

A Better Future.

Labor's Plan for

North and Far

North Queensland



Labor





Message from Anthony.

Australia's best days are ahead of us.

Over the past three years, Australians have shown enormous resilience and strength. Through bushfires and cyclones and pandemic, we've worked together and stepped up.

Australians have earned a better future.

But now we need a government with a plan to build that future. A government that actually delivers on its promises. A government that accepts responsibility and seizes opportunities.

I know that good government can change lives. I've seen it. I've lived it.

Growing up in council housing taught me the power of community and the value of a dollar.

Since then, I've spent my career building things that bring communities together and make our economy stronger – from roads and rail, to the NBN.

Now we have an opportunity to build a better future across our country. By implementing the lessons of the pandemic, we can drive economic growth and invest in domestic manufacturing. We can build more things here in Australia and stand on our own two feet.

North and Far North Queensland have had a really tough couple of years. Industries like tourism have been hit hard by the pandemic and families and businesses have felt the pressure. But regional Queenslanders are a resilient bunch, as I know from my many trips up north.

When it comes to backing the future of this region, I'm on North and Far North Queenslanders' side.

A government I lead will work with the Palaszczuk Labor Government to protect Queenslanders' health and jobs.

We will strengthen Medicare, making it easier to see a doctor. We'll make child care cheaper for working families.

And we'll invest in fee free TAFE and more university places so our kids can secure the jobs of the future.

Building a better future starts right here in North and Far North Queensland.



Building our jobs future here.

Our Plan stretches north from Mackay, up through Townsville and Cairns to Cape York and Torres Strait, and west to Mt Isa and the Gulf. North and Far North Queensland are home to some of the nation's most important industries.

Labor has identified opportunities for job creation in growing industries including:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Minerals value-adding
- Agricultural value-adding
- New energy production
- Defence industries
- The care economy

A future made in North and Far North Queensland

With a wealth of mineral resources and access to cheap and abundant energy resources, North and Far North Queensland is in a prime position to directly benefit from Labor's Plan to make more in Australia.

North and Far North Queensland also has significant deposits of "new economy minerals" – minerals such as cobalt and tungsten – that are used to make smart phones, wind turbines, electric cars, solar panels and batteries.

Working with the Palaszczuk Labor Government, we can strengthen agricultural supply chains through smart investment and new value-added processing. And we can scale up with new energy production such as sugar cane bagasse.

An Albanese Labor Government will use its purchasing power to incentivise the use of

Australian-made goods, products and materials in government contracts as we roll out our plans.

Our National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) can create secure jobs for North and Far North Queensland workers, drive regional economic development, boost our sovereign capability and diversify the nation's economy.


The NRF will begin rebuilding Australia's industrial and manufacturing base by providing up to \$15 billion of capital to invest in job-creating projects through loans, equity and guarantees. This will include:

- Allocating \$3 billion to help industry on the path to net zero by 2050, meaning cheaper energy for existing industries and more jobs in emerging ones like battery manufacturing and biofuels.
- A \$1 billion Value-Adding in Resources Fund to expand Australia's mining science technology capability, create jobs and ensure a greater share of our raw materials are processed in Australia.
- Reserving \$500 million of funding for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Food and Fibre. This will encourage investment in value-adding and growing Queensland exports, help diversify the sector and open up new possibilities for trade.

Anchor investments in North and Far North Queensland

Labor has already announced support for the following anchor investments in North and Far North Queensland:

- Federal Labor is providing \$150 million to back the Cairns Marine Precinct project – to position Cairns to grasp emerging regional opportunities and affirm its position as the leading maritime and defence maintenance and overhaul destination in Northern Australia. The investment would go towards a new common user facility, boosting local shipyards and installing additional paint and



blast facilities, hardstands and a ship lift. The Precinct and its supply chain already support 4,600 jobs. Labor's investment will secure the future of these workers and create secure local jobs for generations to come.

- Federal Labor will contribute \$22 million to the Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct in Townsville – this project, supported by local business, local government, and the Queensland Government, will become Northern Australia's first environmentally sustainable advanced manufacturing, technology and processing hub. When complete, this precinct will drive sustained economic growth, and support 6,000 direct and 9,000 indirect local jobs, by value-adding here.

Through investments like these, Labor will help create secure jobs including for tradespeople, engineers, managers, process operators, plant operators and technicians.

Better roads in North and Far North Queensland

Labor will make nation-building infrastructure investments to unlock the full potential of the vast area of North and Far North Queensland.

We will work with the Palaszczuk Labor Government and local governments across Queensland to invest in the local projects that deliver the biggest benefits.

Labor has always understood the link between effective freight and transport links, productivity, costs and jobs.

That's why Labor is committed to ongoing investment in North and Far North Queensland, including:

- \$210 million for safety and resilience upgrades on the Kuranda Range Road.
- Delivering the Cairns Ring Road and Cairns Southern Access projects.

- Intersection Upgrades at the 777 Block in Charters Towers.
- Labor will also invest \$40 million in much-needed work on Torres Strait marine infrastructure, including dredging, construction and repair works. Marine infrastructure like jetties, wharves and barges underpin life in the Torres Strait.
- Extending the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program through a \$250 million boost to upgrade roads around the nation.

A faster NBN

High speed internet isn't a luxury. In 2022, it's essential infrastructure.

Labor will invest to expand optical fibre NBN access to more businesses and families across North and Far North Queensland. Under our plan, up to 144,000 premises in North and Far North Queensland would receive access to full-fibre NBN, which includes an estimated 48,000 homes and businesses that would miss out under the Morrison Government's current plan.

Fibre offers speeds up to 14 times faster than copper, with fewer dropouts and greater reliability.

Labor will also commit \$200 million for local connectivity projects, including local wi-fi hot spots for remote communities, and upgrades to mobile tower capacity.

Labor will invest \$30 million to expand on-farm connectivity and enable better wireless extension solutions on the field. This will enable more North and Far North Queensland farmers to fully utilise sensor and connected-machinery technology to improve their efficiency.

We will nearly double monthly download data allowances on the NBN Sky Muster Satellite network, and unmeter satellite downloads from midnight to 4pm.

Our investment in the NBN will grow the economy and unlock more local jobs, including for construction workers, engineers and project managers.

Better mobile coverage

Communities in North and Far North Queensland need better mobile coverage for school, work and as a matter of safety.

A key element of Labor's Better Connectivity for Rural and Regional Australia Plan will be the establishment of a \$400 million fund to expand multi-carrier mobile coverage along roads, as well as for regional homes and businesses.

To support this, Labor will in 2022 commence an independent national audit of mobile coverage to establish an evidence baseline to guide future priorities. A tender process will be used to identify a partner company capable of placing mobile signal measurement devices on Australia Post trucks and vans, to gather the best information possible.

Strengthening Medicare.

After nearly a decade of attacks and neglect by the LNP government, Labor will strengthen Medicare and improve health services for communities in North and Far North Queensland.


Under the LNP, average out of pocket costs in North and Far North Queensland to see a GP have increased by 31 percent, while to see a specialist they have increased by 51 percent.

Labor will address the neglect of our Medicare system and make it easier to see a doctor.

Medicare Urgent Care Clinic for Cairns

Labor will deliver a new Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in Cairns to take pressure off local hospital emergency departments and make it easier for families to see a doctor or nurse when they have an urgent, but not life-threatening, need for care.





The Cairns Medicare Urgent Care Clinic will provide time critical and bulk billed treatments for injuries such as sprains and broken bones, wound care, minor ear and eye problems and minor burns, avoiding long wait times at the emergency department.

All that you will need is your Medicare card.

Cutting the cost of medication

Labor will cut the cost of medications by reducing the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme general co-payment from the current maximum of \$42.50 per script, to a maximum of \$30 per script. This will keep the costs of medications down and ease some of the cost-of-living pressures faced by North and Far North Queenslanders.

Restoring regional mental telehealth services

During the COVID pandemic, the Morrison Government cut crucial support for remote telehealth psychiatry consultations. Labor will reinstate the 50 per cent Medicare regional loading, allowing North and Far North Queenslanders in regional and rural areas to access bulk billed telehealth psychiatry consultations.

Supporting our nurses

Labor will establish a National Nurse and Midwife Health Service to provide critical health and wellbeing support to our frontline nursing heroes. Labor's service will help prevent burnout for North and Far North Queensland nurses and midwives, keeping them in the job.

National Melanoma Nurse Network

Labor will support the Melanoma Institute of Australia to deliver 35 extra melanoma nurses across every State and Territory. Over 16,000 Australians are diagnosed with melanoma every

year. Melanoma nurses have the specialist knowledge, training and experience to make sure people have continuity of care – and someone to talk to who knows exactly what's going on.

Newborn screening

Labor will make sure all Australian babies have a better start to life by expanding the newborn screening program. Australia hasn't updated its screening program since the 1980s – and children are going without treatment despite tests being available. Labor's plan will increase the number of screened conditions from around 25 to 80, helping kids get the care they need from the start.

First Nations Health


Labor will train 500 new First Nations health workers, expand access to lifesaving dialysis treatment and double federal funding to help eradicate rheumatic heart disease.

Protecting our environment and jobs.

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef

The LNP government's inaction has put the Reef at risk of an "In Danger" listing from the World Heritage Committee. The Reef needs urgent protection, including real action on climate change.

An Albanese Labor Government will protect the Reef and the 64,000 jobs that rely on it, delivering \$1.2 billion through to the end of the decade, through climate action, catchment restoration, and protecting the Reef's threatened species.



We will deliver an additional \$194.5 million in reef protection programs over the forward estimates. On top of existing programs this will bring total investment by 2030 to almost \$1.2 billion. Labor will:

- Work with farmers on more efficient fertiliser use, to fence paddocks, boost precision agriculture, install real-time water quality sensors, and create on-farm jobs.
- Invest an additional \$85 million over the forward estimates for shovel ready catchment and reef restoration projects.
- Work with the Queensland Government and industry to scale up gully and wetland restoration, including considering matching funding to projects funded through the Queensland Land Restoration Fund.
- Protect turtles, dugongs and dolphins from threats including plastic pollution, egg predation, illegal poaching and accidental take, as well as work with industry to ensure a sustainable fishing sector.
- Protect key coral reefs and tourism sites by expanding Crown of Thorns culling programs.
- Advance research into thermal tolerant corals to help climate adaptation, in partnership with the Australian Institute of Marine Science.
- Provide an additional one-off grant of \$15 million for the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Research Centre at CQ University in Gladstone, to boost local research.
- Continue and double funding for the Reef 2050 Plan, which currently ends in mid-2023, with an additional \$94.5 million over the forward estimates.

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

Labor knows that tourism owners and operators in North and Far North Queensland have been hit hard these past three years under the LNPI government. Labor’s plan to protect the Reef will help secure the futures of those whose jobs rely on it.

Boosting renewables and reducing emissions

An Albanese Labor Government will create jobs, cut power bills and reduce emissions, delivering real action on climate change.

For a decade, the LNP government’s mismanagement of energy policy has been a threat to our economy – leaving Australia missing out on the jobs, growth, and opportunities that our abundant renewable resources could unlock.

Our Powering Australia plan will create 604,000 jobs, with 5 out of 6 new jobs to be created in the regions.

It will spur \$76 billion of investment.

It will cut power bills for families and businesses by \$275 a year for homes by 2025, compared to today.

And importantly, our plan will reduce Australia’s emissions by 43 per cent by 2030 – which will become Australia’s target under the Paris Agreement, keeping us on track for net zero by 2050.

Our Powering Australia plan includes:

- Upgrading the electricity grid to fix energy transmission and drive down power prices.
- Making electric vehicles cheaper with an electric car discount and Australia’s first National Electric Vehicle Strategy, and establishing a real-world vehicle fuel testing program to inform consumers.
- Allocating up to \$3 billion from Labor’s National Reconstruction Fund to invest



in green metals (steel, alumina and aluminium); clean energy component manufacturing; hydrogen electrolyzers and fuel switching; agricultural methane reduction and waste reduction.

- Providing direct financial support for measures that improve energy efficiency within existing industries and develop new industries in Regional Australia through a new Powering the Regions Fund.
- Rolling out 85 solar banks around Australia to ensure more households can benefit from rooftop solar and installing 400 community batteries across the country.
- Investing in 10,000 New Energy Apprentices and a New Energy Skills Program.

Combating yellow crazy ants

An Albanese Labor Government will take the biosecurity challenges facing farmers, regional communities and the agriculture sector seriously. Under the LNP government, four damning reports have found that Australia's biosecurity system is weak and not fit-for-purpose. Labor will improve biosecurity capabilities, including committing \$24.8 million to combat yellow crazy ants in Cairns and Townsville.

Cleaning up our urban rivers and catchments

As part of our Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, Labor will work with councils and community groups to fix up our local waterways. Labor's investments will help restore precious habitat and create valuable recreational spaces in North and Far North Queensland, including:

- \$1.5 million to improve the condition of the Saltwater Creek in Cairns, including aquatic weed control, reconnecting habitats through revegetation and improved hydrology, removal of barriers, improvements in stormwater inputs, and waste clean-up.

- \$500,000 towards a project that will improve the amenity and quality of McCready's Creek in Mackay, working with the local community.

Strengthening defence.

Labor will ensure that Defence has the resources it needs. We will maintain and strengthen Australia's significant defence capabilities in North and Far North Queensland with further strategic investments including:

- \$32 million to establish the North Queensland Simulation Park (NQ SPARK) in Townsville. Labor will work with the Townsville City Council to develop the industry-leading simulation training facility for defence, education and health research, which will support an estimated 555 full-time jobs when completed.
- \$5 million to begin development of a commercial biofuels refinery in Burdekin, which will produce aviation and military-specific fuels using sugarcane waste.


Labor will also prioritise local jobs through our Defence Industry Development Strategy. Over the next decade, there is \$270 billion of defence spending on the books. By maximising local content we can create jobs and establish a local defence manufacturing sector.

Townsville Veterans Hub

Labor will keep Australia's defences strong by treating our defence personnel with the respect they deserve. Labor led the push for a royal commission into veteran suicide – to ask the hard questions and, hopefully, to find some answers.

An Albanese Labor Government will invest \$4.5 million to develop the Oasis Townsville Veterans Hub, providing wrap-around services and greater support to local defence personnel,





veterans and their families. Working with local ex-service and defence community organisations, the veteran hub will act as a “one-stop-shop” to deliver services on the ground, including health, mental health and wellbeing support, employment and transition support, advocacy and social activities.

A Stronger Pacific Family

An Albanese Labor Government will restore Australia’s place as the partner of choice for the countries in the Pacific.

Scott Morrison has dropped the ball in the Pacific, and as a result Australia is less secure.

Labor will secure our region and build a stronger Pacific family, to help face our shared challenges and achieve our shared goals. This includes:

- Establishing a new Australia-Pacific Defence School to build deeper institutional links between the ADF and regional counterparts.
- Doubling Australia’s funding for the Pacific Maritime Security Program, which provides aerial surveillance of Pacific Island countries’ enormous exclusive economic zones.
- Deliver an Indo-Pacific Broadcasting Strategy that boosts Australian public and commercial media content to audiences in our region, increases training for Pacific journalists and enhances partnerships with broadcasters in our region.

Our commitment to First Nations.

Starting with our commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, an Albanese Labor Government will renew our

national commitment to Reconciliation and work in genuine partnership with First Nations people for better outcomes.

Implementing the Uluru Statement

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

Labor is the only party to support it in full.

Labor will pursue a referendum to constitutionally enshrine a Voice to Parliament in our first term. We will also establish a Makarrata Commission to work with the Voice to Parliament on a national process for Treaty and Truth-telling.

Closing the Gap

When the LNP came to power, one of their first acts was to cut nearly \$1 billion from First Nations programs. As the party that established the Closing the Gap framework in 2008, Labor is committed to progressing and lifting ambitions on the current targets.

Labor will work with Aboriginal community-controlled health services to close the gap in First Nations health outcomes – training 500 new First Nations health workers, increasing access to lifesaving dialysis treatment for those living with chronic kidney disease and expanding efforts to eradicate rheumatic heart disease in remote communities.

We will invest \$200 million to improve remote housing across Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory – after the LNP walked away entirely from funding remote housing in Queensland.

And we will help turn the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody with our landmark funding for justice reinvestment.

An Albanese Labor Government will also:

- Invest in First Nations management of land and waters.
- Strengthen First Nations economic and job opportunities.
- Double the number of Indigenous Rangers by the end of the decade.
- Partner with First Nations people and primary schools around the country to teach First Nations languages and culture in schools.
- Get rid of the privatised Cashless Debit Card.

Emergency management & disaster readiness.

North and Far North Queenslanders have seen more than their fair share of bushfires, floods and cyclones.

They deserve to be protected by a Federal Government which plans ahead and invests.

An Albanese Labor Government will improve Australia's disaster readiness by investing up to \$200 million per year on disaster prevention and resilience. Morrison's \$4.8 billion Emergency Response Fund has not completed a single disaster prevention project and has earned the Morrison Government \$800 million.

Labor's Disaster Ready Fund will curb the devastating impacts of natural disasters by investing in important disaster prevention projects like flood levees, sea walls, cyclone shelters, evacuation centres, fire breaks and telecommunications improvements.

Projects in North and Far North Queensland that Labor's Fund will support include:

- Construction of the "missing link" in the Pioneer River Levee and improvement to an existing section of the levee at the Valetta Gardens/Rivers Edge reach.
- Six new concrete causeways for Pormpuraaw Road in Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire.
- Construction of a Cullen Point Barge Ramp Rock Wall capable of withstanding severe weather, so that it can be used for emergency deliveries or evacuation.
- Replacing the Coalbrook Road culvert crossing, aiding cattle station access.
- Improvements to 24 urban streets on Palm Island.
- Coastal improvements to address erosion on the northern beaches of Cairns.
- Upgrade to the Endeavour River pedestrian access bridge crossing the southern side of the river near Cooktown.

Veteran-led disaster relief

An Albanese Labor Government will provide more support to Australians rebuilding their lives after natural disasters by boosting funding for a Veteran-led disaster response organisation.

Disaster Relief Australia (DRA), a fully veteran-led organisation, has been working since 2016 to provide relief to communities in the wake of natural disasters, deploying hundreds of veteran volunteers across Australia and the world.

Under an Albanese Labor Government, Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) will receive \$38.1 million over three years, allowing DRA to add another 5,200 volunteer veterans to its ranks – a total of 6,700 veteran volunteers able to provide over 13,600 volunteer days per annum.

Dignity in aged care.

Older Australians helped build this country. They worked hard, paid their taxes and raised their families. But the Morrison Government has neglected older Australians and the aged care system for the best part of a decade – it's a national disgrace.

An Albanese Labor Government will take practical measures to ensure older North and Far North Queenslanders receive the aged care they deserve:

- **Registered nurses on site 24/7:** Under an Albanese Labor Government, every aged care facility will be required to have a registered, qualified nurse on site, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This will save thousands of stressful, expensive and ultimately unnecessary trips to hospital Emergency Departments, for issues a nurse could solve on the spot.
- **More carers with more time to care:** Labor will raise the standard of aged care across the board by ensuring there are more carers, who have more time to care. We will mandate that every North and Far North Queensland person living in aged care receives an average of 215 minutes of care per day, including 44 minutes of nurse care, as recommended by the Royal Commission. That means more care for every resident, every day. Not just for essential medical treatment – but basic, important things like helping people take a shower, get dressed or eat a meal.
- **A pay rise for aged care workers:** Labor will back a real pay rise for aged care workers. Labor will support workers' calls for better pay at the Fair Work Commission and an Albanese Labor Government will fund the outcome of this case – because if we want higher standards of care, we need to support higher wages for our carers.

- **Better food for residents:** Labor will ensure that there is better food for residents of aged care homes. An Albanese Labor Government will work with the Maggie Beer Foundation and the sector to develop and implement mandatory nutrition standards for aged care homes to ensure every resident gets good food.
- **Dollars going to care:** Labor will make residential care providers report – in public and in detail – what they are spending money on. And we will give the Aged Care Safety Commissioner new powers to ensure there is accountability and integrity.

Labor has a plan to put security, dignity, quality and humanity back into aged care. Only an Albanese Labor Government will treat aged care residents with the respect they deserve..

A better future for the NDIS.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is Australia's disability safety net – a great Labor idea like Medicare and Superannuation – that has been damaged by a decade of LNP cuts, mismanagement and chaos.

An Albanese Labor Government will protect the NDIS and get it back on track, so it works for people with disability and their families, carers, disability service providers and workers. With a review of markets, pricing and compliance and by appointing a senior officer to tackle remote service delivery we will ensure that all North and Far North Queenslanders in the NDIS can access the support they need.

We will put people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS. Labor will identify and solve the problems with the design and operation of the scheme, ensuring solutions are evidence-based and are codesigned with people with disability, their families and carers, and service providers and workers.



Importantly, Labor will stop the unfair cuts to North and Far North Queensland NDIS participants' plans with an expert review mechanism.

Creating secure local jobs.

Fee-free TAFE

Labor wants everyone in North and Far North Queensland to get the education they need for the job of their dreams.

That's why Labor's Made in Australia Skills Plan will provide 465,000 fee-free TAFE places in areas of skills shortage – making it easier for people to train or upskill in areas of demand.

Labor's TAFE Technology Fund will improve and upgrade technology at TAFEs in North and Far North Queensland, including a new TAFE nurse and health worker training hub on Thursday Island.

Extra university places in North and Far North Queensland

Labor will also deliver up to 20,000 extra university places. These extra places will mean more opportunities for North and Far North Queenslanders to study at James Cook University, and other local campuses. In addition, Labor will:

- Fund a new CQ University campus in the heart of the Cairns CBD. By 2030, CQU expects the new campus to deliver a \$500 million injection into Far North Queensland, and more than double the number of local students from 2000 to 4000, meaning more health workers and manufacturing workers can train and stay in the local area.

- Labor will also partner with CQ University to establish an Electric Vehicle and Energy Training Centre in Mackay. The Centre will train the workforce needed to cater to growing demand from the mining industry for mechanics to convert and maintain hydrogen-powered vehicles, as well as light and heavy EVs.

More secure jobs

Our Secure Australian Jobs Plan will create more secure work with better pay for Australian workers in North and Far North Queensland. We will:

- Stand up for casual workers – by legislating a fair, objective test to determine when a worker can be classified as a casual employee.
- Uphold the principle that if you work the same job, you should get the same pay. Workers employed through labour hire companies should receive no less than workers employed directly.
- Deliver a better deal for gig workers – by extending the powers of the Fair Work Commission to better protect people in new forms of work from exploitation and dangerous working conditions.
- Introduce a Secure Australian Jobs Code – to ensure that taxpayers' money being spent through government contracts is being used to support secure employment for Australian workers.
- Legislate to make wage theft a criminal offence.

Growing small business

Small business in North and Far North Queensland has been doing it tough. COVID-19, natural disasters and higher costs have hit small businesses hard.

The Morrison Government has taken small business for granted.

A Labor Government will help small businesses in North and Far North Queensland grow by:

- Providing the certainty small businesses need by not increasing their taxes.
- Making it easier for small business by cutting red tape and paperwork.
- Protecting small businesses from unfair contracts.
- Supporting small businesses by strengthening minimum payment requirements.
- Helping small businesses attract and retain workers by offering fee free skills training and cheaper child care.
- Protecting small businesses from bad actors by cracking down on scams.

Helping Australians get ahead.■

Under Scott Morrison, the costs of essentials are skyrocketing while real wages keep falling. Since the LNP government took office in 2013 the price of beef has increased 64 per cent, fruit and vegetable prices rose 13 per cent and health costs rose 36 per cent.

In real terms, pay is going backwards.

Australians deserve a government that doesn't stifle growth in their pay packet. Labor will prioritise the things that matter – like electricity, child care and other household bills – so that it's easier for working families to get ahead.

Make Child Care Cheaper

Child care costs are up 44 per cent under the LNP government and child care costs are eating a bigger and bigger hole in North and Far North Queensland family budgets. No-one should be penalised for taking on extra hours, extra days or a job.

An Albanese Labor Government will make child care cheaper for 96 per cent of families in the system – benefiting more than 26,000 families across North and Far North Queensland. Our plan will lift the maximum subsidy rate to 90 per cent for the first child in care, keep higher subsidy rates for every family for the second and additional children in care, and extend the increased subsidy to outside school hours care.

Only Labor has a plan to fix the LNPs' broken child care system once and for all.

Community batteries and solar banks to lower power bills

Australian families deserve a government that helps them seize the opportunities of new technology to help lower their power bills. That's why Labor's Powering Australia plan will install 400 community batteries and 85 solar banks around the country, including in North Cairns.

With fuel prices soaring, Labor will also make electric vehicles cheaper for Australian families and businesses to buy – encouraging more affordable models to market and ensuring families can reap the long-term benefits.

More affordable housing

It's harder to buy a house today than ever before, but it's also harder to rent than ever before.

In Cairns, the cost of buying a house has jumped by around 12 per cent in the last year. And in places like Townsville, average rent has jumped from \$320 to over \$400 in just the last five years. An Albanese Labor Government will:

- Establish a Help to Buy scheme that cuts the cost of buying a home by up to 40 per cent for 10,000 Australians each year. In North and Far North Queensland, the eligible property price cap would be \$500,000. This could see the potential for the price of a Cairns, Townsville or Mt Isa mortgage being cut by up to \$200,000.

- Establish the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund that will build 30,000 social and affordable homes to increase housing supply and reduce homelessness across Australia.
- Deliver 50,000 Home Guarantee Scheme places nationally, 10,000 of which will be specifically allocated to regional Australia under the Regional First Home Buyer Support Scheme. The scheme will provide a guarantee of up to 15 per cent for eligible first home buyers, so locals with a five per cent deposit can avoid paying mortgage insurance. In North and Far North Queensland, that will mean a saving of up to \$13,300. With skyrocketing house prices and a sharp drop in affordability, regional first home buyers need and deserve their own dedicated scheme to support them to buy a home.
- Develop and implement a National Housing and Homelessness Plan, working with the Queensland Government, and key stakeholders, to address the severe housing crisis.
- Invest \$200 million from our Housing Australia Future Fund for repair, maintenance and improvement of remote housing, including in North and Far North Queensland – after the LNP walked away entirely from funding remote housing in Queensland.

Support for older Australians and pensioners

Under an Albanese Labor Government, an additional 50,000 older Australians will be eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card from 1 July 2022.

The income test for access to a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card will increase to \$90,000 a year for singles (up from \$57,761) and to \$144,000 a year for couples (up from \$92,416).

With a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, you may get benefits such as:

- Cheaper medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- Bulk billed doctor visits – if your doctor extends eligibility to Seniors Health Card holders.
- A refund for medical costs when you reach the Medicare Safety Net.

Australians who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card are often also eligible for discounts on property and water rates, electricity and gas bills, ambulance, dental, eye care and public transport.

An Albanese Labor Government will also freeze deeming rates at their current levels for two years, helping protect pensioners from interest rate rises.

Around 900,000 aged pensioners and other pension recipients will be better off under Labor's plan, which will mean pensioners can keep more income in their own pockets as interest rates rise.

The pension deeming rate will be frozen at 0.25 per cent and the upper rate will stay at 2.25 per cent for two years under Labor.

Labor understands pensioners know how to manage their own money, so we'll scrap the Morrison Government's privatised Cashless Debit Card so older Australians don't need to worry.

The cost of living has soared under the Morrison Government. Labor will provide more certainty for older Australians who will be able to keep more of their earnings, helping deal with rising prices.

Building stronger communities.

Better schools for our children

Under Labor, every school in North and Far North Queensland will benefit from extra funding to get children's mental health and wellbeing back on track after the last few years of disruption. The average North and Far North Queensland school will get a \$20,000 boost this year – meaning more school counsellors and psychologists, and extra funding for camps, excursions, sports and social activities.

Labor will also invest in a \$240 million School Upgrades Fund to make sure all kids can learn at world class schools with COVID-safe facilities. All schools in North and Far North Queensland will be able to apply for grants to improve ventilation and air quality to make sure schools are safe and every kid can get back on track.

Labor has already announced support for these schools in North and Far North Queensland:

- **Beaconsfield State School** – funding to purchase laptops and bandwidth to allow year 6 students to access computers within their learning area.
- **Redlynch State College** – funding for a new nature playground.
- **Wonga Beach State School** – funding for a covered walkway to provide cover during wet or hot weather.



Investing in Cairns Water Security

Federal Labor has already announced that it will contribute \$107.5 million towards Stage 1 of the Cairns Water Security Project. The project will enable new water to be sourced from the Mulgrave River and enhanced treatment of the current Behana Creek water supply to increase much-needed volumes of water.

Labor will broaden the National Water Grid investment policy, to allow funding for more projects.

This will make essential town water supplies in regional and remote communities eligible for funding, so that projects like the Cairns Water Security Project can be considered, in addition to the continued use of the fund for agriculture projects. In doing so Labor will ensure that critical water projects are able to gain access to government funding where they stack up environmentally and economically.

Vibrant and inclusive neighbourhoods

Labor will invest in communities across North and Far North Queensland to improve everyday life and unlock greater economic development, including:

- **Barron River Trinity Bulls Facility Upgrade.** Labor will contribute \$60,000 for the upstairs of the clubhouse to be upgraded. The upgrade will allow multipurpose use for events and for local sports including karate, yoga and playgroups.
- **Bhutanese Diwali Festival in Cairns.** Labor will deliver \$24,000 in funding support to Cairns Bhutanese Community to secure the future of the Diwali Festival in Cairns for the next three years.

A fairer Australia.

An Albanese Labor Government will bring leadership back to the national stage – restoring faith in our political system with a National Anti-Corruption Commission, recognising First Nations peoples in our Constitution and working to eliminate violence against Women.

Equality for Women

Labor will lead a national push to help close the gender pay gap, embrace all 55 recommendations of the Respect@Work report, establish 10 days of paid domestic violence leave and build an additional 4,000 homes for women and children experiencing violence.

Implementing the Uluru Statement

Labor is committed to the Uluru Statement in full. It's a matter of common decency and respect that First Nations people have a say on the issues that impact their lives.

Fighting corruption

An Albanese Labor Government will legislate a powerful, transparent and independent National Anti-Corruption Commission by the end of 2022. The ever-growing list of scandals surrounding the Morrison Government shows why Australians deserve a strong body with the power to tackle corruption and hold politicians to account.



A decade of LNP neglect.

The people of North and Far North Queensland are bearing the brunt of a decade of the LNP government:

- **Record low wages** – wages growth has been at or near record lows for the last decade, with real wages still going backwards even as the economy recovers.
- **Sky-rocketing cost of living** – at the same time real wages are falling, the cost of essentials like petrol, rent and child care are skyrocketing. Since the LNP government took office in 2013 the price of alcohol and tobacco is up 67 per cent, vegetable prices have risen 32 per cent, child care costs are up 44 per cent and health costs up 36 per cent.
- **Too little too late on COVID** – Morrison failed his two pandemic jobs, bungling quarantine and presiding over a vaccination “stroll-out” that saw unnecessary deaths, chaos in aged care and lockdowns.
- **Scandals and rorts** – from sports rorts and carpark rorts, to Christian Porter’s blind trust, the Morrison Government has proved it can’t be trusted.
- **Weakening Medicare** – after a decade of attacks and neglect of Medicare by the LNP government, average out of pocket costs in North and Far North Queensland to see a GP have increased by 31 percent.
- **Failures on aged care** – the Morrison Government has ignored critical recommendations from on the Aged Care Royal Commission, which were handed down over a year ago.

- **Fires, floods and natural disasters** – for three years, the LNP’s sat on a \$4.8 billion Emergency Response Fund that did not spend a cent on disaster recovery and did not complete a single disaster prevention project.
- **The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility**, established by the LNP in 2016 with much fanfare, has hardly funded anything. Despite the NAIF being based in Cairns, not a single project in Cairns has been supported.
- **Pacific security** – Scott Morrison’s complacency has let Australia down in the Pacific.

For Scott Morrison, every problem is someone else’s fault and someone else’s responsibility. He’s a Prime Minister who doesn’t hold a hose and isn’t straight with the Australian people.

North and Far North Queensland deserves a government that’s on their side, a government that cares about the things that matter wherever you live – secure jobs that pay the bills, a strong health system, good schools for our kids and a society that treats all its members with dignity.

North and Far North Queenslanders deserve a better future under an Albanese Labor Government.



A Better Future.

Labor

