

# LABOR'S PLAN FOR **BUILDING RESILIENCE IN FUTURE GENERATIONS & INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH**



Territory  
**Labor**



POLICY POSITION PAPER

# OUR PLAN: MENTAL HEALTH

All Territorians, no matter their age or where they live, should be able to access quality mental health and wellbeing services to enable them to live full and rewarding lives.

Earlier this year the Territory Labor Government secured a \$50 Million investment from the Australian Government for Mental Health in the Northern Territory through the National Health Reform Agreement, which will see:

- A new inpatient facility in Darwin and new infrastructure and ongoing operational expenses over five years for a community adult mental health facility.

In a new term of Government, Territory Labor will:

- Improve access to whole of life community mental health services through a \$50 million investment via the National Health Reform Agreement into an adult mental health facility.
- Trial a co-responder model in Darwin for Triple-0 mental health-related call-outs to better assess patient needs prior to Emergency Department presentation.
- Focus on partnerships with other providers of mental health services to provide integrated care delivery and pathways. This would include the Darwin Private Hospital Mental Health Unit and the Veteran Wellbeing Centre when operational.
- Fund NGO providers of community mental health services during the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) transition.
- Expand the Housing Accommodation Support Initiative to Alice Springs.
- Implement the Recommendations of the independent Review of Forensic Mental Health and Disability.
- Explore the potential for:
  - A Stabilisation, Assessment and Referral Area (Short Stay Inpatient Unit) at Royal Darwin Hospital.
  - A Safe Haven Hybrid Model - providing a safe and non-clinical environment for those needing support with the potential to be staffed by peer support workers.
  - Additional housing in the community for step-up/step down care (Adult and Youth).
- Continue to focus on reducing the rates of suicide and the devastating impacts it has on families in the Northern Territory.

# OUR PLAN: RESILIENCE IN SCHOOL CHILDREN

Labor will ensure children and families receive high quality support when and where they need it and communities are healthy, safe and sustainable.

Territory Labor will:

- Integrate health promoting school nurses into urban middle schools via the holistic and prevention focused model.
- Remain committed to School Counsellors in our schools and will review the School Counselling Action Plan 2019-2023 in conjunction with the draft Mental Health Productivity Commission Report Recommendations.
- Develop an NT Student Wellbeing Policy to complement the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.
- Expand the NT Social and Emotion Learning resources for teachers and develop community-led initiatives that focus on mental health literacy and response in children and increase after-hours services.
- Further develop new evidence-based cyber bullying and digital resilience programs.
- Continue the Youth Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) small grants program and expand the Youth AOD rehabilitation program.





## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Released the Northern Territory Suicide Prevention Strategic Framework 2018-2023 - a comprehensive approach to the design, ongoing implementation and evaluation of suicide prevention efforts.
- Launched the Northern Territory Suicide Prevention Community Grants. Grants of up to \$10,000 are provided to support locally-led projects or activities that address an identified suicide prevention need.
- Invested \$3 million over four years to trial the Housing Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI). HASI provides a formal link to public housing, psychosocial support services and clinical mental health services to provide tenancy support and stability for Territorians with mental illness.
- \$150,000 investment in the establishment of Headspace Katherine, which opened in September 2019.
- Developed the Mental Health Strategic Plan 2019-2025 to ensure mental health services meet the needs of Territorians.
- Completed the independent Review of Forensic Mental Health and Disability.
- Launched the NT Child and Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2018-2028 “The Best Opportunities in Life”. One of the priority action areas is: Children and youth 6 to 18 years old are supported and equipped to be informed, self-aware, resilient and healthy.

## THE ALTERNATIVE

When it comes to front line services, all Terry Mills and the CLP know how to do is cut. Their slash and burn approach will cripple our economy and cause immense pain to Territorians.

Labor is restoring the cuts inflicted on Territorians by the previous CLP Government.



# LABOR'S PLAN FOR **REMOTE EDUCATION**



Territory  
**Labor**



POLICY POSITION PAPER

For a trained and qualified Aboriginal workforce in key areas of education, health and policing.

For high achieving and high potential Aboriginal students supported to become the next generation of leaders in remote communities

For Aboriginal leaders in remote communities to be making decisions on Government service delivery that impact their children, family, school and community.

## OUR POLICY

The Government has clear pathways for students in remote communities to become qualified teachers, health professionals and police officers and build intergenerational leadership for lasting social change and employment outcomes.

We are putting important resources back into our schools, after school resources were slashed under the former CLP Government.



## OUR PLANS

- Re-establish Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) with first programs to be rolled out in Yirrkala and 2020 and Yuendumu in 2021.
- Deliver school based apprenticeships in remote communities in the fields of education, health and policing
- Create a High Achieving High Potential student support program that will engage Aboriginal secondary students, their parents, schools and the business community in a partnership designed to support high achieving students and students with high potential to realise their ambitions. The program will initially focus on key employment areas: Teaching; Engineering; Defence; Space and Cyber Security; Financial Services and Health Services, Law and Law Enforcement, the Arts.
- Continue governance and capacity building training in remote schools delivered by Northern Territory Council Of Government School Organisations (COGSO) and possibly and/or an Aboriginal organisation such as Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT).
- Establish a Young First Circles program, made up of young representatives from remote and urban settings.
- Under Local Decision Making principles, Community Led Schools to continue their development at Yambirrpa Schools - Yirrkala and Yirrkala Homelands - and Warlpiri Triangle schools - Yuendumu; Willowra; Lajamanu; and Nyirrrpi.
- Local Engagement and Decision-making (LEaD) committees will continue to be established in remote schools over the next four years.



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

RATE and Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Education Program (AITAP) were highly successful and respected programs run in the NT in the 1990s. As Australian Government funded programs, and due to various policy changes, these programs ceased to exist.

The re-establishment of RATE is regularly raised as a priority by remote schools, particularly those schools who have RATE trained teachers still working or living in the community. Many of these teachers are approaching retirement and wish to see the re-establishment of this program for the sake of their children and grandchildren.

Our long term investment in Families as First Teachers (FaFT) has seen the highest level of Year 12 completions for Aboriginal students. There is a gap in identifying and encouraging high performing Aboriginal students, particularly in remote areas.

It is proposed that Federal Government funding through the NT Remote Aboriginal Investment (NTRAI) program be used to support the establishment of two new coordinator positions, North and South, to centrally coordinate support for these high achieving Aboriginal Students.

We have commenced implementation Local Decision Making in 2018 with Community Led Schools and Local Engagement and Decision Making (LEaD) committees based on the previously successful Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness (ASSPA) program.

# THE ALTERNATIVE

The Territory Labor Government knows the importance of education, especially in remote areas.

The former CLP Government cut \$130 million out of schools and sacked 500 teachers and education support staff.

Labor is restoring resources to our schools and putting teachers back into classrooms.

Terry Mills and the CLP have no plans for education other than more cuts and more sackings.





# LABOR'S PLAN FOR **EARLY CHILDHOOD**



Territory  
**Labor**



POLICY POSITION PAPER



We want our families happy, healthy and safe.

We want Territory kids to have the same opportunities as every other kid in Australia.

## OUR POLICY

Territory Labor aims for every child to start Day 1, Term 1, Year 1, on an equal playing field.

For every Territory child to have access to opportunities to be the best they can be.



# OUR PLANS

The Government has a clear plan, backed by evidence - and with funding and resources - to invest in the development of children 0-5 and create long lasting positive social and economic change.

- Establish child and family centres in Tennant Creek, Katherine, Wadeye, Northern Suburbs and East Arnhem land before August 2020 and six more over the next four years - funded through Starting Early for a Better Future.
- All child and family centres will go through a process of Local Decision Making (LDM) (\$260,000 per community) to support community led programs in each community. Those existing child and family centres that are currently run by the Department of Education will undertake an LDM engagement process to ensure that communities have a say over services and programs available.
- Establish Families as First Teachers (FaFT) stay, play and learn in the following locations: in Robinson River; Barunga; Urapunga; Yuelamu; Laramba; Areyonga; and Milikapiti.
- Deliver adult literacy programs as part of child and family centres.
- We will continue to deliver free dental for children.
- We will continue to deliver a subsidy for childcare costs.
- We will continue to subsidise 15 hours of pre-school for families (not all jurisdictions do this).

## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Developed the Territory's first whole of government early childhood plan "Starting Early for a Better Future". Investment of \$35 million over 10 years.
- Delivered the first FaFT programs in 2009 in 21 communities.
- Established FaFT Stay Play and Learn at Braitling; Malak; Belyuen; Epenarra; Kintore; Harts Range; Robinson River; and Peppimenarti.
- Established nurse home visiting in East Arnhem, Katherine and Barkly - supporting 200 vulnerable families from pre-birth to three years.
- Supporting more families through early intervention services provided by NGOs. This is provided through a hotline delivered by Territory Families.
- Established LDM led initiatives for child and families centres.
- There are now six child and family centres in Gunbalanya; Larapinta; Maningrida; Ngukurr; Palmerston; and Yuendumu.
- Introduced a new practice framework for child protection that supports families staying together.
- Partnered with Aboriginal organisations to support more aboriginal carers.
- Four year partnership agreement with the Menzies School of Health Research and 20 communities to support the early identification of hearing issues in children and evaluate community based interventions.



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Hearing Health partnerships have been integrated into Katherine; Tennant; Alice; and Palmerston FaFT sites – with local community hearing workers recruited.
- Literacy for parents programs being run out of Child and Family Centres (CFC) sites.
- Healthy under 5's – a standardised development screening program – has been fast tracked and is being delivered across all urban primary health centres and Aboriginal community controlled health centres.
- The 'Yellow Book' – the NT Child Health Record – has been updated and will be integrated into the national unique patient identifier record.
- Recognised Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) as an ongoing disability and delivered the first FASD plan.

## THE ALTERNATIVE

Terry Mills and the CLP abandoned child protection reforms from the 2010 Board of Inquiry that were yielding good results

They slashed funding to all NGOs and reduced funding that supported families in need.

They are not interested in long term investment – they cut \$135 million and 500 teachers and support staff out of education when they were in government.

All they will do if given the chance is make savage cuts to frontline services. They've done it before and they'll do it again.

# LABOR'S PLAN FOR **BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES: FAMILIES AS FIRST TEACHERS**



# OUR PLAN

Territory Labor aims for every child to start Day 1, Term 1, Year 1, on an equal playing field.

For every Territorian child to have access to opportunities to be the best they can be.





## OUR PLAN

Invest in the development of children 0-5 years and create long-lasting positive social and economic change.

The Territory Labor Government has doubled its Families as First Teachers (FaFT) sites in the past four years, with 53 communities now benefiting from the key early childhood program.

The vast majority of FaFT sites are located in remote communities and help support parents and family members to become their child's first and most important teachers. In addition to supporting families to build their child's early literacy and numeracy through adult-child interaction, the program helps establish good attendance habits from early on, which enables children to be better prepared for day one of school.

So far the Territory Labor Government has spent \$5.6 million to expand FaFT to 53 sites around the Territory. 48 are in remote communities and five are in urban settings.

If re-elected, Territory Labor will expand to a further four remote communities, taking the total number to 57.

More than half of all FaFT employees are Aboriginal, which has provided local job opportunities in communities and pathways for Aboriginal Territorians to pursue a career in early childhood services and education.

FaFT funding is part of a \$35.6 million Territory Government investment in early childhood development, following the release of its 10 year Starting Early for A Better Future Early Childhood Development Plan in 2017.

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# LABOR'S PLAN FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



Territory  
**Labor**





For every child to attend school every day.

To maximise opportunities for lifelong learning for all children in Northern Territory.

## OUR POLICY

Territory Labor has a clear plan to establish positive patterns of school attendance from an early age. This will be achieved through wraparound support and early intervention in a child's first years of education. Families and communities will be involved in lifting attendance rates through Local Decision Making mechanisms.



# OUR PLANS

## **Expand Three Year Old Preschool**

The provision of three-year-old-preschool will be expanded so that all children across the NT have access to two years of Preschool. Current NT preschool enrolment policy enables Aboriginal children in very remote locations to access preschool at age 3, provided they attend with a parent/carers until they are 3.5 years.

## **Provide wrap around support for Year 1 - Early intervention in the early years**

The current commitment to the early years will be strengthened during the important time of transition to school to cater to the well-being and additional needs. An immediate response for each Year 1 student who presents with challenging behaviours will ensure students remain engaged during the early years.

## **Create a new and improved attendance and strategy to supersede Every Day Counts 2016 - 2018**

Make School A Part of Your Story Strategy will focus on education engagement. A core element of the Strategy is a communications campaign to promote student engagement by highlighting the value and opportunities of schooling.

## **Trial Youth Engagement - FlexiSpace**

FlexiSpace is an in-school learning environment to help engage and retain students to fulfil their potential in a mainstream educational setting. Schools delivering a FlexiSpace will provide the highest quality teaching and learning in a bespoke learning space to achieve the engagement and achievement of students who may be experiencing early signs of disengagement.

# OUR PLANS

## **Revitalise Flexible Secondary Provision in the NT - Virtual College**

This initiative will deliver expanded educational access and outcomes for secondary students across the NT by providing a high quality flexible online learning experience. A trial of a virtual college will be established to deliver secondary programming to students in remote and very remote areas across the NT.

## **Aboriginal Tertiary Aspirations Program**

This project will engage Aboriginal secondary students, their parents, schools and the business community in a partnership designed to support students who aspire to further education. The program will initially focus on five key employment areas: Teaching; Engineering; Defence; Space and Cyber Security; Financial Services and Health Services

## **Expand Local Decision Making**

To ensure parent representative bodies exist in all Government schools in the form of Schools Councils, School Boards or LEaD Committees.



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We know children do better when they attend school every day, both in academic achievement and life outcomes.

Attendance in remote communities remains a challenge as it has done since self-government.

Families need to be supported so that circumstances outside the school gate do not impact school attendance.

Labor governments since 2001 have taken attendance issues very seriously and consequently tried many different approaches including punitive measure, which ultimately did not achieve the desired outcomes.

Aboriginal families need to be engaged to understand the underlying reason for non-attendance and should be making the decisions that impact on their children's schools.

New opportunities are presented with Labor's Local Decision Making commitment and community controlled schooled.

Until we have full and frank dialogue with Aboriginal stakeholders, we are unlikely to gain traction in addressing this serious and ongoing issue.

In this term of Government Territory Labor have delivered:

- Developed the Every Day Counts School Engagement and Attendance Strategy to consider the factors “outside the school gate” that impact on school attendance and work with families these overcome these barriers.
- Continued to focus strategic leadership, oversight and coordination of youth education and engagement activities, including flexible options, through the Youth Engagement Board.
- Provided additional funding for early intervention and support for students with challenging behaviours, including expansion of flexible learning sites and services to Palmerston, Katherine and Tennant Creek.



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Established the Back on Track program to support training opportunities for young people in detention or those who at risk of disengaging from the education system.
- Expanded the Indigenous Education Strategy to support improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.
- Employed 24 student Engagement Officers, to work with schools students and families to remove barriers to attendance, and 9 Compliance Officers, to enforce the compulsory attendance provisions of the Education Act.
- Co-located Engagement Officers with the Department of the Chief Minister in Katherine and Alice Springs and embedded Engagement Officer in Strike Force Orion to focus cross-government efforts to support young people who are disengaged from school.
- Expanded regular patrols of major shopping centres and hotspots, and continued the No school, No service programs to support business owners.
- Expanded Clontarf, Stars and Role Models and Leaders, supporting Indigenous students to maximise their engagement in schooling.
- Assisted students to prepare for boarding schools, and provided boarding students and their families with ongoing case management through the Transition Support Unit.
- Doubled the number of Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program sites to build early engagement with schooling.
- Engaged preschool children from town camps with an Engagement Officer working with Connected Beginnings to prepare for regular school attendance.
- Partnered with the Commonwealth Government through the Remote School Attendance Strategy and the Joint Taskforce to work to improve attendance in remote schools.

# THE ALTERNATIVE

Terry Mills and the CLP's cuts resulted in a huge loss of teachers and funding. It was felt most in remote schools.

Public schools in very remote areas lost 12.5% of per student funding during the CLP's term of government.

\$135 million and 500 teachers and education staff were cut from education during the Mills and CLP term of Government.

Territory Labor is restoring funding and putting teachers back into classrooms.

