



Labor's Commitment To

**First Nations
Peoples**





A message from Anthony.

An Albanese Labor Government will prioritise First Nations policy. We will fight to elevate First Nations voices, to remove barriers to full participation in our national life, and to close the gap in social outcomes that is holding people back.

Labor will do this in full partnership with First Nations people: the people who hold the solutions and who should lead the way on the legislation and policies that affect them.

Labor is committed to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. With grace and patience, the statement's authors mapped out a path forward for us as a nation. It's an opportunity that Australians should seize.

An Albanese Labor Government is determined to walk with First Nations people on this path. If elected, we will move quickly on a referendum to enshrine a Voice to Parliament in our Constitution. And we will establish a Makarrata Commission to progress Treaty and Truth-Telling.

Labor will work every day to close the profound gap that still exists between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians across a range of life outcomes. We will start with investments that include improving housing in remote communities and homelands, training 500 new First Nations health workers, working to eradicate rheumatic heart disease and teaching First Nations languages in schools.

We need to ensure justice is delivered in every corner of our nation. Labor's landmark funding for justice reinvestment will help turn the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody. We will abolish the punitive Community Development Program and replace it with a program with real jobs, proper wages and decent conditions. And we will abolish the discriminatory Cashless Debit Card.

We benefit from the strength of our First Nations representatives: Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney MP, and Senators Patrick Dodson, Malarndirri McCarthy and Jana Stewart. And we hope to see more First Nations caucus members join us following this election.

This is Labor's commitment to First Nations people – the beginning of a new chapter that will make our nation proud.



Labor's First Nations Representatives and candidates.



Linda Burney - Barton

Linda Burney is Labor's Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians and Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services. A proud member of the Wiradjuri nation, Linda was the first Aboriginal person to be elected to the NSW Parliament and the first Aboriginal woman to serve in the Australian House of Representatives. Linda's commitment to Indigenous issues spans more than 30 years.



Patrick Dodson - WA Senate

Senator Patrick Dodson is a Yawuru man from Broome and Labor's Shadow Assistant Minister for Reconciliation and Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians. He received the Sydney International Peace Prize for his work as a Commissioner in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and inaugural Chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.



Malarndirri McCarthy - NT Senate

Senator Malarndirri McCarthy is a Yanyuwa Garrwa woman from the Gulf country in the Northern Territory and the Chair of Labor's First Nations Caucus Committee. She was elected as a Senator for the Northern Territory in 2016. She first entered the public sphere as a journalist and served for seven years in the NT Assembly as the Member for Arnhem.



Jana Stewart - VIC Senate

Jana Stewart is a proud Mutthi Mutthi and Wamba Wamba woman. She has worked across Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, universities, the public sector, and politics. Jana is a family therapist who has spent her working life amplifying community voices, standing up against injustice to ensure First Nations people and communities have the best opportunities succeed.



Marion Scrymgour - Lingiari

With cultural links to the Tiwi Islands and Central Australia, Marion Scrymgour was raised in Darwin with her 11 siblings and extended family. She was a Member of the NT Legislative Assembly for 11 years, the first Indigenous woman in NT Parliament, the first Minister and the first Indigenous leader of any Australian government when she served as Acting Chief Minister.



Donisha Duff - Bowman

Donisha Duff is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman from Thursday Island. She has familial links with Moa, Badu and Mabuiag Islands (Torres Strait) and is a Yadhaigana/Wuthathi Aboriginal traditional owner (Cape York). She has over 20 years of experience in health policy with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and preventative health.



Gordon Reid - Robertson

Dr Gordon Reid is a Wiradjuri man and Central Coast local who grew up in Umina Beach, and the son of local business owners. As a local emergency department doctor, Gordon has been serving on the front lines of the pandemic. In his work, he sees every day the impact of local GP shortages, the neglect of the health system, and the pressure on local hospitals.



Jeremiah Riley - Durack

Jeremiah Riley is a Yamatji man from the Nharnuwangga Wajarri Ngarlawangga Peoples north of Meekatharra. He is an active member of his Native Title Corporation and has worked in Indigenous affairs in different ways for over 20 years, including as a youth worker, Night Patrol Mediator, Native Title lawyer and CEO of a remote Indigenous community.



Tabatha Young - Bonner

Tabatha Young is a fierce advocate for equal opportunity and equal access to essential services in the Bonner community. As an Aboriginal woman, Tabatha has spent her full career ensuring a level playing field for all in the justice system and that community understand their rights, particularly for women and families facing domestic violence and the child protection system.



Shaneane Weldon - O'Connor

Shaneane Weldon is a Wangkatja/Ngaanyatjarra woman raised in the North Eastern Goldfields country of her mother, father and grandparents. She has a degree in Community Management and Development, as well as a Bachelor of Education. Shaneane is the Deputy President of the Shire of Laverton, where she has been a Shire Councillor for the past 16 years.



Jack Ayoub - Parkes

Jack Ayoub is a Gamilaraay man, born and raised in Coonabarabran. Jack has been a farm labourer and worked at the Coonabarabran High School. His family have a proud tradition of union membership. Jack knows the importance of community in rural areas and the courage and strength it takes to work on the land.

Fulfilling the promise of Uluru.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was the ultimate act of generosity – the offer of a genuine partnership, and a real chance for us to create a reconciled Australia. It calls for three things – Voice, Treaty and Truth.

Labor is the only political party committed to implementing the Uluru Statement in full.

Constitutionally enshrined voice to Parliament.

An Albanese Labor Government will move quickly on a referendum to constitutionally enshrine a Voice to Parliament in our first term.

If we want to change outcomes, First Nations voices must be heard.

Five years after the Uluru Statement was presented to the Australian people, there should be no more delay.

A Makarrata Commission for Treaty and truth-telling.

Labor will also establish a Makarrata Commission with responsibility for Treaty and truth telling.

If we want to understand the challenges of the present, we must understand their roots in past trauma.

The Makarrata Commission will support local models of truth-telling, in partnership with First Nations communities and other levels of government.

It will also develop a national framework for treaty-making as a first step, taking into account existing State and Territory treaty processes.

Without Treaty and truth, we will never be all that we can be as a nation. Labor will take the steps necessary to progress these important elements of the Uluru Statement so its full vision becomes a reality.





Closing the Gap.

Labor established the first Closing the Gap framework in 2008. We will maintain and strengthen the current National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

When the Liberals came to power, one of their first acts was to cut nearly \$1 billion from First Nations programs.

Under the Morrison Government only three of the 17 current Closing the Gap targets are on track – and some still don't go far enough.

We need to work in partnership on the investments required to deliver that change.

And we need a government that believes in self-determination as the path forward.

An Albanese Labor Government will work with the Coalition of Peaks and all levels of government to raise ambitions and ensure sustained progress on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Labor will increase the overall investment in Closing the Gap, starting with our commitments to improve housing and strengthen the First Nations health sector.

Improving Housing in Remote Communities and Homelands

Thousands of First Nations people live in overcrowded and run-down housing – with major impacts on health, economic and social outcomes.

Despite chronic overcrowding, the Liberals have stopped supporting remote housing in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland – and the funding agreement for the Northern Territory ends in mid-2023.

In the Northern Territory, the Liberals have systematically withdrawn housing support for homelands, which are culturally important places and home to around 10,000 Aboriginal Territorians.

Labor will deliver an immediate boost of \$100 million for housing and essential services on Northern Territory homelands.

We will re-negotiate a new remote housing agreement for the Northern Territory, which properly supports homelands, when the current one expires in mid-2023.

And Labor will invest \$200 million from our Housing Australia Future Fund for improvements and upgrades to remote housing across Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

By investing in homelands and remote housing, Labor will support self-determination and invest in better health, social and environmental outcomes.

Training 500 First Nations Health Workers

First Nations health workers have been on the frontline saving people's lives during COVID, but health services are straining under the pressure of the pandemic.

Labor will train up to 500 First Nations health workers to create jobs, expand local services and save lives. Our new traineeship program will fund participants to undertake Certificate III or IV accredited training as Aboriginal health workers or practitioners, while receiving on the job experience and mentoring in their local Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health service.

Our traineeship program is a tangible measure to increase the First Nations health workforce and provide genuine employment opportunities for First Nations people that want to live and work on country.

Better Renal Services in the City and the Bush

First Nations people living in cities and in the bush should have access to better renal care. First Nations Australians are four times more likely to have chronic kidney disease, but many communities don't have the infrastructure or clean water supply they need to support lifesaving dialysis treatment.

Labor will commit \$45 million in better renal services to address the high rates of chronic kidney disease in First Nations communities. This includes \$30 million for up to 30 four-chair dialysis units in urban and remote locations across the country, as well as \$15 million for small-scale water infrastructure projects that improve access to clean water, which is critical for dialysis treatment.

Helping Health and to Eradicate Rheumatic Heart Disease

Labor will commit \$12 million to double the current funding to combat rheumatic heart disease (RHD) in high-risk communities over the next three years. Labor's commitment would enable prevention and treatment programs to be extended to further at-risk communities. Labor will also invest \$1.5 million to fund portable echo-cardio machines and training to improve RHD screening across the country.

RHD is a disease of poverty which has been eradicated in most developed nations around the world. It can lead to heart failure and death. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be disproportionately affected, with undiagnosed RHD affecting many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

It is simply unacceptable that First Nations people continue to suffer disproportionately from this disease. Labor's goal is to eradicate rheumatic heart disease in Australia and this commitment is a step in that direction.

Improving First Nations Health Infrastructure

Aboriginal health services work tirelessly to keep their communities safe but many are managing with limited equipment and are operating out of too-small or rundown premises.


Labor will invest in long overdue capital upgrades in Aboriginal community-controlled health services across the country. Our investments include:

- \$13 million to replace the dilapidated Yadu Health Aboriginal Corporation in Ceduna, that has been neglected for years by the Liberals, leaving parts unsafe for human use.
- \$9 million to re-build the outdated Central Australian Aboriginal Congress clinics at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) and Mutitjulu and improve basic services.
- \$22 million for a dedicated Birthing on Country Centre of Excellence at Waminda in Nowra, to support cultural safety during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.
- \$18 million to support the construction of the Southwest Aboriginal Health hub in Bunbury, providing holistic and culturally appropriate care in South-West WA.
- \$2 million to upgrade a Child and Family Centre at Kambu Health in Ipswich, providing holistic care and health checks to children as they prepare to start school.
- \$11.6 million for Danila Dilba's Palmerston clinic, to bring services under one roof and more effectively deliver medical and wellbeing services.

First Nations Language Teachers

Labor will partner with sixty primary schools around the country to teach local First Nations languages and cultural knowledge in schools.

First Nations communities will be placed at the centre of the program, deciding whether they want to share their language and culture with local schools. Where communities decide to



participate in the program, they'll be able to work with schools and regional coordinators to appoint First Nations Educators who will receive training in Education Support to complement existing skills and cultural knowledge, and then be placed in a local primary school.

Teaching First Nations languages will help engage kids in school, build pride in First Nations cultures and bring Australians together to build our shared future.

Justice for First Nations people.

Landmark Justice Reinvestment Funding

More than 30 years after the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, rates of First Nations incarceration and deaths in custody are still unacceptably high.

An Albanese Labor Government will commit \$79 million - matched by the states - to expand justice reinvestment initiatives across the country, helping to turn the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody.

Labor's landmark funding commitment for justice reinvestment will enable up to 30 communities to establish locally tailored initiatives that address the underlying causes of incarceration and deaths in custody.

Existing community-led justice reinvestment models, such as those in Bourke and Halls Creek, have proven successful in reducing incarceration and re-offending by providing targeted supports and services in their communities.

To support these efforts, Labor will also establish an independent national justice reinvestment unit, as recommended by the Australian Law Reform Commission. The unit will assist communities to develop and evaluate justice reinvestment initiatives, ensuring valuable lessons can be learned and shared across the country.

Improving Representation in the Legal System

Labor will provide \$13.5 million in additional, specific, standalone funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services to ensure First Nations families who have lost a loved one in custody can access culturally appropriate, timely and fair legal assistance before, during and after all coronial processes.

It is critical that the voices of families and First Nations communities are heard in order to prevent deaths in custody and secure lasting change.

Labor will also invest \$1 million to build capacity and support the leadership of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS), the representative peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. This funding will support NATSILS important contribution to law reform and policy development to address inequalities in the legal system.

National Action on Deaths in Custody

Labor will establish consolidated real-time reporting of all deaths in custody at a national level - including First Nations people.

In government, Labor will convene a national summit bringing together First Nations and state and territory representatives to ensure coordinated action on First Nations deaths in custody.





Rights and safety for First Nations women.

First Nations women are vital to the strength and wellbeing of families and communities. Yet First Nations women face multiple and layered forms of discrimination, experiencing unacceptably high rates of violence, child removal and incarceration, as well as poorer outcomes across health, housing, education and employment.

First Nations women have consistently called for greater self-determination in addressing these disparities. And have sought recognition of the extensive – and often undervalued – work they are already doing to advance their rights and those of their communities.

First Nations Women's Summit

An Albanese Government will conduct a National First Nations Women's Summit, chaired by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, as the first step in responding to the landmark Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) report.

First Nations Women's Safety

Labor is committed to working with First Nations women to address the unacceptable rates of family and domestic violence they experience. This includes funding 500 new frontline workers to support women in crisis, with a specific focus on plugging the gaps for First Nations women in rural and regional communities.

Labor will also deliver a separate national plan for First Nations people to end violence against women and family violence. This recognises that the issues affecting First Nations women are multilayered and unique.

Funding the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum

Labor will invest \$3 million in supporting the work of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (the Forum). The Forum works in collaboration with Family Violence Prevention Legal Services across the country to increase access to justice for First Nations people experiencing or at risk of family violence, especially women and children.

The Morrison Government cut direct funding to the Forum in 2020. Labor's commitment would reverse this decision, supporting the Forum's role in ensuring that the voices of First Nations women and children are heard.



Strengthening First Nations jobs and economic opportunities.

Replace the Punitive Community Development Program

Labor will abolish the Liberal Government's punitive Community Development Program. The program has been a failure and has caused real hurt in communities across Australia.

We will work in partnership with First Nations communities to develop a new program that increases economic opportunities and jobs in remote areas. The new program will pay real wages, ensure people have access to super, leave and other conditions and give more control to communities to determine local projects that support economic development. It will be much more like the old CDEP.

Abolishing Mandatory Income Management

Labor will scrap the Liberal Government's discriminatory Cashless Debit Card and make the Basics Card voluntary for those individuals or communities who wish to keep a form of income management.

Labor fundamentally supports First Nations people and communities to make their own decisions. We will work community-by-community on what comes next, with a focus on jobs, opportunity and better services.

Five Per cent Employment Target in the Public Sector

Labor will set a target of five percent First Nations employees in the Commonwealth public sector by 2030.

Some government agencies have already achieved a five percent First Nations employment rate, but there is more to do - overall the employment

rate is around 3.4% and there is significant underrepresentation of First Nations people at senior levels of the public service.

Labor will seek to increase the rate and seniority of First Nations people in the public service, leading by example while also working with the private sector to lift workforce share proportionate to population.

Mandatory First Nations Employment Reporting by the Top 200 Companies

Labor will work with Australia's largest 200 employers on public reporting of the proportion of First Nations employees, in line with reporting requirement for gender balance on boards.

Labor will also work with the 200 largest businesses to bring employment levels of First Nations working age Australians to levels consistent with share of population by 2030, including through improving access to training and apprenticeships.

Protecting First Nations Intellectual Property

The unconscionable market in fake art robs many First Nations artists of income.

Labor will get on with a Productivity Commission inquiry into the market for First Nations arts and crafts, including the prevalence of fraud and inauthentic art.

Drawing from the findings of this inquiry, Labor will work with First Nations to establish stand-alone legislation to protect First Nations peoples' traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, as well as reviewing the operation of the Indigenous Art Code.





International engagement.

Advocating for First Nations Rights in International Trade

Labor will support inclusive growth for First Nations-owned businesses in both domestic and international trade and will reaffirm the importance of Indigenous rights in future international trade agreements. This includes protecting traditional knowledge and the integrity of First Nations arts and cultural products.

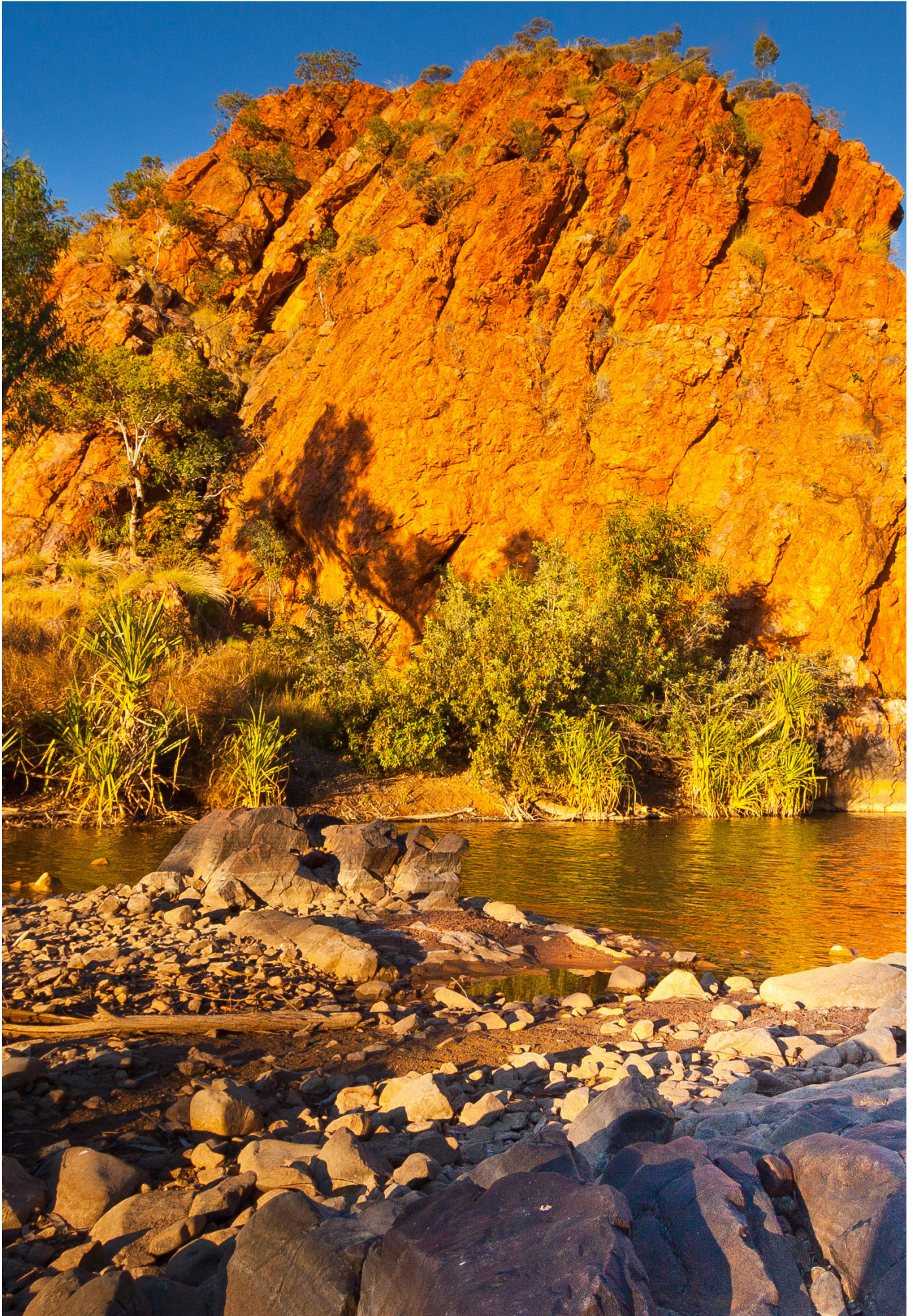
For too long First Nations rights and interests have been neglected in international negotiations. Labor wants to reverse this trend and support a new model of trade which actively includes and advances First Nations people.

A First Nations Ambassador

An Albanese Labor Government will establish an Ambassador for First Nations peoples to embed First Nations perspectives and experience in Australian diplomacy.

The Ambassador for First Nations peoples would be supported to engage with likeminded countries to share our commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and experience of treaty and truth-telling processes, as well as the implementation of our commitments under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Ambassador would forge deeper connections for First Nations communities and businesses across the Indo-Pacific region, as well as working with First Nations Australians to identify and repatriate human remains and sacred objects located around the world.



Protecting land and heritage.

Doubling Indigenous Rangers

Labor will double the number of Indigenous Rangers to 3,800 by the end of the decade.

Indigenous Rangers play a vital role in the restoration and preservation of land and water, helping to protect both biodiversity and cultural values. The program also provides jobs in regional and remote communities, maintains connection to country and grows local economies.

Labor will work towards a target of gender equality in ranger positions.

Boosting Support for Indigenous Protected Areas

Labor will provide \$10 million each year to boost funding for the management of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs).

IPAs are areas of land and sea managed by First Nations groups as protected areas. IPAs make up a substantial part of our National Reserve System and are important for maintaining cultural sites, biodiversity conservation and restoration.

Labor's investment will boost funding by around 50 per cent, meaning Traditional Owners, Indigenous Rangers and First Nations groups will have more autonomy in their traditional land and sea management practices.

Labor will also provide increased certainty for Ranger groups and IPAs by committing to six year contracts and requiring that contract extension negotiations begin no later than 18 months before the end of the contract.

Funding First Nations Reef Preservation Work

Indigenous rangers will play a lead role in the preservation of the Great Barrier Reef – with Labor ensuring an allocation of at least \$100 million of protection and restoration work to Indigenous organisations for this work by the end of the decade.

Delivering on Cultural Water

Labor will deliver the \$40 million of cultural water promised in 2018 but not yet delivered by the Morrison Government.

There are around 75,000 First Nations people living in Australia's Murray Darling Basin. Despite this, First Nations groups only hold 0.1 per cent of the total value of the water market.

Labor will work to increase First Nations ownership of water entitlements in the Murray Darling Basin by providing a full response to the Productivity Commission's recommendations in its National Water Reform report.

Labor will make sure First Nations authority, knowledge and experience better informs the work of relevant agencies and is incorporated into planning for environmental water.

Protecting First Nations Heritage

Labor shares the national devastation at the destruction of the 46,000-year-old Juukan rock-shelters in May 2020. We engaged closely with First Nations representatives in response to the tragedy and have pursued answers and action in the Parliament, including helping to establish the Juukan Inquiry.

Labor is committed to achieving the change that is required. It should have been delivered some time ago but has been badly neglected by the Morrison Government.

An Albanese Labor Government will work with the First Nations Heritage Alliance and other stakeholders to reform our national heritage protection framework and prevent such destruction occurring in the future. This includes through new stand-alone First Nations heritage protection legislation.

Many reviews have highlighted the need for change and Labor's work to strengthen heritage

protections will take into account the findings of the Juukan Inquiry's A Way Forward report, the Samuel Review of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, the Dhawura Ngilan best practice standards and the principles in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

These are Labor's commitments to First Nations People. There is much work to be done, and this is just the start. If we are elected, it will be our privilege to work in partnership with First Nations people across the country to advance reconciliation and improve outcomes.



A Better Future.

Labor

