p>

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Support the Uluru Statement and further decisions about Constitutional Recognition.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>In its first week, Labor will convene a meeting of First Nations’ Leaders to outline a national policy approach that reflects shared</p>		<p>First Nations Peoples must be the key decision makers in policies and programs that affect their communities. We must start by</p>

<p>priorities and the actions needed to create tangible and lasting outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Labor will establish a Voice for First Nations people and seek the support of the Australian people for that Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution, agreeing on a process including a clear pathway to a referendum.</p> <p>Labor will provide \$1 million to the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples to assist them to participate in the consultations on the establishment of a Voice for First Nations People.</p> <p>Labor will establish transitional Regional Assemblies to ensure local and regional input and engagement on place-based solutions for important policy issues.</p> <p>Labor commits to establishing and implementing a Makarrata Commission, through a process of co-design with First Nations' peoples and organisations, to facilitate a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations' peoples and truth-telling about our history.</p> <p>Labor will partner with Reconciliation Australia and the Healing Foundation to provide \$9 million to support community truth-telling initiatives, through the development of resources and tools for community engagement and healing, including a community grants and research program.</p> <p>Labor will support the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to develop the concept of a National Resting Place in the Parliamentary triangle for First Nation's human remains which cannot, for cultural and</p>		<p>addressing Australia's unfinished business through implementing a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and establishing a path to treaties. The Australian Greens support the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.</p>
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<p>historic reasons, be immediately returned to their ancestral lands.</p> <p>Labor will deliver justice and compensation for the remaining survivors of the Stolen Generations, by establishing a compensation scheme for members of the Stolen Generations in Commonwealth jurisdictions – the Northern Territory and Jervis Bay-- which will provide ex-gratia payments of \$75,000 and a Funeral Assistance Fund to provide one-off payments of \$7,000.</p>		
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Improve food security and access to fairly-priced fresh foods in rural and remote Australia.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Ensure timely access to culturally-relevant aged care, noting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people die between 11-17 years younger than other Australians.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
		<p>People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and First Nations peoples need culturally appropriate aged care services. The Greens want aged care facilities to deliver culturally appropriate services tailored to the diverse needs of their residents, for example by hiring bilingual staff.</p>

OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS		
Commitment	Party	Comments
<p>A series of commitments to promote First Nations Art and Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.7 m will be provided to establish a new grants program for Indigenous musicians to help artists get started or move along their career path. the First Nations arts and cultural sector will be 	ALP	Strongly endorsed.

supported in work towards an agreement on a National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority.

- the rights of Indigenous Australians to protect their cultural and intellectual property will be supported
- the ABC will receive \$2 m to help switch shortwave radio back on across the Northern Territory.
- Labor will progress First Nations Media nine Calls for Action in partnership with the sector.
- \$3 million will be provided to assist existing state based First Nations theatre companies and dance groups to grow, and if possible, apply to become major performing arts organisations. This funding would be made available with the expectation that state governments would also contribute.
- Funding will be made available to establish Australia's first National Indigenous Theatre Company, including funds to increase First Nations' audiences, perform stories on country and to build capacity in the sector. The initial investment will be \$8 m over four years to establish the Theatre and ongoing funding of \$5 m per year.
- \$5 m to build the NAISDA Dance College, a new centre for National Indigenous creative learning called Naya Wa Yugali ('We Dance' in Darkinjung Language).

Authorised by Kate Gunn, Sydney.