



# Manifesto 2023

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Labour is in it for you. This election Kiwis will decide what kind of country they want New Zealand to be, who they trust to have their back, and how we can be better, together. This election matters.

Over the past six years Labour has prioritised growing jobs, increasing wages and protecting New Zealanders from the COVID pandemic and the rough edges of a global cost of living crisis.

After the toughest three years in living memory we're coming out the other side stronger. Our economy is turning the corner. Record numbers of Kiwis are in work with growing wages, tourism is returning, exports are solid, and inflation is coming down.

Unshackled from the pandemic, the next Labour Government can turbo charge progress.

New Zealanders have a choice to make between progress with Labour, or National and their coalition of cuts and chaos.

A re-elected Labour Government I lead will:

- Grow our economy, keep Kiwis in work with growing wages, and bring inflation back down.
- Provide Free Basic Dental care for under 30 year olds. By the end of our next term in Government 40% of all Kiwis will have access to free dental care – and we'll open the door to Labour's long term goal of making basic dental free for all ages in the future.
- Remove GST from Fruit and Vegetables. We know every dollar counts in the family shop for so many.
- Extend free early childhood education for 2 year olds, so families will receive 20 hours of free early childcare education. This will save parents \$133 a week from March next year.
- Boost Working for Families, meaning an additional \$25 per week for 160,000 working families by 2024 – helping with the cost of living pressures.
- Add another 300 new frontline Police to the force on top of the 1800 additional Police we've already delivered in Government.
- Introduce four weeks paid parental leave for partners.

Of course that isn't all - we are committed to the policies already in place, like free prescriptions and cheaper public transport for under 25s - both of which National have promised to get rid of.

I'm proud of our track record, realistic about the challenges before us, and incredibly optimistic about New Zealand's future. Progress is being made. We're turning the corner on so many fronts – now is not the time to turn back.

We've got your back.

We're in it for New Zealand families.

We're in it for New Zealand communities.

We're in it for you.



## Labour's values

Working New Zealanders formed the Labour Party in 1916, determined that everyone's contribution to our nation should be respected and valued. They strove then, as we do now, for a fair share for all, support for the vulnerable, and hope for a better tomorrow.

These are the values of our nation and of the Labour Party. They have stood the test of time and they still guide us today.



## Equality/Oritetanga

Our vision of a just society is founded on equality and fairness. We believe in more than just equal opportunities — we believe in equity and equality of outcomes. An equal society is built on inclusion, respect for diversity, and co-operation.

## Opportunity/Whakaritanga

We want all New Zealanders to have the opportunity to realise their potential and make the most of their talents. We should all share in prosperity, feel valued, and have the capability to live full lives, participating in our communities.



## **Solidarity/Kotahitanga**

We accept we have mutual rights and obligations for the good of society. Solidarity defines our commitment to a compassionate, inclusive, tolerant, and responsible society. It gives us the means of finding our place in that society.

## **Sustainability/Kaitiakitanga**

We are all responsible for ensuring the sustainable use and restoration of our natural resources, to protect our environment for future New Zealanders. We are driven by whether our actions are going to leave our children and grandchildren with an even better country than we have today.

## **Freedom/Rangatiratanga**

Freedom is about both the right to fully participate in society and to exercise choice about how we live our lives. Labour recognises that people can only exercise true freedom when they live within a society that supports strong personal, social, and economic rights for everyone.



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1

■ LABOUR'S 10-POINT  
COST OF LIVING PLAN

# Labour's 10-point Cost of Living Plan

Labour's number one priority is to support New Zealand families and businesses through difficult economic conditions.

That's because most people are finding it tough right now. Labour understands the pressures they and their families are under and has a plan to take practical steps to help Kiwis get ahead without making inflation worse.

Our 10-point plan is carefully calibrated to deal with the pressures families are facing right now, while laying the foundations for long-term growth and not exacerbating inflationary pressures, as tax cuts would.

## 1. Creating jobs and growing wages



We are starting from a strong position with some of the lowest public debt in the world, an economy that is 7.7% larger than before COVID and growing, and continued investment in critical services we all rely on like health, education and housing.

Maintaining record low unemployment and growing wages is the single best thing a Government can do to support Kiwi families with the cost of living.

We've delivered more Kiwis into work than ever before and kept unemployment below 4% for two years – for only the second time in 30 years. Wages are growing ahead of inflation at nearly 7% in the year to June 2023.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Increase the Minimum Wage every year during the term of the next government as we work towards paying the projected Living Wage.
- Continue to pay a living wage as a minimum to both directly employed and contracted workers in the Public Service

and progressively extend the payment of a living wage minimum to contracted and directly employed workers in the education sector and Te Whatu Ora.

- Increase the wages of our hard-working doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and other public servants.

## 2. Protecting our newly free prescriptions and keeping health costs down



In the 2023 Budget, we removed the \$5 prescription charge to make it easier and cheaper for New Zealanders to access the medicines they need. This is already making life easier for many households, particularly those who have multiple prescriptions to fill on a regular basis. It builds on our expansion of free doctors' visits to children under 14 and lower-cost doctors' visits to Community Services Card Holders.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Keep free prescriptions for all New Zealanders so cost is not a barrier to healthcare.

## 3. Cheaper education, childcare and early learning



We've extended targeted childcare assistance to half of New Zealand children, saving some families as much as \$252 a week, after it was frozen for a decade by National. We have increased funding for ECE centres to take pressure off parents and will extend 20-hours free ECE to two-year-olds from next year. As children grow, we have

reduced the cost to send children to school by removing school donations for more than 1,600 schools, saving families more than \$70 million a year, and by removing NCEA fees.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Extend 20-hours free ECE to two-year olds from March next year.
- Index eligibility to targeted childcare assistance to wage growth, after it was frozen for a decade by National.
- Keep 1,600 schools from charging school donations and NCEA fees-free.

#### 4. Free and half-price public transport



Transport is a big cost for Kiwi households. It's why we provided relief at the pump when petrol prices spiked following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Making public transport free for children, half price for under 25-year-olds and one million low-income New Zealanders with a Community Services Card, will make it much easier to get around and provide significant relief to household budgets.

Free fares for under 13s saves \$30 a week for an average household with two children.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Protect free fares for kids under 13 and half price for young people under 25.
- Keep half price fares for one million low-income New Zealanders with a Community Services Card.
- Keep free off-peak travel for SuperGold Card holders.

#### 5. Targeted cost of living support for Kiwi families



Targeting support to those families most affected by the cost of living crisis is the cornerstone of Labour's approach. The Families Package, consecutive and historic increases to main benefits, increases in thresholds for childcare subsidies and our investment in getting people into work are all making a difference in the lives of many low- and middle-income people and families. Instead of providing property speculators, international investors and millionaires with billions in Government support, we're focussed on those families who need it the most.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Increase the In-Work Tax Credit by \$25 from \$72.50 to \$97.50 a week from 1 April 2024, delivering targeted meaningful cost of living support to about 160,000 low and medium-income families.
- Lift the Working for Families abatement threshold to \$50,000, meaning 175,000 families will gain on average an extra \$47 a week, before the end of our next term.
- Keep the superannuation age at 65 and indexed to wage growth.
- Increase main benefits by wage growth, which the then Children's Commissioner called "the single biggest step to stop children remaining in poverty".
- Implement child support pass-on to sole-parent beneficiaries, lifting an estimated 6,000 to 14,000 children out of poverty as 41,550 sole-parent families are better off by a median gain of \$24 a week.
- Continue our overhaul of the welfare system and make sure this overhaul is informed by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's recommendations, to:
  - Improve income adequacy and maintain the real value of benefits, which have now been restored to pre-1991 levels.



- Work to individualising entitlements.
- Recognise and support the diversity of family structures through reviewing relationship rules.
- Improve rates and expand eligibility to Child Disability Allowance and Disability Allowance.

77,000 fewer children are in poverty than when we took office.

## 6. GST off fruit and vegetables



We know it's tough right now with the rising cost of living. Buying food is an essential cost, but with high global inflation, many families are facing tighter budgets – and food can be expensive.

Fruit and vegetables have been particularly impacted and volatile as the weather plays havoc with supply chains and affects our growers.

For example, in June alone vegetables increased 18%. Labour will take GST off fruit and vegetables from 1 April next year, saving families about \$20 a month.

Other countries, including Australia, take GST off fruit and vegetables. In fact, most countries that have a form of GST have carve-outs for certain items, and if anything, New Zealand is currently an outlier.

To ensure retailers are passing on the full GST removal, the new Grocery Commissioner will be monitoring supermarkets' pricing behaviour and will enforce the cut as necessary.

## 7. Expand free basic dental care to 800,000 young Kiwis as the first step in the journey to free dental care for all adults



A Labour Government will begin New Zealand's journey to universal dental care by expanding free basic dental care to nearly 800,000 under 30-year-olds. New Zealand has some of the highest recorded rates of unmet need for adult dental care.

In 2022, 1.5 million Kiwis didn't visit a dentist because it was too expensive.

Extending free basic dental care is a huge move and one that will ultimately benefit all New Zealanders.

[You can read more about our plan here.](#)

## 8. Reducing power bills



Power bills are a big cost to households under the pump. Labour is helping to ease that pressure by investing in more clean energy and improving the energy efficiency of homes.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Implement Empowering New Zealand, our 12-point Plan to increase renewable electricity to lower power bills and increase our economic security in a volatile world.
- Help over one million New Zealanders a year with the cost of their power bills through the Winter Energy Payment.
- Complete 100,000 more insulation and heating retrofits through Warmer Kiwi Homes.
- Establish a new \$18,000 incentive for deep retrofits in some of our most energy inefficient existing homes.

- Establish a new \$7,000 rebate for partial retrofits like double-glazing and insulation.
- Establish a new \$4,000 rebate to install roof-top solar.
- Establish a new \$3,000 rebate for households who electrify and move off gas.
- Continue the Kāinga Ora Retrofit programme to upgrade our older public homes and require new Kāinga Ora homes to meet HomeStar 6.
- Reduce the upfront costs of LED light bulbs and enable the purchase and installation of around five million LED bulbs over four years through Warmer Kiwi Homes and a subsidy scheme for mass market uptake of LEDs. Switching to energy efficient LEDs can save a household over \$100 a year, and it reduces peak electricity demand.
- Halve power bills on Chatham Island with a renewable energy system.

[You can read more about our retrofit and solar policies here.](#)

## 9. Provide healthy school lunches for 230,000 students at nearly 1,000 schools and kura



Labour is incredibly proud of our programme of providing free, healthy school lunches at nearly 1,000 schools and kura. Parents, principals, and teachers are all agreed on the benefits of kids learning on full tummies and frequently highlight how much of a gamechanger this programme is for supporting kids' wellbeing, attendance, and focus.

Healthy School Lunches reduces food insecurity, saving the average family \$33 a week per child, or up to \$2,500 per year for two kids.

## 10. Bringing inflation under control



We will keep a lid on debt, maintain prudent levels of government spending, and return inflation to around 2%.

Alongside targeted support and our balanced and responsible fiscal policy, it is crucial that we take steps to address the underlying causes of inflation: supply chain instability, a lack of domestic competition in key industries, and our dependence on imported fossil fuels.

Good competition ensures prices are fair, and production is efficient. Our distance from significant international markets makes us susceptible to concentrations of market power, poor competition and a lack of innovation and productivity. We will work to reduce the power of dominant players, prevent the emergence of new monopolies, enable pro-competitive cooperation, and encourage and reward market innovation.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Give consumers the power to get better deals by setting rules to make businesses share consumer information to compare products and services, switch between providers, or share with competitors and comparison websites. This will start with open banking so people can compare banks and products and switch easily between them.
- Improve competition in the banking sector through the Commerce Commission's market study to keep interest rates as low as possible.
- Act on the economy-wide use of restrictive covenants.
- Implement the response to the Commerce Commission's market study on the supply of building materials.
- Review competition law to ensure a productive and fair economy for all by

preventing monopolies and duopolies emerging, and creating the power to intervene decisively where markets are not working to give fair outcomes to consumers.

- Work to improve the resilience of the New Zealand economy to supply chain disruptions.

As oil prices rose following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, our reliance on volatile fossil fuels put pressure directly on household budgets.

Accelerating our transition away from fossil fuels to domestically generated renewable energy will help to insulate New Zealanders from the significant global oil price fluctuations that are becoming increasingly common.

We have levelled the playing field for lower cost petrol companies, and lowered the cost of alternatives, such as EVs and public transport, for those who can travel this way.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Incentivise the uptake of electric vehicles through the highly successful Clean Car Discount. We have already made significant progress on the uptake of EVs.

There are now more than 70,000 EVs on our roads, more than twice as many as December 2020.

- Work with the private sector to provide EV charging hubs every 150 – 200 kilometres on main highways and deliver between 600 and 1000 EV chargers at community facilities in smaller rural communities. We have already co-funded more than 1,300 EV chargers across New Zealand, growing our public EV charging network to the point that we now have rapid charging stations at least every 75kms over 97% of our state highway network.
- Take pressure off freight costs by providing approximately 500 grants towards the purchase of low-emissions heavy vehicles, including trucks, heavy vans and non-public transport buses.

- Continue to roll out the Low Emissions Transport Fund, backing the private sector to invest in alternatives to fossil fuel vehicles.

All New Zealanders deserve access to affordable, healthy food. The food we eat and produce is critical to our wellbeing, as well as the health of our economy, our environment, and the planet. Food systems are complex – spanning health and nutrition, food safety, affordability, resilience, waste and rescue, climate change, production, economic benefits, and the role of Māori food and knowledge.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Develop a multi-sector Food Strategy to support our food system. It is crucial we accommodate the interactions across this system and present a cohesive vision, providing clarity of responsibility and outcomes.
- Act on food waste, which could save households as much as \$1,510 a year.





# 2

## OUR MĀORI MANIFESTO AND TE TIRITIO WAITANGI

## Our Māori Manifesto and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Labour is in it for you, and we are working hard every day to deliver better housing, health care and education for Māori throughout Aotearoa. We are proud of what we have achieved in our six years in Government. We delivered record levels of investment for Māori, more than any previous Government in history.

We believe that providing strong and responsible leadership means listening, working together, and committing to build an enduring relationship with Māori that delivers on partnership, protection, and participation.

We're proud to work for, and with, Māori every day. We will defend our record in Māori Crown relations in the face of misleading, cynical, and divisive attacks from our opponents.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Make healthy kai cheaper, through our policy to remove GST from fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables.
- Back Te Aka Whai Ora to deliver equitable health outcomes for Māori.
- Roll-out the largest ever investment in Māori housing through Whai Kāinga Whai Oranga.

- Expand of Te Ahu o Te Reo to ensure all tamariki have the option to learn Te Reo Māori.
- Fund Te Matatini and recognising it for the taonga it is.
- Celebrate Matariki so that all people enjoy this special national holiday.

And so much more. Our Māori manifesto sets out how we will work to rebuild our health system which was blind to Māori needs, support rangatahi to flourish and succeed, lead the revitalisation of Te Reo Māori and support mokopuna to be fluent in their language.

[Our work is not finished - read the next stage of our journey here.](#)





3

OUR ECONOMIC  
PRIORITIES

## Our economic priorities

Our focus is on broadening the economic opportunities we have as a nation. We have enormous potential – if we invest and are determined to build a more secure economy that provides higher-wage jobs while reducing emissions.

Our Economic Plan to create a high-wage, low-emissions economy that provides economic security in good times and bad provides the foundations for an economy where all businesses, large and small, can thrive and pay higher wages, and where our emissions are heading to net-zero. We've made incredible progress on this goal as we've recovered from COVID-19, global instability, and severe weather events.

- Our economy is now 7.7% bigger than at the start of the pandemic and has grown faster out of the depths of COVID than Australia, the US, UK and Euro Area, according to the IMF.
- Kiwis had 29% increase in wages on average over the past six years.
- Our emissions have fallen three years in a row, and we've achieved record levels of renewable electricity generation and electric vehicle uptake.
- The Government's books have received ticks of approval as world-leading by international ratings agencies, with the Government's net debt among the lowest levels in the world.

We're unleashing the potential for New Zealand businesses with record levels of business research and development expenditure and strong progress on digitisation and decarbonisation. We're backing New Zealanders to upskill and prepare for the jobs of the future.

We're strengthening our international connections with a 50% increase in the share of our exports covered by Free Trade Agreements. We're building stronger connections with global centres of knowledge and innovation, including

through the university and science system. We're enhancing capital flows with our new investor attraction strategy, and attracting skills that work for New Zealand through the immigration rebalance.

We're unleashing the significant potential of the Māori and Pacific economies.

Across [Our Economic Priorities](#) Labour will continue working in partnership with industry and unions to identify high-impact interventions that drive more directed investment, accelerate levels of innovation, lift productivity, support emerging sectors, and grow our exports.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Actively partner with industries that have significant potential to contribute to a high wage, low emissions, economically secure future through Industry Transformation Plans (ITPs).

Established through the Government's 2019 Industry Strategy, ITPs are a key mechanism for improving the industrial structure of our economy. Four years in, ITPs are underway for eight sectors, selected for their potential to shift industries to higher value, to improve the performance of large and interconnected industries, and to scale up high potential industries to be a larger part of our future economy.

## 1. Grow an export-led economy with a strong global reputation

New Zealand is a trading nation. International trade makes up around 60% of New Zealand's total economic activity and our export sector employs more than 600,000 New Zealanders.

As global economic pressures intensify, high-quality, modern free trade agreements that open new markets and allow for goods to keep flowing are essential for the economic security of all New Zealanders.

We have built real momentum on trade and with our reputation on the international stage.

We concluded seven new or upgraded Free Trade agreements covering almost three quarters of New Zealand's exports, up from less than half six years ago.

Our strong trade relationships and new FTAs mean New Zealand can focus on selling our goods and services to offshore buyers to bring income into the economy, as opposed to selling off land and assets to earn income.

Expanding into new and emerging markets will grow our economy, create jobs, and support economic resilience across our trade markets in a time of global uncertainty.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Lead a Prime Ministerial delegation to India within the first 100 days of a new Government and work to deepen ties between New Zealand and India.
- Continue to pursue high quality trade agreements that diversify our trade relationships, such as the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement, increased trade and engagement with South America, and the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade, and Sustainability.
- Implement the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, building on the Free Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom that we have already delivered.

- Continue to implement PACER Plus and explore ways to expand it further.

We will partner with business to grow into offshore markets, diversify what we sell and who we sell it to, and seize the opportunities of these trade deals. We will back our exporters to grow.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Back New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to grow New Zealand businesses.
- Work with our primary sector to lift value, diversity and sustainability through Fit for a Better World and industry transformation plans.
- Continue the Strategic Recovery Plan for the International Education sector to ensure the sector continues to rebuild following the impacts of COVID.
- Develop a plan to become a world leader in hydrogen production using renewable energy, creating new export opportunities, high-wage jobs and regional industries.

Building on our Trade for All Agenda, and in partnership with signatory countries, Labour will work with partner countries to strengthen the international trading system, promote New Zealand businesses and human rights, environmental sustainability, and fair and inclusive trade that advances an increasingly modern economy.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Expand New Zealand's engagement with partner countries at the World Trade Organisation to strengthen the architecture and processes of the WTO so that they are durable and support the aspirations of all countries, particularly those that are small and developing.
- Continue our work at the WTO to embed the indigenous trade, environmental protection and sustainability, gender equality, labour protections and human rights included in our recent trade agreements in global trade rules.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi is our founding document and sits at the heart of our constitutional arrangements and strengthens the way we conduct ourselves in international trade relations.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Support Indigenous IP protection frameworks for Indigenous knowledge to reduce the exploitation of Indigenous people through the unauthorised use of Indigenous resources.
- Continue the solid foundation we have built on Indigenous trade in our trade agreements.

## **2. Make New Zealand a Centre of Excellence for sustainable agriculture and agricultural technology**

Our goal is to support our primary sector to stay at the head of the pack in a rapidly changing world.

Global consumers are demanding greater environmental standards from how we farm and grow the goods we sell to them.

This will require investment in new technologies along with clear and simple ways to promote our actions on the world stage. We also need a highly skilled workforce that can use new technologies to keep our primary industries at the leading edge. The investments required for this will create new opportunities for young Kiwis to enter our primary industry workforce, supporting our regional economies.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Work with businesses to grow the agritech sector to \$8 billion by 2030, from its current estimate of \$2-3 billion. Our next step will be to inject \$100 million into the Venture Capital Fund to invest in the agritech businesses that will shape our clean, green economic brand in the future, including through their joint investment fund with Finistere Ventures developed through the Agritech ITP.

- Seize New Zealand's advantage of being a 'test-bed' for agritech development, through our counter seasonal position to the Northern Hemisphere.
- Continue to work alongside agri-business leaders to accelerate the research, development and commercialisation of tools and technology to reduce on-farm emissions to farmers quicker through the Centre for Climate Action on Agricultural Emissions.
- As part of our Agritech Industry Transformation Plan, invest \$29.9 million in the Horticulture Technology Catalyst to support growers to adopt innovative technology, including automation. This type of investment can be win-win for business owners and workers – businesses become more productive, and the increased economic activity creates more jobs.
- Continue to support specialised extension services with a climate and environmental focus and fund on-farm incentives to take action to reduce methane emissions through an effective system to price emissions from 2025.
- Partner with the sector to measure, report, and price on-farm emissions, as set out in Labour's Climate Manifesto.
- Back Kiwis to enter a broader range of jobs that will become available in a more technology focussed primary sector, building on initiatives like the Food and Fibre skills action plan.
- Drive down gross emissions and avoid over-reliance on offsetting through forestry. We cannot offset our way out of the climate crisis.
- Improve broadband and support more farmers to adopt precision farming tools to manage inputs, lift productivity and minimise environmental impacts more efficiently.

### 3. Become a world leader in renewable energy and climate science

New Zealand is well placed to seize the opportunities created as other countries look to see who can help them in the transition to renewable energy.

We've delivered record levels of renewable energy generation and we're poised for more.

We have the potential to harness the energy we have in the ground below our feet and the environment around us to build a sustainable and secure economy that powers itself.

This is about addressing cost of living pressures as well. We've all seen the pain that a war like Russia's invasion of Ukraine can have on economies like ours, as petrol and diesel prices rose. The rest of the world has also taken notice and is accelerating investment in clean technology, and renewable generation.

You can read our comprehensive plan to increase renewable electricity in New Zealand and export our energy and expertise to the world, while creating thousands of new, highly skilled jobs in our [Climate Manifesto](#).

### 4. Jobs of the future: Harnessing New Zealand's digital and scientific expertise

As a small island nation, a long way from traditional markets, a strong digital economy allows us to leverage what Kiwis have to offer – no matter the time or place.

The digital technologies sector contributes more than \$7 billion to the economy, growing 77% faster than the wider economy since 2015.

We will drive export value across science, space, gaming, information technology and biotech.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue a 20% rebate for video game developers, which will help grow and protect New Zealand's domestic game-development sector.
- Support the growth of the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Community.
- Take 'New Zealand's Tech and Innovation Story', a marketing initiative led by industry in partnership with government, to the world.
- Support small businesses to digitise, including through Digital Boost and Business Connect.
- Pilot digital apprenticeships under the Digital Industry Transformation Plan, with \$27 million to cover part payments for trainee wages, employer support and guidance, and which will cover set-up costs for trainees.
- Back the Centre of Digital Excellence unit in Dunedin to support the industry-wide drive towards a \$1 billion interactive media industry and continue the incentive schemes for movies and video game developers, to grow and protect New Zealand's domestic game-development sector.
- Work to address digital hardship and exclusion, so that all New Zealanders can access digital devices and the internet at home.

Our investments in the digital economy go well beyond that sector. More and more businesses are going digital, and the rise of AI Technology will be the next frontier for many firms.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Develop a comprehensive plan to enable our economy, health and education systems, and workforce to access the opportunities that artificial intelligence and similar technologies provide, while ensuring a "Just Transition" for workforces likely to be affected.
- Work with regulatory agencies to ensure

our laws remain fit for purpose in an AI-enabled world, are applied in a consistent manner, but which do not stifle innovation or opportunity.

- Build on the OECD Principles on AI to ensure all AI use is innovative and trustworthy and respects human rights and democratic values.
- Develop resources through the Digital Boost programme to upskill small businesses to harness the potential Generative AI can play in improving their productivity.

**Businesses are spending record amounts on research and development due to the R&D Tax Incentive.**

Our future scientists will help us fix the greatest problems we face as a country, while also building commercial opportunities to sell to the rest of the world.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Enhance our research, science and innovation system for the future through Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways science-system reform programme.
- Back New Zealand science on the world stage by being the first non-European country involved in the multi-billion-dollar Horizon Europe research programme.
- Continue the Research and Development Tax incentive supporting record levels of business investment in research and development.
- Continue fellowships for future science leaders and invest in three new research hubs that will bring scientists together to boost collaboration and research on:
  - Technology and innovation, including a focus on advanced manufacturing and materials, energy futures and biotechnology;
  - Climate Change and disaster resilience, including a national centre for research on oceans, climate and hazards; and

- Health and pandemic readiness, including a new pandemic centre to ensure we are prepared for future emergencies.

## 5. High-value tourism

New Zealand will always be a beautiful place that people want to explore and visit.

Tourism was one of our largest and fastest growing sectors in 2019 before it was severely affected by COVID-19. But it was also a sector of the economy that was starting to be questioned by New Zealanders as the numbers of visitors put pressure on our infrastructure and resources.

A silver lining of New Zealand's successful COVID response is that many people around the world considered New Zealand a leading example of a compassionate and caring nation, and this put us top of their list to visit after travel restrictions ended.

As tourists come back, we do have choices about how to make the best of our visitors. The Government is already working with the industry through the Tourism Industry Transformation Plan to build a more sustainable and higher value tourism industry that doesn't overstep its social licence.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Review the International Visitor Levy to ensure the settings are right and fit for purpose.
- Focus Tourism NZ's ad campaigns on key markets, targeting high-value tourists.
- Use New Zealand's trade relationships, and developments like our climate-focussed investments, to promote New Zealand to high-end tourists.
- Back industry development through the Tourism Industry Transformation Plan, including its initial focus on investing in the people who work in the industry: Tourism should be an attractive career choice for New Zealanders who want to show off our beautiful country and bring income into our regional economies at the same time.

## Building blocks for our high-wage and low-emissions economy

These priorities require strong foundations to ensure that economic growth is sustainable, and the fruits of growth are shared. Labour is committed to removing the social and infrastructure deficits and to shifting the focus to improving the wellbeing of all our people.

### Our four foundations:

- 1. Skills for the Future.** In a fast-changing world, educating young New Zealanders and ensuring everyone can train and upskill is essential if we are to support decent jobs, high wages, and improved job opportunities for a sustainable economy. We're incredibly proud of the outcomes we have achieved in boosting the skills of New Zealanders, including backing more than 60,000 apprentices, building 2,500 new classrooms, delivering 100 million healthy school lunches to ensure Kiwi kids are best placed to learn, or making sure every child leaves school equipped with a foundational knowledge in maths, reading and writing by making their teaching requirements compulsory and consistent. Our Education policy is set out in Chapter 4.
- 2. Secure high-paying jobs.** Under our Labour Government, more Kiwis are in work than ever before, with wages growing at record levels. We will continue to build an economy where more New Zealanders share the rewards and benefits of work and economic growth, where we take steps to improve the wages of workers, protect contractors, work towards pay equity and foster healthier, safer and more empowering workplaces. Our Employment Relations policy is set out in Chapter 5.

- 3. Infrastructure that lasts.** We know that an investment in infrastructure is an investment in jobs, people and our future. It's all part of our plan to keep New Zealand – and our economy – moving forward. The floods and cyclones New Zealand experienced earlier this year and their impact on our communities are a sharp reminder of how important our infrastructure is to people's lives – especially when it's not working. Labour has repealed the Resource Management Act, accelerated consenting and committed a record \$71 billion of investment over the next five years to build the schools, hospitals, roads and public housing New Zealanders rely on and to help grow the economy. Our Infrastructure and Transport policy is set out in Chapter 6.

- 4. A balanced fiscal plan.** In uncertain economic times, our view is it's best to keep things consistent and stable. The times call for restraint and clear and smart policies which grow our economy, help drive inflation down and provide targeted help to those families who need it the most.

Our balanced approach to fiscal management is forecast to achieve an OBEGAL surplus across the Budget forecast period and to keep net debt below 30 percent of GDP.

We will prioritise investment in critical public services, such as the health and education frontlines and make long-term investments to secure New Zealand's economic future.

[You can read more about our approach in Labour's Fiscal Plan.](#)



4.

EDUCATION:  
SKILLS FOR  
THE FUTURE

## Education: Skills for the future

Education empowers us all to realise our full potential. We have made schooling more affordable, and school buildings more modern and welcoming. In 2017, we inherited a system that put our kids' learning at risk and frustrated parents due to underfunding, teacher-blaming and bureaucratic compliance exercises like National Standards.

Our first task was to set it back on track. Our education system was on the front lines of the battle against COVID and is still recovering from that, but its underlying health is strong. Labour has a strong plan to lift maths and literacy achievement, increase attendance and provide barrier-free access to education.

### The early years

The early years of a child's life are critical, and we are committed to supporting families during this time by reducing financial pressures and improving access to quality education.

From March 2024, a re-elected Labour government will:

- Extend 20 hours free Early Childhood Education to 40,000 two-year-olds saving these families up to \$130 a week.
- Increase the subsidies for ECE centres to ease the pressure on fees.

We have put over \$1.3 billion into bringing pay for teachers in education and care centres into line with those in kindergartens and schools - one of our largest education investments.

Teachers in centres opting into pay parity will receive pay increases of up to \$6,850 from their current salaries.

We will make sure the funding we made available reaches teachers through more comprehensive and more regular compliance checks on employers.

We will also hold a first principles review of ECE funding and look at the differences between the community based and the for-profit parts of the sector.

### Great schools for every child

#### Class Sizes

Labour will work towards the recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Group on staffing and reduce staff-student ratios, starting with reducing the ratio in Years 4-8 from 29 students per teacher to 28 students per teacher by 2025.

We will also develop a long-term plan for staffing and resourcing of schools to keep up with changing needs and the modernisation of best practice.

#### Maths and Literacy

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Provide at least two million hours of free catch-up maths and literacy tutoring support for secondary students focussing on the regions most affected by COVID lockdowns, the North Island Weather Events, and other disruptions to learning over the past three years, and including targeted programmes specifically designed for Māori and Pacific students.
- Develop and deliver programmes to support students to accelerate their progress in reading and maths, especially over Years 2-6.
- Continue to roll out and encourage the uptake of the Better Start Literacy Programme for new entrants' students.
- Provide a maths and literacy training fund to upskill and support primary and intermediate teachers to implement the new maths and literacy curriculum and lift the quality of maths and literacy teaching.

- Roll out Core Teaching Requirements in maths and literacy to guarantee foundational teaching and learning in these subjects.

Core learning areas in maths and literacy will become a legislated requirement from 2026.

They will clarify what needs to be taught and when throughout the curriculum, to ease workload on teachers, improve teaching standards, and ensure no learning opportunities are left to chance.

Labour will require financial skills in schools to be taught in all schools from 2025. This will ensure all young people will leave school with a core knowledge of saving, budgeting, banking, borrowing, bills, taxes, KiwiSaver, mortgages, and insurance.

### **Barrier free access to education**

Labour believes in quality inclusive public education for all. We are proud of the foundations we have put in place in the last six years to remove barriers for kids to attend school.

- We've funded 1.4 million free period product packs in schools.
- Delivered over 100 million free healthy school lunches.
- We've removed school donations fees to reduce the financial pressures on schools and families.
- Over 24,000 students have access to counselling in schools.
- We have grown the teaching workforce by 3,800 teachers.
- Changed to school funding to make it fairer by replacing the decile system with the equity index so that resources are more targeted to those who need them the most.

All these initiatives will continue under a Labour Government.

We've lifted the level of investment into learning support. But access to quality

and equitable support for students with additional learning needs at their local school is still unsatisfactory for many students, whānau and teachers. A review of support for the teaching and learning of those with the highest needs was completed in 2022 and made many recommendations for improvements that have the potential to be transformative.

We will implement the recommendations of the Highest Needs Review to enable all students to achieve their potential at their local school, along with improved funding and workforce capacity. Labour is committed to implementing a new comprehensive, fairer, more student-centred, integrated and inclusive system of quality support in all schools.

Learning Support Coordinators help a growing number of students with additional learning needs. So far over 600 Learning Support Coordinators have been provided covering about 40% of schools.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Continue to support the Learning Support Coordinator rollout, starting with the new Specialised Learning Support Coordinators in Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education that were funded in Budget 2023, as we work towards our aspiration of one for every 500 students in our schools.

### **Education Pathways for disengaged youth and increasing attendance rates**

Labour will further increase education and training pathways for disengaged youth who have either dropped out or been expelled from school. This means ending the historical underfunding for disengaged youth services, requiring property improvements to alternative education facilities and ensuring accountability and monitoring for their progress and educational development.

Encouraging attendance and engagement in school requires all of community solutions to support our young people in their education and keep them motivated for a successful future.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Increase attendance rates through funding the attendance service and attendance officers in schools. Labour will improve the collection and reporting of attendance data to drive better intervention for disengagement.

### School infrastructure

Since 2017, we have invested \$4.2 billion in school infrastructure.

We've delivered more than 2,250 new classrooms and repaired over 500 schools affected by severe weather events. Over the next three years we will deliver another 300 classrooms.

We will continue to invest in learning support modifications to school buildings for students with special needs, including automatic doors, lifts, fencing, hoists and bathroom modifications.

### Valuing our leaders

Leadership is pivotal to the success of the education sector. We value principals as highly respected school leaders and will support them to lead complex learning environments effectively. We will develop and retain principals by providing them sufficient time, support and resources to lead complex learning environments and systemic opportunities to share and develop expertise at regional and national levels.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Develop a comprehensive school leadership strategy so school principals and those aspiring for school leadership roles are well supported and prepared.
- Work to improve the staffing management formulas used for the allocation of management support and professional development opportunities for school leaders.
- Work to increase the number of leadership advisors as we continue to progress the

reform of Tomorrow's Schools, prioritising areas with a high number of principals within their first five years or where retention is an issue.

- Consider updating and expanding the Kahui Ako models to focus on shared responsibility for all students within the cluster and empower experienced principals to lead their clusters including by:
  - working with the sector to lift the moratorium on schools joining;
  - aligning the expansion of leadership advisors with clusters;
  - involving principals in the recruitment process of others in the cluster; and
  - implementing the outcomes of the staffing Ministerial Advisory Group through the refreshed Kahui Ako model.

Labour will continue to grow teacher training opportunities through our workforce strategy.

Since 2017, the teaching workforce has grown by 3,800 teachers.

We will continue to work with the sector on initiatives to increase the teaching workforce pipeline.

### Lifelong opportunities to train and retrain

Our education system needs to keep up with the changing demand for skills and learning that happens rapidly around the world. Labour is supporting New Zealanders to learn and upskill, as well as ensuring we have the workforce with the skills needed for an upgraded economy, including new maths, literacy and science curriculums, and digital courses at high schools.

We know global inflationary pressures and the tough economic outlook have had a profound impact on our tertiary providers.



A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Review the funding of universities.
- Restore the requirement for university councils to have two remunerated student members and ensure students have a strong collective voice in the decisions made by tertiary institutions so that providers are responsive to learning needs and improve the quality of education.
- Improve transition support for neurodiverse students moving between secondary schooling and tertiary education, for example by increasing neurodiversity understanding among secondary and tertiary staff through professional development and seeking improvements in the systems students use.

Labour is incredibly proud of the outcomes we have achieved boosting the skills of New Zealanders.

Apprenticeship Boost has supported businesses to offer more than 60,000 apprentices to Kiwis.

The reinstatement of the Training Incentive Allowance had an overwhelming response with an over 600% increase in uptake from 1 January to 30 June 2022 and more than 5,000 young people have entered work or training through Mana in Mahi.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Make the Apprenticeship Boost Initiative permanent to provide both apprentices and employers certainty of a secure pathway into trades and training under a Labour Government. This ensures a strong pipeline of skilled workers for key industries.
- Continue to support the implementation of our far-reaching reform of vocational education that has set up our skills system for the 21st century. This includes completing the full integration of training with a nationwide provider, Te Pūkenga, that serves all regions, managing both pre-employment study and apprenticeships, and continuing to place industry firmly back in the driver's seat at setting skills standards

through Workforce Development Councils.

- Work with Regional Skills Leadership Groups to identify and support better ways to meet future skills and workforce needs in their regions, both now and in the future.
- Create a statutory right for workers to access vocational education, and the resources for both the training and the release from work to attend, to support a Just Transition as well as the new structures created through the Reform of Vocational Education.
- Remove the youth and training rates that penalise young people who also need to survive, thrive, and become productive members of the workforce.
- Continue He Poutama Rangatahi with its focus on at-risk Māori, and consider similar programmes for underserved communities, as resourcing allows.
- Continue Mana in Mahi to support more people into jobs and on pathways into employment, education and training.
- Improve the Ministry of Social Development's employment services so they are more accessible and provide one-on-one support for those struggling to get into employment, training, or re-establish careers disrupted by technological change and or medical injury.
- Work to improve and expand health and education voluntary bonding schemes, as part of a wider review and redesign of the programmes across Government.

Adult and Community Education, sometimes called night classes, has a long, proud history in New Zealand in providing opportunities for 'second chance' education, personal development, learning new skills, recreation and building social and community cohesion. In Budget 2020, we reversed National's cuts with an initial boost to revitalise night classes.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to grow ACE, build the capacity and capability of providers, and improve access to ACE for Māori, Pasifika, ethnic, disabled, and rural learners.



5



EMPLOYMENT  
RELATIONS: SECURE  
HIGH-PAYING JOBS

## Employment relations: Secure high-paying jobs

Labour has made many changes to improve the lives of New Zealand workers. We've increased sick leave to 10 days, reinstated rest and meal breaks, passed Equal Pay and Fair Pay legislation, increased worker participation in their Health and Safety at the workplace, and extended the definition of vulnerable workers to include security workers.

However, there is still much to do.

We will continue to build on the work already undertaken to create a more productive, sustainable, and inclusive economy. One that provides decent jobs, higher incomes, and more opportunities for current and future generations. An economy where all New Zealanders have equal opportunities to participate in an economy that is strongly connected to the world. One where all New Zealanders get to share in the rewards and benefits of economic growth, and workers feel respected, valued, and safe, and have appropriate protections.

### Fair pay agreements

We know that an imbalance of bargaining power in some sectors can mean lower wages and poorer working conditions for employees. There are entrenched weaknesses in the labour market, which does not always produce quality jobs, or higher real wages and productivity.

Collective bargaining coverage has fallen in the public and private sectors, despite record numbers of New Zealanders in work. There is evidence that competitive market structures (such as tendering) can hold down terms and conditions in some labour-intensive sectors of our economy.

New Zealand was unusual internationally in not having bargaining at sector or occupation level. But Labour, alongside the unions, has fought hard to deliver Fair Pay Agreements for Kiwis.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Enable waterside workers, supermarket workers, commercial cleaners, early childhood educators, bus and coach drivers, cleaners, hospitality workers, security officers and other workforces to collectively bargain through Fair Pay Agreements.
- Deliver Fair Pay Agreements to these and other workers across the economy.

### Paid Partners Leave

We extended paid parental leave to 26 weeks and funded the extension of KiwiSaver employer contributions to those on Paid Parental Leave. Labour will introduce four weeks paid partner's leave able to be taken either concurrently or consecutively with the first parent, including where the first parent was caring full-time.

[You can read more about this policy here.](#)

### Fairer rules for contractors

Labour believes that everyone has the right to be self-employed and have the independence to work with whom they like and charge what they believe is a fair amount for their service. However, we also acknowledge that some workers are being wrongly defined as contractors and will build on the work we already have under way to fix this problem.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Better define in legislation who is an employee and who is a contractor so we protect vulnerable workers, in line with the 2021 Tripartite Working Group on Better Protection for Contractors process, and

- Set out a simple process for wrongly classified workers to easily gain access to justice so they can have their status changed.

### **Modernising employment relations**

We aim to create a stable future for work where employers, unions, and government equally share the challenges and responsibilities of building a productive, high-wage economy. Labour will embed tripartism in employment relations, so workers are treated fairly and equitably while giving clarity and certainty to employers.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Establish a tripartite mechanism, with an initial focus on Fair Pay Agreements, the statutory minimum wage, and pay transparency.
- Ensure work facilitates the stability and integrity of collective bargaining, in particular preventing discrimination against union members through the pass on of gains from collective bargaining to all workers.
- Ensure vulnerable workers, such as those on the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme, have access to specialised employment representation.
- Allow equitable access for all New Zealanders to employment institutions and systems.
- Continue policy work on an Income Insurance Scheme with a view to considering its implementation when economic conditions are appropriate.

### **KiwiSaver that's fair for all**

Labour believes that all New Zealanders who contribute to KiwiSaver should get a contribution from their employer. Currently, employers are required to contribute 3% of the worker's salary to those contributing to KiwiSaver who are aged between 18 and 64.

However, before a worker is 18 or when a worker turns 65, that employer contribution is voluntary. Some employers do choose to make the contribution, but many others do

not. This is unfair to our younger and older workers and Labour will require all employers to contribute the 3% to all their employees who are contributing to KiwiSaver.

### **Healthier, safer workplaces**

We will continue to make improvements to Workplace Health and Safety to grow workplace productivity by assisting employers to manage the hazards around mental well-being within their workforce, and by increasing access to support, training, and enforcement to continue to address the health and safety at workplaces.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Work to increase free and accessible union health and safety training, access for union officials to workplaces for assessment purposes, and issuing of improvement notices.
- Continue work on hazardous substances as well as the regulations around plants and structures, and by increasing the age for the performance of hazardous work by young people.
- Require data recording, monitoring, enforcement, and prosecution of psychosocial risks in workplaces.
- Improve educational resources about workplace violence and harassment in workplaces.
- Strengthen the support available to those experiencing workplace violence or harassment.

### **Upholding our international obligations**

We aim to build on our reputation as a responsible global citizen in the world of work by ratifying the most fundamental laws that have been passed by the International Labour Organisation. Achieving this goal will require a sustained, sufficiently resourced, and targeted approach to meeting international obligations contained in the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Move to ratify ILO Convention 87 on

Freedom of Association in line with the requirements of the European Free Trade agreements, and progress ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment.

### **Equal pay for care and support workers**

Care and support workers, like many other women-dominated industries, have been undervalued and underpaid for a long time. Labour passed Equal Pay Legislation that has

enabled these groups of workers to lodge Equal Pay Claims, and they are now near the end of the process.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Introduce legislation to extend the claim so these workers can be paid the rate that accurately reflects the skills and experience needed to do their jobs.





6

■ BUILDING  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
THAT LASTS

## Building infrastructure that lasts

Addressing the long-term infrastructure deficits and improving the resilience of New Zealand's critical infrastructure is more than dealing with the here and now; it is also about planning for our future and enabling economic growth.

### Getting the settings right

Being smarter about the way we plan, deliver, and use infrastructure is critical if we are to meet the infrastructure deficit and deliver the infrastructure New Zealanders need now and into the future.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to implement the Infrastructure Action Plan in response to Te Waihanganga/ New Zealand Infrastructure Commission's first infrastructure strategy.
- Develop an Infrastructure Priority List to standardise the way we assess infrastructure proposals, ensuring value for money and building an enduring project consensus from a very early stage.
- Support Rau Paenga to help organisations that don't have day-to-day experience of delivering large, complex projects, to get projects done efficiently and effectively and grow into an infrastructure and construction centre of excellence, driving efficiencies, establishing shared services, adding vertical integration, and driving innovation across the Government's construction programme.
- Ensure a stable construction workforce under the Construction Sector Accord and Construction Industry Transformation Plan, which will also focus on clarifying regulations, simplifying contracting, and clarifying regulations to make building easier.

The cost and time it takes to get a resource consent for infrastructure projects has grown significantly in recent years. Te Waihanganga estimates costs directly related to resource consents increased 70% from 2014 to 2019 and the time taken to make consent decisions for infrastructure projects has increased by up to 150% over the same period. Infrastructure

developers collectively pay about \$1.29 billion a year on consent processes, around 5.5% of total project costs.

Labour has repealed and replaced the Resource Management Act. The new system will cut more than 100 RMA plans to just 15. The time taken to prepare those plans will be reduced from 10 years to a maximum of four.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Establish the National Planning Framework and support local authorities to efficiently transition to the new system.

Safe drinking water is critical for the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders. In many parts of New Zealand people cannot be confident that their drinking water is safe, that we are achieving good environmental outcomes and that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate population and housing growth. Reporting from Taumata Arowai, the new drinking water regulator, shows that 18% of New Zealanders are supplied with water that does not meet drinking water standards.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue affordable water reforms by establishing 10 new regionally led entities.

These reforms are essential. Leaving things as they will mean unaffordable rate bills.

The cost of meeting the upgrades needed for our water systems is projected to be up to \$185 billion over the next 30 years.

Local councils cannot afford this on their own, and households in some areas could see rates rise up to \$9,730 a year by 2054 if we do nothing. Under our proposal to establish 10 entities, New Zealand households will

make big savings, projected at \$2,770 - \$5,400 a year by 2054 on average within each region.

### Getting Kiwis moving

We're focussed on reducing congestion and emissions, boosting productivity and improving the resilience of our transport network. Labour will continue to invest in road, rail, public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure to get our cities and regions moving, keep New Zealanders safe, unlock housing, and boost productivity.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Progress the rapid transit projects under development in Wellington and Christchurch, Auckland Light Rail, the Northwestern and Eastern Busways, and the Alternative Waitemata Harbour Crossing.
- Deliver the New Zealand Upgrade Programme and Strategic Investment Programme.
- Significantly improve the frequency, reliability, accessibility, and quality of public transport to improve productivity and reduce congestion. This includes rolling out a standard national ticketing service from 2024.
- Decarbonise our public transport network. We will implement the zero-emissions public transport bus mandate by 2025 and work to fully decarbonise the public transport bus fleet by 2035, and progressively electrify the North Island Main Trunk Line between Papakura and Te Rapa, with electrification to Pukekohe being completed next year.
- Continue to ensure that bus drivers, train drivers, and other public transport workers are well paid to increase the workforce and retain existing workers.
- Continue to invest in the restoration of the national rail network to improve resilience, support freight and passenger rail growth, including working to extend rail freight from Wairoa to Gisborne, developing domestic rail workshops at places like Hillside and Woburn and considering the establishment of inter-regional passenger rail between Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, and Wellington.

- Continue our work to help New Zealand's freight network to become more sustainable and efficient, including through coastal shipping.
- Improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians by facilitating more efficient delivery of street improvements designed to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive and deliver new cycling infrastructure.

National's flat maintenance budgets between 2008 and 2016 made our roads much more vulnerable to damage from the recent severe weather events.

We have shown a commitment to maintaining the level of service on our roading network.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Increase funding for essential maintenance of state highways and local roads, including pothole repairs, by 41%. This is on top of the 20% increase in the 2018 Government Policy Statement on land transport, and 15% increase in the 2021 Statement.

### Infrastructure of the future

Infrastructure is increasingly about electrification, digital connectivity and the new economy.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Invest in the infrastructure for the future by driving electrification, including improving the resilience and capacity of electricity transmission infrastructure.
- Partner with the private sector to provide EV charging hubs every 150 – 200 kilometres on main highways and deliver between 600 and 1000 EV chargers at community facilities in smaller rural communities, building on the more than 1,300 EV chargers delivered to date.
- Invest in the high-speed connectivity required for automation, AI, and the digital economy.





7 ■

IMPROVING THE  
PHYSICAL AND  
MENTAL HEALTH  
OF EVERYONE

## Improving the physical and mental health of everyone

Every New Zealander has the right to a world class health system, and we believe in the importance of a strong, well-funded public health system.

Labour is building a new health system where we keep people well in their communities and avoid costly hospital care as much as possible.

We have started strengthening community and primary healthcare and will keep doing so.

This is why the health reforms are focused on offering more convenient services in the community near where you live. We have already offered more free services in pharmacy and general practice.

We expanded our health system into primary mental healthcare and built a programme that has seen hundreds of thousands of people access a million free mental health sessions. We've extended free GP visits up to 14-year-olds and are working to remove the postcode lottery. We've removed the \$5 co-pay on prescriptions, which has meant more than three million prescriptions have been free.

We have a strong track record taking the tough decisions on prevention – like smokefree and fluoridation – and we've invested in better breast and cervical screening programmes.

### Free Dental: progressively expanding free basic dental care, starting with 18–30-year-olds

We are expanding free dental care. New Zealanders should be able to access dental care when they need it, without worrying about the bill. However, as a country, we have some of the highest recorded rates of unmet need for adult dental care.

We will begin the journey to free dental care for all adults. It's a huge job to get there, and there is a lot of work to build the workforce and infrastructure needed.

As a first step in achieving this vision a re-elected Labour Government will:

- Grow our dental workforce through a targeted immigration campaign and training 30 more dentists per year – an increase of 50%.
- Work to improve existing free dental care for under-18s.
- Progressively expand free basic dental care, starting with 390,000 under 24-year-olds from 1 July 2025, and growing to nearly 800,000 under 30 years olds across the next term of Government.
- Increase targeted oral health promotion to keep Kiwis healthy and prevent small problems from becoming large ones.

[You can read more about our plan here.](#)

### Better access to health professionals

Primary and community care are key to reducing pressure on hospital services and providing people the care they need when and where they need it.

One of the best ways to improve people's health is if primary healthcare is accessible, affordable, and delivered within local communities.

Primary and community healthcare is often fragmented, is suffering from significant workforce shortages and is not always easy to access due to barriers including cost, location of services, hours, availability of appointments, and cultural safety. People can often face lengthy wait times to get an appointment. The 2021-22 New Zealand Health survey estimated that 478,000 adults (11.5% of the population) and 73,000 children (7.6% of the population) could not get a GP appointment because of the length of waiting times.

It is unacceptable that one third of general practices have also closed their books to new patients, and there is a lack of after-hours care in many areas of the country. We have already begun the work and investment needed to turn this around.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Work to increase access to general practices and after-hours care where there is limited provision or where practices have closed books.
- Reshape the general practice funding system to better reflect patient need, including making a commitment to increasing cost pressure funding for primary care.
- Give all our communities a voice in planning primary and community services through localities plans, allowing local services to be more innovative and convenient.
- Break down the barriers between community and hospital care using digital tools and video consultations.
- Implement our comprehensive plan to grow the general practice and primary care workforce.
- Support women's health through free cervical screening and implementing the women's health strategy.

### **More surgery, lower wait times**

Wait lists for surgery are decreasing in all regions of the country, and we are on track to clear the backlog of people waiting more than one year for treatment (excluding orthopaedics) by the end of the year. We will double down on this progress to clear waitlists everywhere. Labour will end the postcode lottery for care by setting the same criteria for access to surgery in all parts of the country, like we are with cataracts.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Clear the backlog of people waiting more than one year for treatment (other than orthopaedic surgery) by 31 December 2023.
- Clear the waitlist for people waiting more than one year for orthopaedic surgery by 30 June 2024.

- Clear the waitlist for people waiting more than four months for any procedure by 2026.
- Deliver 3,500 more cataract surgeries so that everyone in New Zealand can access surgery according to the same clinical criteria. This means nobody in the country will be legally blind before they are eligible for surgery.

### **Improving access to mental healthcare**

We have been building a new mental health system from the ground up. We have recruited more than 500 general practices to deliver mental health services and more than a million free counselling sessions have been delivered so far.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Expand primary mental health services to 3.5 million New Zealanders.
- Expand Mana Ake to 195,000 primary and intermediate school aged children.
- Continue to rollout a new workforce of mental health professionals who'll help stop early mental health issues from becoming large ones.
- Deliver He Tapu te Oranga, our 10-year whole-of-society and whole-of-government suicide prevention strategy. We're starting to see progress with the number of suspected suicides reducing by 20% since 2018.
- Continue the Piki pilot programme which provides free integrated primary mental health and addiction support for young people aged 18–25 years in the Greater Wellington area
- Continue to treat addiction as a health issue and invest in support services.
- Continue to support digital mental health support for young people.
- Continue to rollout a new workforce of mental health professionals including an additional 12 psychiatry trainees a year, each year.

## More world-class hospitals and clinics

We inherited hospitals that were unsafe and run down. Despite the challenges with COVID-19 we have increased annual health infrastructure funding eight-fold since 2017.

We've invested six times more on health capital in six years than National spent in nine.

We've purchased 12 new Linear Accelerators for radiation therapy, of which 7 are now in place including in hospitals they weren't previously in.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Build a new hospital in Hawke's Bay.
- Complete the builds of Whangarei, Dunedin, and Nelson hospitals.
- Continue the Regional Hospital Infrastructure Programme to ensure we prepare business cases for other hospital redevelopments, including Tauranga, and Palmerston North.

In 2017, there was no mental health infrastructure programme and facilities were unsafe. We've invested nearly \$1 billion in 16 new or upgraded mental health facilities – four of which will open soon.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Complete construction on the Waikato Adult Mental Health Facility, Lakes Mental Health and Addiction Facilities, Tairāwhiti Acute Mental Health and Addiction Facilities, and Hillmorton Hospital.

## Health workforce: More doctors, more nurses

The New Zealand health system is staffed by hardworking, highly trained and committed professionals who deliver excellent care.

For too long we have not trained enough nurses, doctors, and other specialists to work in our health system. This has left us today with significant gaps, and a workforce under strain.

There are now more than 5,400 more nurses and more than 1,700 more doctors working in our public health system.

We will increase the size, skills, capability, and diversity of our health workforce so we can meet our people's current and growing health needs and help our health system be more resilient.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Train 50 more doctors every year from 2024, increasing to 335 a year by 2027.
- Create 700 extra nursing places in 2024, increasing to 1000 additional trainees by 2025.
- Retain more nursing and midwifery students in training through offering more 'earn and learn' options, targeted hardship assistance and improve clinical supervision and support.
- Implement our Health Workforce Plan 2023-24 so we have a comprehensive long-term health workforce plan that ensures safe working environments, improved pathways to promotion, seamless movement of staff between primary, secondary and tertiary health care and continue the Green List for key health professions.
- Continue the Health Immigration Service, to take a national approach to recruiting health workers from overseas. Between this and our immigration reforms, we have had around 2,490 health workers approved for Accredited Employer Work Visas to work at Te Whatu Ora since 1 July 2022.
- Settle pay equity for midwives, grow domestic intakes of midwifery students, reduce attrition rates from our midwifery programme and explore regulatory changes to allow overseas trained midwives to practice here.

[You can read more about our Health Workforce Plan here.](#)

## Pharmac: More funding for more medicine

For some Kiwis, prescription costs mean they avoid the healthcare they need. In the 2021-22 financial year, 135,000 people did not collect their prescription because of the cost. That's why we removed the \$5 prescription fee.

Since 2017, Labour has increased Pharmac's funding by 51%.

This has enabled Pharmac to make 212 funding decisions, including 75 new medicines and the widening of access to 137 treatments.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Increase Pharmac funding by more than \$1 billion over the next four years, a total increase of 62 per cent since 2017.

[You can read more about our Medicines Plan here.](#)

## No more postcode lottery

Bringing together 20 district health boards into one Crown entity has enabled districts and regions to increasingly work together on service delivery, data quality and reporting. The reduction in variation across specialities and districts and promotion of unified, nationally consistent processes, systems and initiatives is improving access to and timeliness of treatment.

We are seeing the benefits of a more coordinated approach to our health services across the country. Regionalising waiting lists and sharing expertise has enabled 50% of people waiting longer than 12 months for surgery to be booked in for that surgery, despite the lingering winter and COVID-19 delays.

For example, from February 2023, patients in South Canterbury have been able to undergo maxillofacial surgery in their district at Timaru hospital carried out by a Christchurch based surgeon. Wellington

hospital sent a radiation oncologist, registrar and technician to Palmerston North to see patients requiring treatment from Taranaki, Hawke's Bay and other surrounding areas. These breakthroughs in efficiency make good sense and will become ever more commonplace around the country.

These reforms have also achieved savings of \$139m a year that can go to the frontline through simple things like good procurement and reduction of duplication.

The biggest risk to our health system now would be turning back the health reforms.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Seize the opportunity of nationally consistent healthcare.

During COVID, many Kiwis adapted to using modern health technology, to book their vaccinations and report test results online. The transformation of health IT will allow for better, more accessible digital supports for patients, doctors and nurses. It is also important that wherever you are in the country, medical staff can access your records to make the best decisions for the care you need. We will also work to use digital technology and expand telehealth services to take the pressure off our health system.

The COVID pandemic brought home the severe impact of global health emergencies for communities everywhere. To build our global resilience, a re-elected Labour government will:

- Work towards a Global Pandemic Treaty and increase our engagement in multilateral health institutions while supporting them to continue the important work they do.



8

■ QUALITY HOUSING  
FOR EVERYONE

## Quality housing for everyone

Safe, healthy and affordable housing is at the heart of the wellbeing of New Zealand families. Labour is working hard to make that a reality for every family and we have made considerable progress, with 25% more homes being built in the last year than in 2017.

The country's housing crisis was decades in the making and we know it can't be fixed overnight. Labour is determined to build on the progress that we have made, and we have a comprehensive plan to make it happen.

### Paving the way to home ownership

Since we took office, 75,000 first home buyers received the First Home Grant and 472 have been supported into progressive home ownership homes, and we lifted the share of first home buyers in the market from 21% to nearly 27% - the highest levels since records began.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Continue to support New Zealanders into home ownership, including through the Progressive Home Ownership scheme, First Home Loans and Grants, and the government underwrite to enable more affordable homes.
- Make it easier to use KiwiSaver to purchase first homes off the plans.
- Continue to prioritise first home buyers over tax breaks for property speculators that give them an unfair advantage to outbid young families trying to buy their first home.

### Building more public homes

Labour will continue to deliver on the largest public house build since the 1950s by delivering 27,000 homes by 2027. So far, Labour has delivered more than 13,000 of these public homes, more than 4,000 transitional homes, and made thousands of public homes healthy, warm, and dry as we rebuilt public housing following its decimation by National.

One in six of all public homes have been delivered by this Labour Government.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Deliver 27,000 public and transitional homes by 2027.
- Deliver universal design in 20% of new public housing so it is fully accessible for disabled people by 2027, as we work towards 25% and an overall housing stock that reflects the diversity of those who need public housing.
- Continue upgrading New Zealand's public housing stock, retrofitting a further 2,500 state homes to meet or exceed building standards for new builds.

### Warmer, healthier homes

Labour will support homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes by providing targeted subsidies for building upgrades.

Warmer Kiwi Homes has provided 110,000 insulation and heating upgrades across the country.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- Complete 100,000 more insulation and heating retrofits through Warmer Kiwi Homes.
- Protect the Healthy Homes Standard and extend the Standards to include the provision of curtains.
- Establish a new \$18,000 incentive for deep retrofits for some of our most energy inefficient existing homes.
- Establish a new \$7,000 rebate for partial retrofits like double-glazing and insulation.
- Establish a new \$4,000 rebate to install roof-top solar.
- Establish a new \$3,000 rebate for households who electrify and move off gas.

- Continue the Kāinga Ora Retrofit programme to upgrade our older public homes and require new Kāinga Ora homes to meet HomeStar 6.

### Building more homes, faster

Labour is turning around the housing crisis we inherited by stripping back red tape to get more housing built, and investing in the long-neglected critical infrastructure needed to prepare land so it is ready to build on.

Laying the literal groundwork like this with roading, and water infrastructure for drinking, waste and stormwater, means new housing projects that include affordable housing can get under way faster.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to roll out vital housing infrastructure like roads and pipes as part of the biggest housing infrastructure programme in a generation to deliver a long-term pipeline of 35,000 homes through a \$3.5 billion investment in pipes and roads.
- Continue to require councils to plan for 30 years of housing growth through the National Policy Statement on Urban Development.
- Roll out the new Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 and Spatial Planning Act 2023 to cut red tape, lower costs and shorten the time it takes to approve new homes and key infrastructure projects.
- Build on our Urban Growth Partnerships by rolling these out across the whole of New Zealand and expand these to include local businesses, community organisations and other critical stakeholders.
- Maintain momentum in the residential construction sector during economic uncertainty through the Build Ready Developments fund.

Kāinga Ora are working to increase offsite manufacturing solutions by a minimum of 20% year on year for the duration of the Public Housing Plan. To drive further uptake of offsite manufacturing at scale, Labour will look to encourage other government agencies to consider setting goals to

increase the number of offsite manufacturing solutions by a minimum of 10% year on year.

### Backing renters

Labour has worked hard to make life easier for renters, and ensure everyone has a healthy, secure place to live.

More Kiwis than ever are renting, including families with young children and older New Zealanders.

Over the past three years, we have put in place a range of practical policies to turn this around, and make a real difference for Kiwi families, including limiting rent increases to once a year, introducing the Healthy Homes Standards, and stopping no-cause terminations. However, we know there's more to do. Over the next three years we will continue to improve renting in New Zealand.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Use the Affordable Housing Fund to partner with investors, philanthropic organisations, developers, and the affordable housing sector to expand the range of housing options for people whose needs are not currently being met by the market, to especially secure affordable rentals.
- Support a greater security of tenure for rental housing. Security such as a just cause for eviction, a longer period of notice, and annual rent rises is so vital to family wellbeing.
- Require tenancy managers to be licensed and meet standards of conduct and care to landlords and tenants.
- Continue to strengthen enforcement of the Healthy Homes Standards by increasing the number of inspections conducted each year and the level of central enforcement of requirements through the Tenancy Tribunal.
- Create a Build-to-Rent asset class that provides greater stability of tenure for tenants, exempts developments from interest deductibility tax rules, and clarifies rules around overseas investment.





### Backing the construction sector

The building and construction industry plays a substantial role in New Zealand, providing the buildings in which we live, work, shop and relax. We need to make sure they are fit for purpose, well-regulated, safe, and support a transition to a zero-carbon economy.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue our commitment to the construction industry through the construction sector accord.
- Support a skilled and productive workforce through the Construction Skills Action Plan and National Construction Pipelines Reports.
- Reduce whole of life and operating carbon emissions through the Building for Climate Change work programme including consideration of emissions caps.
- Incentivise the use of mass timber construction.
- Further enable the construction of detached buildings not exceeding 30 square metres in floor area by providing straightforward means to satisfy the building code for example in relation to storeys, sanitary facilities, potable water, sleeping accommodation, cooking facilities and site boundary distances.
- Investigate requiring all publicly funded buildings to use New Zealand wool carpet and insulation to achieve better environmental outcomes and support New Zealand industry.
- Review building regulations in light of what we have learned about the transmission of viruses as aerosols.

- Improve how the Building Code incorporates guidance for optional better-than-code minimum designs including sustainable construction, energy efficiency, insulation, heating, ventilation, seismic resilience, universal design principles (for all people including older people and disabled people) and inclusive amenities (disabled ablutions, family change rooms, gender neutral bathrooms, showers for active commuters).
- Enable better-than-code minimum designs to have compliance pathways no more onerous than code minimum designs while at the same time provide consent authority design reviewers the opportunity to provide constructive optional criticism of designs during the consenting process.

Small business tradespeople are often the least protected party when developers go into receivership or liquidation. We want to better protect the work of tradespeople, so they are paid what they are owed even when developers go into receivership or liquidation. We have already made progress towards protecting sub-contractors through the Construction Contracts (Retention Money) Amendment Act 2023 which provides increased confidence and transparency for subcontractors that retention money they are owed is safe. Overseas countries tend to have this retention scheme alongside a lien scheme to protect subcontractors.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Introduce an additional law that provides that fixtures, fittings and improvements provided by these tradespeople are not legally incorporated into the property and remains the property of the tradespeople, until it is paid for. This would require banks and finance companies to ensure their builder/developer clients pay the tradespeople to protect the value of their security and compensate them for their work.

## Tackling homelessness

Labour will continue to make homelessness rare and brief for all New Zealanders to give real effect to the human right for housing for all.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Develop the next stage of our Homeless Action Plan to implement the New Zealand Homelessness Strategy. This will include working with a range of agencies, including local government and community organisations dealing with mental health, addiction, crime, family dynamics, employment, welfare and affordable housing issues.
- Work to phase out emergency accommodation in motels and boarding houses as quickly as possible.



9.

TACKLING THE CLIMATE  
EMERGENCY: LABOUR'S  
CLIMATE MANIFESTO

## Tackling the climate emergency: Labour's Climate Manifesto

Our future depends on limiting the warming of our planet. Labour is committed to achieving net-zero long-lived gases by 2050 and a 24 to 47% reduction in biogenic methane.

We're proud of our track record. We've reduced emissions three years in a row, passed the Zero Carbon Act, reformed the emissions trading scheme, and overseen record levels of renewable energy generation and electric vehicle uptake.

We need to keep going. We need to go faster. We need to be more resilient.

That's why Labour has launched New Zealand's first climate manifesto. It sets out our priorities for the second emissions reduction plan and the work we will do to prepare New Zealand for more frequent and more severe extreme weather. While the climate crisis challenges us all, the way we respond can build a more prosperous and resilient country.

A re-elected Labour Government will:

- develop a second emissions reduction plan that puts New Zealand on the path to achieving the second emissions budget and seeks to minimise the need for overseas credits. This plan will focus on:
  - Enabling innovative and dynamic businesses to take advantage of the economic opportunities arising from the transition to a low-emissions economy. A core focus of the next emissions reduction plan will be on innovation and developing and expanding the use of new technology, including through increasing Green Investment Finance's funding to \$1 billion, increasing our research and development, and establishing mission-led innovation platforms.
  - A just transition for local communities, including workers, to adapt to economic in response to climate change. This

includes a dedicated Minister for a Just Transition to drive the Just Transition strategy and establishing a Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy.

- Delivering on our reputation. For a country already earning a premium from our clean, green and innovative image, there is an opportunity to use that natural advantage to create new jobs in new industries and future-proof our exporters for changing consumer demands.
- Accelerating our transition away from fossil fuels to domestically generated renewable energy through Empowering New Zealand, our 12-point plan to grow renewable energy generation, the Clean Car Discount, more electric vehicle chargers and investment in public transport projects.
- Drive down gross emissions and avoid over-reliance on offsetting through the ETS Review and other means, including by clearly prioritising gross emissions reductions and limiting exotic afforestation.
- Prioritise nature-based solutions in policy, planning and decision-making for carbon sequestration and climate change adaptation, including restoring wetlands and coastal ecosystems and restoring and planting native forests.
- Develop effective and fair measures for adaptation, and where necessary, carefully managed retreat. This includes a new Climate Adaptation Framework and considering long term sustainable funding sources to support adaptation and resilience to more frequent and intense weather events.

[You can read our full plan in Labour's 2023 Climate Manifesto.](#)



10.

SAFER COMMUNITIES

## Safer communities

Labour’s plan for safer communities is focused on prevention, protection and responsibility.

We are committed to keeping New Zealanders safe and will continue to crack down on criminal behaviour, especially organised crime, while investing in the programmes that prevent crime. To truly reduce crime, we need to ensure that we are tackling both the immediate causes of crime and addressing the underlying drivers of offending. Those who offend must also be held responsible for their actions.

[You can read more about our plan here.](#)

### Backing our Police

After a decade of no significant increases to Police numbers under National. We have resourced the Police, so they have the equipment they need to keep safe and be effective on the frontline with the Police operating budget increasing by 50%.

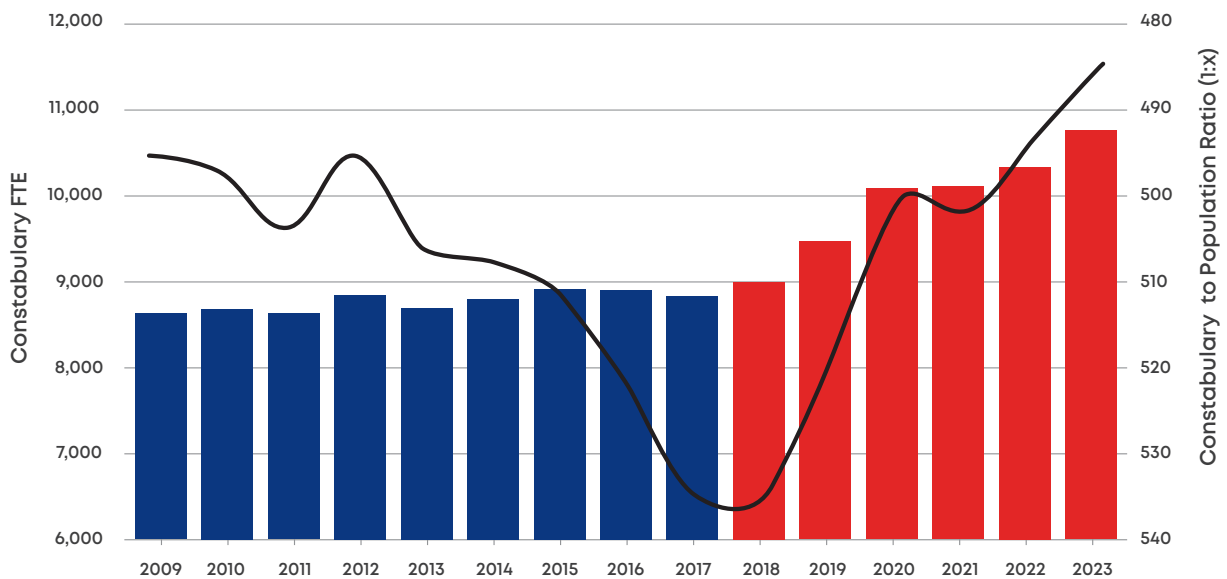
Labour has increased constabulary numbers by 1800, to the highest levels ever.

Under the last National-ACT government, Police operating budget only increased by 19%, an effective freeze. To make matters worse, the number of officers per person fell significantly with one officer to 541 people in 2017.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Deliver 300 more Police officers, focused on more officers on the streets and in the community.
- Free up Police time by enabling mental health workers to respond to mental health callouts through expanding the co-response model.
- Continue to ensure that Police have the resources to do their job and stay safe, through the nationwide rollout of the Tactical Response model to keep officers safe, implementing the ReFrame modernisation programme to reduce administrative burdens, and ensuring that Police prosecution services have the resources to do their job.

## Police numbers and ratio to population under National and Labour



## Keeping our streets safe

New Zealanders deserve to feel safe in their homes, businesses, and on the streets. We will do more to support our retailers and will make practical legislative changes to tackle the challenge of ram raids. We have made significant progress in removing banned firearms from circulation and have reformed firearms laws with a focus on pragmatic safety measures, and will protect these gains from parties that wish to reverse them.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Pass legislation to establish a new offence for ram-raiding, with a penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment, which will include the ability of 12–13-year-olds to be accountable in the Youth Court to enable more tools to be available that can break the cycle of offending.
- Provide support to retailers to protect their properties, through the Retail Crime Prevention Programme.
- Protect the Firearms Registry and sensible gun reform.
- Support the operational uptake of Firearms Prohibition Orders.
- Operationalise a legislative regime to crack down on fleeing drivers.
- Continue our work on the prevention of family and sexual violence.
- Strengthen legal protections against stalking and harassment, including adding an offence of stalking to the Crimes Act.

Since 2019 78,000 firearms have been seized, surrendered to, or recovered by Police.

## Going after organised crime

Labour has led a robust response against gangs, who cause significant harm in our communities, and make profits from their illegal activities. We must offer both a path out of organised crime, particularly for young people, while coming down hard on those actively involved in stoking gang tensions and perpetuating violence.

In the past year alone, Police laid more than 50,000 charges and seized over 2,000 firearms from gangs.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Ensure that Police have the legislative tools they need to combat organised crime, and seize gang assets and weapons, and are resourced to undertake operations that target organised crime.
- Target the leaders and facilitators of organised crime, and break their international links.
- Develop gang convoy legislation.

## Preventing youth crime

Labour believes that to truly reduce crime, we need to ensure that we are tackling both the immediate causes of crime and addressing the underlying causes of offending. In no area is this more important than youth offending. Labour refuses to commit young people to a life of crime and will do everything in our power to break the cycle of offending and provide better opportunities to young people who are heading down the wrong path. Strong evidence backs this approach.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to support the highly successful Circuit Breaker fast track intervention programme, the enhanced component of that programme for recidivist youth offenders, and the Kotahi te Whakaaro programme.
- Make youth justice residences safer and more secure.

- Improve the Youth Justice Family Group Conference system and ensure that Police and Oranga Tamariki are delivering quick referrals.

80% of children in our circuit breaker initiative have not been re-referred.

### Accountability for youth offending

Labour believes that prevention is the best cure for youth offending, but when serious or repeat offending takes place, there needs to be accountability for the young people involved – for the sake of victims, and to demonstrate that there is a better path to take. We will deploy practical, stepped escalations, where necessary, to intervene before offending becomes a way of life.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Legislate an aggravating factor at sentencing for an adult to use young people to commit a crime, and for adults and young people to post their crimes online.
- Enable victims to attend Care and Protection family group conferences.
- Reform the Family Court, to enable young offenders to be required to undertake community activities or attend educational programmes.



### Better outcomes for victims of crime

Since 2017, Labour has made the largest ever financial investment in victims, with a goal of ensuring a justice system that serves all New Zealanders. We have reviewed legislative settings, launched operational pilots in the courts, tripled the level of funding for the Victims Assistance Scheme, and doubled the level of funding for Victim Support. There is more work to be done, including on how court ordered reparations are paid to victims.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue the cross-agency work programme on victims, which will include reforming the Victims' Rights Act 2002, to improve the experience for victims within the justice system.
- Review the victim reparations system to pay victim reparations faster and reduce the backlog.
- Give victims more rights and support including name suppression settings for victims of sexual violence, victims of litigation abuse in the Family Court, and victims of child sex offending.
- Pass the Family Proceedings (Dissolution for Family Violence) Amendment Bill, to reduce the waiting period required before finalising a divorce in situations of abuse.

### Prisons that work

Labour believes in a corrections system that upholds community safety, and ensures accountability for offending, while also fostering rehabilitation and reintegration.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Pass the Corrections Amendment Bill to improve rehabilitation, reintegration and safety outcomes in the corrections system.
- Maintain a fit for purpose Corrections estate.





11.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

## Justice for all

Labour believes in a justice system where New Zealanders are not blocked from justice by cost, system delays, or confusing processes, and where all voices in our community can be heard.

Next term our priorities in the Justice portfolio will be community safety, increasing access to justice, and ensuring better outcomes for victims of crime. Victims come first and should be supported on a quick path to recovery, with offenders held fully accountable for their crimes.

We have a range of plans in place to speed up access to justice, but more work is needed to tackle the challenge of court delays and to clear the backlog. Access to justice must sit alongside efforts to prevent crime, protect communities and hold offenders responsible for their actions.

### Improving access to justice

Labour has made good progress in Government to increase access to justice, particularly for low-income New Zealanders through our increases to legal aid. More work is needed on tackling the complex challenge of court delays. System challenges were accelerated by the pandemic, and if re-elected, Labour will increase our efforts on reducing the case backlog, which prolongs pain for victims, and denies defendants a timely, fair trial.

[You can read more about our policy here.](#)

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Legislate to increase the uptake of audio-visual technology in the courts.
- Review the legislative settings for jury trials in the District Court.
- Progress with the establishment of a formal class actions regime.
- Roll out Associate Coroners and Family Court Associates, which free up Coroners and Judges.
- Back the Te Ao Marama model throughout the District Court.

- Scrap paper records and deliver a new digital system for our courts.
- Continue building a new, fit for purpose courthouse in Tauranga.
- Continue with seismic strengthening upgrades at the Auckland District Court, Hamilton District Court and Wellington High Court.
- Modernise consent law, drawing on the experience of sexual violence survivors, victims' advocates and legal experts in the field.
- Evaluate the progress of a series of pilot programmes that began in court locations in July 2023 that aim to improve safety and experience in the court system for victims of serious crime, strengthen support for child victims of sexual violence, and ensure victim's views are heard in bail decisions, and scale up if successful.

### More community voice on alcohol

Last term, Labour progressed legislation that gave communities their voice back on local alcohol decisions. For too long, many local councils were unable to enact local alcohol policies, in the face of organised opposition from the supermarket duopoly and liquor retailers, and their well-resourced legal teams. We legislated to remove the statutory appeal process against local alcohol policies, opened up local alcohol hearings to a broader range of community voices, and stopped excessively legalistic cross-examination of community leaders who tried to stand up for the health of their people.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue work on alcohol policy, including in the areas of sponsorship and marketing, building on the changes passed this term that increased the voice of communities in local alcohol decisions.

## 21st century adoption and surrogacy laws

Labour made good progress in reviewing adoption and surrogacy settings, including through extensive engagement with the public. We will work to make adoption and surrogacy laws more accessible and streamlined for all and ensure that any changes mean that Rainbow people who want to form a family are treated on the same basis as heterosexual couples.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Pass legislation to reform adoption laws, in line with proposals in the 2022 discussion document *A new adoption system for Aotearoa New Zealand*.
- Continue to progress the Improving Arrangements for Surrogacy Bill, in response to the recommendations in the Law Commission report *Te Kōpū Whāngai: He Arotake Review of Surrogacy*.



ਗਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

He can be attained through the grace  
of the true Guru.

12.

WELCOMING NEW KIWIS



## Welcoming new Kiwis

Kiwis value an immigration system that contributes to a strong New Zealand economy with decent jobs and higher incomes, providing more opportunities for current and future generations. We also expect our immigration system to maintain high labour standards and stop migrant exploitation, and to build multicultural communities, allow for family reunification, and meet humanitarian commitments.

Labour has rebalanced the immigration system to deliver tens of thousands more critical workers and long-term residents with new visa pathways, improved protections for migrant workers, while boosting the number of young working-holiday makers from overseas, and significantly increasing New Zealand's annual refugee quota.

### Attracting and retaining skilled workers

We're committed to a balanced immigration system that will meet workforce needs and address skill deficits, maintain labour standards appropriate to a high-performing and advanced economy, reflect commitments to Pacific neighbours and to international humanitarian responsibilities, and deliver a more productive, high-wage economy.

A quarter of a million work visas have been approved since the border re-opened from COVID-19 restrictions.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Make it easier for businesses to attract and retain high-skilled migrants. A coordinated, connected and longer-term approach to workforce planning and development will support employers to hire domestic workers, while talent shortages and high skilled migrants will more easily be attracted through immigration.
- Implement the Productivity Commission's recommendation to introduce a Government Policy Statement for the immigration system.
- Continue to eliminate migrant exploitation, including through ongoing enforcement work, by empowering ethnic communities to take system-level ownership of exploitation in their communities, piloting the linking of work-visas to sectors or rural areas with labour shortages rather than to a specific employer, and move forward with a full review of support for victims of family violence within the immigration system.
- Implement the review of the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) and implement the refugee and migrant employment action plan.

### Empowering migrants and communities

Ethnic communities have faced challenges in the past few years, including international border closures preventing family reunification.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Improve the wellbeing of ethnic communities with bespoke immigration policies that make New Zealand a more attractive destination for high-skilled migrants to settle long-term, including a broader review of family and partnership policy with an initial focus on culturally arranged marriages.
- Work to clear the backlog of the parent category and implement a new long-term temporary parent visa category (Super Visa) for those not eligible for the current parent residency category. Subject to detailed design and consultation, this new visa will allow parents to stay in New Zealand for a period of up to ten years, with a requirement for medical insurance and undertakings

from New Zealand resident children for appropriate care and support.

- Undertake a one-off regularisation of well-settled overstayers who have been in New Zealand for ten years or more. By becoming eligible to apply to regularise their visa status, thousands of existing residents will be treated more fairly at work and gain access to more Government services, such as higher education.

- Continue to resettle and support refugees in New Zealand, while also ensuring equitable support services to asylum seekers subsequently recognised as refugees. Asylum seekers will also be provided adequate support services while their claims are processed. A discreet rainbow subcategory will be also introduced to New Zealand's annual refugee quota.

[You can read more about our immigration policies here.](#)





13.

REGIONAL NEW ZEALAND

## Regional New Zealand

We know that when our regions do well, all of New Zealand excels. Labour will focus on building resilient regional communities with good access to services and thriving economies that are growing good jobs in the regions and backing local businesses.

### Improving rural connectivity

Rural communities are at risk of being severely affected by extreme weather events, and in remote communities it is so crucial that emergency services have reliable road access.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Strengthen the resilience of our roading network through a 41% increase in investment for essential maintenance of state highways and local roads, and significant new interregional connections through the New Zealand Upgrade and Strategic Investment package.
- Install up to 1000 new EV chargers in smaller rural communities so charging is not a barrier in rural communities for adapting to EVs. This funding will ensure more Kiwis are able to make the switch to an EV.
- Improve broadband infrastructure and digital connectivity in the worst-served areas, enabling stronger connections and greater productivity.

### Growth across Aotearoa

Labour will back local businesses to grow good local jobs across regional New Zealand. We will improve connection between regions, support our primary sector to grow their exports, maintain our agricultural sectors' international competitive edge into the future, and invest in the new and innovative businesses of the future.

Food and Fibre revenue is at record highs, up 50% from 2017.

Our economic security depends on New Zealand's food and fibre sector. Consumers around the world are more climate conscious

and are changing their spending to match. Other countries are moving to compete and seize these opportunities. New Zealand cannot afford to be left behind. In many areas we will not be the first to make these changes, but we can still be the most innovative. The future growth of our exports will be built on a credible plan to reduce our emissions and meet our targets.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Work with farming leaders on He Waka Eke Noa, roll out integrated extension services to work alongside farmers, foresters, and growers, and invest in the Centre for Climate Action on Agricultural Emissions to enable our primary sector to adopt the new technology, adapt practices and drive value growth as they respond to changing international markets. [You can read more about this work in our Climate Manifesto.](#)
- Implement the Forestry and Wood Processing ITP and prioritise domestic processing, enable increased domestic manufacturing, and unlock commercial and environmental opportunities from native tree species.
- Expand into new and emerging markets to grow our economy, create jobs, and support economic resilience across our trade markets in a time of global uncertainty, as set out in our Economic Priorities.

Since 2018, we have allocated \$4.5 billion towards a range of projects and initiatives to grow good jobs in our regions, with more than 1,000 projects completed.

These projects have created thousands of jobs, helped cushion the impact of COVID-19,



and laid the foundation for strong regional economic growth.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Invest in the Regional Strategic Partnership Fund to support the development of more productive, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive regional economies.

### Strong regional services

Rural communities' health needs are often under-served, particularly in relation to accessing health services, and our health system has not adequately considered the different needs of rural communities in funding and planning health services.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to remove the postcode lottery through our health reforms, as set out in Chapter 7.
- Implement the new Rural Health Strategy, the first health strategy for rural communities.

We have begun the process of substantially rebalancing the Ministry of Education towards more regional and local support and have established a \$10m yearly Regional Response Fund to support the local arms of the Ministry to respond to local needs.

We've invested \$382 million on improving classrooms in small or remote schools.

The programme seeks to improve lighting, noise levels, temperature, energy efficiency and comfort. Improvements include LEDs, acoustic panels in teaching spaces, thermal insulation in ceilings, residual current devices (RCDs) and carpet tiles in primary school teaching spaces. Since 2019 195 schools have benefited from completed projects as part of this programme.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Deliver the 589 classroom improvement projects are currently underway.





14.

OUR NATURAL WORLD

## Our natural world

Our natural world sustains us: we rely on flourishing ecosystems to survive. When nature thrives so do our families, communities and businesses. Labour will continue to build on our track record of action to protect and restore our natural world, protecting today what we need to survive tomorrow.

Aotearoa New Zealand is unique. We have some of the oldest and rarest biodiversity in the world, both on and off our conservation land. But our streams, forests, wildlife, wetlands, mountains, plains, coasts and ocean are all suffering the impacts of climate change, pests and predators, and human activity.

We have the highest proportion of threatened species in the world, with over 4,000 species threatened or at risk of extinction.

Kiwis love and value the natural world we live within and are proud of the efforts we make together to stop predators, protect our birds, forests and rivers, and preserve and rejuvenate the ecosystems around us that we all enjoy and care for.

### Boosting conservation efforts

Labour backs nature, and that is why we made the largest investment in nature, expanding our ability to protect our conservation land and native plants and wildlife, and maintain the huts and tracks that make our great outdoors accessible to all and a world-leading tourism experience.

We have launched Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020, to guide our efforts to protect our unique biodiversity.

We created thousands of nature-based jobs through the successful Jobs for Nature programme, which helped get communities through COVID and simultaneously helped nature and connecting communities. Now's not the time to stop.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue the successful Jobs for Nature programme, with a renewed focus on achieving biodiversity outcomes and nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, including native afforestation and wetlands.
- Repeal and replace the 70-year-old Wildlife Act, which currently hinders our ability to protect and rejuvenate nature.
- Introduce a biodiversity credit system to incentivise and reward landowners for protecting New Zealand's indigenous flora and fauna.

Conservation land is set aside to protect our biodiversity, natural and heritage spaces; mining damages the environment and kills wildlife and has no place on conservation land.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Legislate to prevent mining on conservation land.

The Department of Conservation has been underfunded for decades, and while we have made good progress there is more to do. A re-elected Labour government will:

- Complete the financial sustainability review of the Department for Conservation and explore mechanisms to increase the level and long-term funding for New Zealand's conservation efforts.

Pest management is a key tool to protect our wildlife, and we must continue cracking down on the animals that are destroying our native flora and fauna. We are also focused on eradicating the diseases having a devastating impact on our most precious trees.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Refresh the Predator Free 2050 Strategy, including prioritising on strategically important areas where we can demonstrate success and learn from it.
- Provide a nationally coordinated, long-term approach to the management of kauri dieback disease through a kauri dieback National Pest Management Plan.
- Review pesticide and herbicide regulations in the light of emerging sciences, explore opportunities to improve pest control practices, and ensure they have the greatest impact possible on halting biodiversity decline.

### Protecting our freshwater resource

Freshwater is a precious and finite resource. It is a taonga of paramount importance to all New Zealanders. Access to safe drinking water must be ensured. Labour came into government in 2017 with the quality of our freshwater badly degraded. Our work since has focused on stopping further degradation, making immediate improvements, and reversing past damage to bring our freshwater resources, waterways and ecosystems to a healthy state within a generation. We have worked hard through our Essential Freshwater reforms to achieve this.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue these reforms to achieve sustainable, efficient and fair allocation of freshwater resources, having regard to all interests including Māori, and existing and potential new users.
- Improve protection of estuaries, including the potential to include them in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, recognising the habitat these areas provide for our indigenous biodiversity, their carbon sequestration value and flood management potential.

### Healthier oceans

Aotearoa New Zealand is responsible for one of the largest and most biodiverse marine areas in the world, with our marine area about 21 times larger than our land area. Oceans and coasts are central to our wellbeing and prosperity, and have provided kaimoana and enjoyment for as long as people have lived here.

In 2020 we created the Oceans and Fisheries portfolio to focus on ocean ecosystems as a whole. In 2021 we articulated our vision for the oceans: to ensure the long-term health and resilience of ocean and coastal ecosystems, including the role of fisheries. In doing so, we recognise and respect all collective interests and be guided by the principles of Te Ao Māori, kaitiakitanga and whanaungatanga.

There is more to do to achieve our vision. Our marine protection legislation is outdated and prevents us from properly protecting our oceans.

We're creating 19 new marine protection areas in the Hauraki Gulf, and have banned bottom trawling from the vast bulk of it.

To address this, a re-elected Labour government will:

- Reform of our marine protection legislation.
- Continue to expand the country's network of marine protected areas and improve protection of key marine environments, working towards the 30% global target for marine protection.
- Work to establish the Rangitāhua / Kermadecs ocean sanctuary.
- Attend to the health of the Hauraki Gulf, continuing to implement the Revitalising the Gulf Strategy, pass the Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill, and strengthen the heritage and environmental protection aspects of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000.
- Continue implementing the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan to protect these rare animals from extinction.

- Continue progressing the Kaipara Moana Remediation project, in partnership with the other contributors.

Labour will act on the emerging issue of seabed mining, considering the recommendations from Parliamentary Select Committee's inquiry. Until international rules are developed and supported by robust science, we will continue to back a conditional moratorium on international seabed mining. Bottom trawling also has a huge impact on our corals and marine environments.

Labour will commit to a ban on new areas of bottom trawling on seamounts and vulnerable marine ecosystems in the New Zealand EEZ and will phase out existing bottom trawling in these areas. We will implement effective marine biosecurity measures, including tackling invasive species, such as the Caulerpa seaweed and golden clam.

We will continue work to mitigate bycatch of seabirds and protected species, such as supporting industry initiatives and exploring further regulatory levers and explore a pathway towards a default 50% biomass of national state for fished marine species by 2030, ensuring that some marine species are not driven into extinction, or entire marine ecosystems damaged.

### Fisheries we can rely on

Fishing and aquaculture industries provide jobs for many communities, and our high-quality New Zealand products earn valuable export returns for our country.

**Fish caught in the wild contribute an estimated \$1.45 billion annually to our economy in exports.**

However, we must balance the use of our oceans as a resource with maintaining its health and resilience. In 2022, the Labour Government modernised and strengthened our Fisheries legislation by ensuring that all fish species caught are reported on and introducing cameras on boats.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Build on our new Fisheries Industry Transformation Plan, which supports our fishing industry to become world leaders in sustainable fishing, working with nature and communities to increase the value we gain from fishing and ensure future generations can do the same.
- Continue to rollout cameras on boats and work with the sector on practical solutions to the issues that drive misreporting.
- Work with the commercial fishing industry to expand use of innovative and data-led practices to support healthy ocean ecosystems and improve accurate data about fishing activity with cost-effective monitoring and auditing systems.

The New Zealand aquaculture industry produces some of the world's best seafood. New Zealand exports to 81 countries, with annual sales of around \$650 million.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to build on our aquaculture strategy including boosting the development of open ocean aquaculture with low environmental impacts.
- Work with Māori fisheries stakeholders to ensure that the full range of Māori rights and interests in fisheries and the marine environment are exercised in an integrated manner, consistent with the obligations in the Māori Fisheries Settlement.

### Planning our future

We have known for nearly two decades that the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) was outdated and ineffective. While previous governments spent years talking about it, we took action and reformed the RMA to put nature first, while enabling responsible development.

The National Planning Framework will coordinate and replace about 20 current pieces of national direction and result in our air, soil, estuaries and coastal areas being protected, restored or enhanced, a reduction of greenhouse gases and the development of well-functioning, climate-resilient urban areas.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Implement the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 and improve how we plan our urban environments.
- Improve urban tree protection and promote urban green spaces.

### **Waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle**

The effective management of waste is crucial for reducing environmental pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and for promoting sustainable practices at all levels of society.

Waste is responsible for about 4% of our total gross greenhouse gas emissions, most of which is methane from decomposing

organic material in landfills. Aotearoa New Zealand has had a poor record in waste management compared with many other developed countries.

Our waste management practices have been ineffective and inconsistent nationally, and legislation has become badly outdated. In government, we have been working to fix this.

We're preventing more than a billion plastic shopping bags and 150 million plastic produce bags a year from being used by phasing out problem plastics.

Labour will future-proof our society and economy through preventing, reducing and recycling waste consistent with a zero-waste circular approach where waste and pollution are designed out. Labour will continue supporting international negotiations towards the development of a global plastics treaty that aims to end plastic pollution.

We will announce our Waste Policy shortly.





15

OUR PLACE  
IN THE WORLD

## Our place in the world

The world around us is changing like never before. Amid this uncertainty, Labour has provided steadfast guidance in our international relations.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, New Zealand stood alongside like-minded countries and our partners to advocate for the international rules-based order that keeps us all safe.

We have led diplomacy for women's rights, speaking-up for women and girls in crisis situations, such as Afghanistan and Iran. We have provided humanitarian assistance to those in need, from Ukraine to Sudan, to Tonga. We have continued to grow our cooperation with Pacific countries to achieve shared prosperity for all, supporting them through natural disasters, and engaging in mutual dialogue on shared concerns.

In the Pacific and beyond, we have provided an unprecedented boost to climate finance to communities on the frontlines. We have deepened our existing relationships across the world, based on our commitment to shared goals of democracy, partnership, safety and security for all.

### Enhancing diplomacy and international cooperation

Labour's values-based, independent approach, based on our values of democracy, human rights, partnership, reciprocity and mutual respect, provides a robust yet nuanced response to a world that faces a period of uncertainty unknown in most of our lifetimes. The peace and prosperity New Zealanders have enjoyed over the past decades is now under threat – from climate change, geo-strategic tensions, conflict, and challenges to the international rules-based order. These challenges can only be solved through global solidarity, with collective, cooperative efforts to continue to build a human society where all people flourish on an abundant planet.

We have worked to embed our unique bi-cultural values of manaaki – the reciprocity of goodwill, whanaunga – our shared sense

of humanity, mahi tahi and kotahitanga – our collective benefits and shared aspiration, and kaitiaki – our role as protectors and stewards of intergenerational wellbeing into our diplomatic toolkit, building on our country's history and Te Tiriti o Waitangi experience.

These values match Labour's belief that multilateral cooperation is key to addressing the global issues that no one state can deal with alone, like climate change and transnational crime.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to build on New Zealand's reputation as a constructive global citizen, expanding its efforts to strengthen the United Nations and its work to reform the UN Security Council, focusing on abolishing the right of veto amongst P5 members.

Labour knows that New Zealand and our people are safer and prosper when we live in a world where all people realise their rights. Labour will put human rights at the heart of its foreign policy.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Pilot a human rights defenders programme from within the existing Vote, providing safe haven for human rights defenders from across Asia and the Pacific, and building our diplomacy in this area. Alongside this, Labour will expand its ability to engage in global human rights diplomacy to promote democracy and peace, and respond to crises as they emerge.

Labour is committed to an enduring and just two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the right of Israel to live in peace within secure borders internationally recognised and agreed by the parties, and reflecting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to also live in peace and security within their own state.



A re-elected Labour government will:

- Invite the Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to present their credentials as an Ambassador to New Zealand.

To advance our indigenous foreign policy, a re-elected Labour government will:

- Leverage bilateral and multilateral relationships with other indigenous groups and nations to protect and promote the rights of indigenous people, including greater economic inclusion.
- Support fundamental shifts in the international rules-based system to establish high environmental thresholds, based on the value of kaitiakitanga, and advance indigenous collaboration arrangements between New Zealand and other indigenous nations.

Times are not only tough here, but across the world. Extreme poverty increased during the COVID pandemic, exacerbated by climate change and conflict. Labour has a strong track record providing humanitarian assistance to those in greatest need, and we have built a reputation as a country that stands up for communities on the frontlines of climate change across the Pacific, Asia and beyond.

**We have quadrupled our support to countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.**

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue providing overseas development assistance, making sure it is high quality and well evaluated to have the greatest impact on lifting people out of poverty and expanding their opportunities.

Labour knows our wellbeing as a Pacific nation is connected to that of other Pacific countries. As a Pacific nation we will continue to work with countries across the Blue Pacific to improve the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of our region. This includes playing our part in keeping a nuclear-free South Pacific.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Ensure New Zealand works with the Pacific Island Forum and civil society organisations to assess the legacy of nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific, support recommendations from this research, and engage in active diplomacy to promote the Treaty of Rarotonga and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Acknowledging the importance of fisheries and oceans for Pacific nations, Labour will continue to support the Blue Pacific by improving current maritime and fisheries surveillance patrols and training.
- Continue our work to expand Pacific Island countries' ability to patrol their waters, through offering capacity and capability development.

### **Promoting peace and disarmament**

Labour is proud of our nuclear-free stance and efforts to eliminate all nuclear weapons. Yet as we act to address the weapons we already have, new technologies are bringing us new weaponry, such as cyber operations and autonomous weapons.

Already, Labour has acted to halt a new arms race, joining partners in committing to ban 'killer robots' – weapons that can target and kill with no meaningful human guidance. Globally, we have been a strong presence alongside partners, speaking up against nuclear weapons at a time when the threat of nuclear weapon deployment is edging closer. But there is more to do. Labour will build on this work and our global reputation as a nuclear-free proponent of peace.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue New Zealand's leadership of diplomatic efforts to revive coordinated action to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and phase out all nuclear weapons.
- Expand our leadership to achieve a global ban on autonomous weapons systems, working with like-minded countries to implement a plan to achieve a global ban on autonomous weapons.
- Urge nations to join the Dublin Declaration

and ensure our own Defence Forces have the systems in place to prevent and mitigate the use of high explosive weapons and weapons of mass destruction in urban areas.

The use of space is increasingly contested and militarised, threatening the peace and prosperity of everyone. To support New Zealand's growing activity in space, we launched the National Space Policy and Aerospace Strategy, emphasising our belief that space is a place for sustainable peaceful purposes.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Advance shared and common interests in space that prevent the militarisation, degradation or pollution of space from New Zealand's soil and promote effective international agreements to protect space for peaceful multilateral purposes.
- Engage diplomatically to strengthen and enforce the UN Treaty for Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), including for it to include objects in Earth's orbit, establish greater independent oversight of New Zealand's space activity, and actively participate in multilateral activities that address the issues of space junk, the impact on night-sky observation and Astro-tourism from satellite constellations, and space activities' contribution to climate change.

### **Protecting New Zealand's interests**

The global strategic and security environment has altered significantly over recent years. As a small State in a world of cyber operations and artificial intelligence, New Zealand can't face these challenges alone. We need to work with other like-minded countries to ensure we can defend our values of democracy and peace, while also being transparent and accountable to the public.

Over the past six years, Labour has taken important steps to ensure New Zealand's security and stability. We have strengthened the public administration and accountability of the New Zealand Defence Forces through implementing the Operation Burnham

recommendations, including establishing the Office of the Independent Inspector-General of Defence. In 2022 we instigated a Defence Policy Review, to assess the state of New Zealand's defence policy, strategy and capabilities. This year alone we have delivered the largest increase for defence personnel pay in a decade.

Given the global strategic uncertainty, we must do more to protect New Zealand and our people, and build a world-class defence force. Labour will announce our Defence policy shortly.

To respond to our increasing cybersecurity needs, Labour will develop a coordinated, national cyber security approach to best protect people, businesses and institutions from cyberattacks, enabling them to optimise the benefits from their use of digital, cyber and electronic connectivity. We will continue our successful global leadership to eliminate online extremism through The Christchurch Call: seeking the cooperation of nations and global social media and information platforms to identify trends and prevent cyber domains being used for sharing violent extremist and terrorist material.



16

■ ENHANCING OUR  
DEMOCRACY AND  
SUPPORTING OUR  
NATIONAL IDENTITY

## Enhancing our democracy and supporting our national identity

Democracy is the cornerstone of a just and inclusive society. Every voice deserves to be heard, and all perspectives within our society must be represented. This is equally relevant at both central and local government levels. These institutions must be underpinned by good governance and accessible services.

A successful, flourishing arts and cultural sector contributes to our national identity, and we believe in a well-supported public media environment to ensure that New Zealand's stories are told.

### Responsive government

Labour is proud of the progress we have made on enhancing our democracy at the central government level. This has included work on open government and transparency, expanding the Māori Electoral Option period, tightening our political donations regime, and the launch of a fundamental review of our electoral law.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Respond to the recommendations of the Independent Review on Electoral Reform.
- Continue our work on open government, building on our progress to date.
- Continue work to ensure that frontline public services are easily accessible by New Zealanders, and that departments interact with citizens using plain language.
- Address digital hardship and exclusion, so that all New Zealanders have the ability to access digital devices and the internet at home and develop policies to promote digital literacy and ensure basic training on the use of digital devices is easily available to all.

### Strong local democracy

Labour will uphold local decision making in the democratic institutions of local government. Local governments play an integral role in the delivery of social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing for all New Zealanders. We will

maintain a cooperative, genuine, enduring, and meaningful partnership with local government through a time of significant reform.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue the Affordable Water Reforms as set out in Chapter 6.
- Implement the new Spatial Planning Act 2023 and Natural and Built Environments Act 2023, as set out in Chapter 7 & 15.
- Develop a broader range of funding tools so that everyone pays their fair share and communities have more choices about how to raise funds for the things they value. This will include working across Parliament to legislate to enable Congestion Charging, considering value capture options and enabling councils to make better use of targeted rates.
- Urgently work with local government to develop a framework for climate adaptation and managed retreat, as set out in Chapter 9.
- Respond to the recommendations of the Future of Local Government Review, following the receipt of further input from the local government sector.
- Lower the local government voting age to 16 by passing the Electoral (Lowering Voting Age for Local Elections and Polls) Legislation Bill.
- Make the Electoral Commission responsible for running local government elections, including promotion and voter education.
- Ensure our emergency management systems are geared towards an inclusive, community-led response to natural disasters, through the passage of the Emergency Management Bill.

- Work with Auckland Council to review Auckland Council’s governing legislation, including the Council’s relationship with Council-Controlled Organisations.
- Reform consultation requirements to focus more on engaging with communities rather than requiring councils to use a cumbersome and difficult process that doesn’t work for many residents.

### **Treasuring our arts, culture, and heritage**

Our stories and history are unique, and it is right that we celebrate them. Our priorities are ensuring there is more quality local broadcast content – about New Zealanders, made by New Zealanders, supporting the next generation of artists, and securing the future of Te Reo Māori.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Explore an Aotearoa Arts Strategy, bringing together the significant work under way in the arts and culture sector including toi Māori and Pacific arts.
- Build on the success of the Creative Careers pilot and New Zealand Music Commission internships funded through the Cultural Sector Capability Fund by investing in a permanent programme to support New Zealand artists to have sustainable and rewarding careers.
- Deliver the Erebus memorial and St James refurbishment.
- Continue to support our cultural entities Creative NZ, NZ Film Commission, NZ Symphony Orchestra, Royal NZ Ballet, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand Music Commission, Antarctic Heritage Trust and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, and regional cultural entities.

### **Vibrant local media**

A strong local media sector, able to tell local stories and attract world-class journalists, is essential for a well-functioning liberal democracy. We are proud of our record in supporting the crucial role the media has in our society.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Legislate to ensure that large multinational digital platforms pay a fair price to New Zealand media companies for the local news content they host and share on their platforms.
- Continue to support our existing public media entities to ensure there is high-quality local content – about New Zealanders, made by New Zealanders.

### **Sports and racing**

Sport plays a significant role in bringing our communities together. Our success on the world stage also brings inspiration and pride to our country and large events, such as the FIFA Women’s World Cup, bring Kiwis together and build community spirit.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Roll out the Strategy for Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation.
- Complete the review into greyhound racing, ensuring that animal welfare is the prime consideration in determining the industry’s future.



17.

VALUING EVERYONE  
IN AOTEAROA

## Valuing everyone in Aotearoa

### Gender and equality

New Zealand has been at the forefront of fighting for gender equality. New Zealand was a world leader in implementing the Electoral Act which gave women the right to vote in September 1893. This law was the first step in fulfilling women's rights, reducing gender inequalities and acknowledging the importance of women in our political system.

We have taken massive strides since then, including reducing the gender pay gap, increasing leadership for women in the public sector and extending Paid Parental Leave.

However, there is still much to do, particularly for Māori and Pacific women, who remain underrepresented in many of the areas where women in general are making progress.

We know that women undertake most of the caring work in New Zealand, both paid and unpaid. While unpaid work is an important contribution to the economy and society, it is often poorly recognised and undervalued. We are committed to improving support for women both in their caring responsibilities, and if they want to return to the workforce.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue to make progress on pay equity, with over 100,000 people receiving a pay equity pay increase to date.
- Implement a Pay Transparency regime.
- Pay a matching KiwiSaver 'employer' contribution to Paid Parental Leave recipients, as announced in Budget 2023.
- Increase abatement thresholds so people can earn more while on a benefit and are not discouraged from taking up part-time work.
- Implement child support pass-on, continue the welfare overhaul and implement the recommendations of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group.

- Work with business leaders to develop a for women by women innovation and entrepreneurship scholarship programme aimed at lifting women's entrepreneurial pathways for low to middle income women interested in running a small business.

We will act to ensure women's healthcare is free from discrimination. We will progressively implement the Women's Health Strategy, fund initiatives to support women's health and whānau health, train staff and support staff, and provide funding for NGOs that work in this area. In addition, a re-elected Labour government will:

- Develop a national endometriosis action plan to provide a clear blueprint to tackle endometriosis through education and awareness, support the training of healthcare professionals, clinical management, and care, and research.
- Extend the age of breast cancer screening to 74 years.
- Protect increased access to free long-acting contraception, sexual health care and period products.
- Provide free cervical screening.

[You can read our Women's Manifesto here.](#)

### Supporting our disability community

Labour will continue our work towards a more inclusive and accessible New Zealand. Approximately one in four New Zealanders identify as having a disability. Disabled people face significant obstacles to wellbeing, including disproportionate representation in poverty statistics and experiences of inaccessibility and discrimination.

We are committed to supporting disabled people and the realisation of their full rights and opportunities. This commitment can be achieved through disability focused policy, funding and services, as well as ensuring disabled people as a population group have their needs and potential considered across all significant policy and service

development. “Nothing about us, without us” is the mantra that underpins how Labour approaches addressing disability issues.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue transforming the cross-government disability support system and the roll out of Enabling Good Lives, using the power of the Government for more coordinated and better outcomes.
- Respond in a people-centred and mana-enhancing way to the findings of the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care.
- Listen to the disabled community and strengthen the draft Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill so it better follows a rights-based approach and has mechanisms to ensure public and private organisations fulfil their responsibilities under this legislation.
- Implement the recommendations of the Highest Needs Review, and improve transition support for neurodiverse students moving between secondary, as set out in Chapter 4.
- Develop and rollout diagnostic and assessment pathways for neurodiversity in the public health system, so that we can focus on early interventions.
- Increase the number of NZSL interpreters working nationwide so that deaf people can better access health services, including by increasing interpreters’ pay and providing more training so interpreters can better understand the language used in the health sector.

We commit to increasing disabled people’s employment rates to be comparable with non-disabled people, especially for disabled women, tangata whaikaha Māori and Pasifika. We will support all disabled people who wish to work in the sector that suits them, including in self-employment.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- End the Minimum wage exemption by mid-2025 and replace this with a wage supplement so all disabled people receive at least the minimum wage.

- Implement the Disability Employment Action plan and start to shift the way employment services are contracted for and delivered, so that disabled people are put at the centre, in line with Enabling Good Lives principles.

- Increase specialist employment services and industry partnerships, and link up vocational education, trade training and apprenticeships with employment services to facilitate employment and on the job learning.

- Continue our overhaul of the welfare system, guided by the recommendations of the Welfare Expert Advisory group, including modernising how relationship status is treated in the welfare system so a disabled person is no longer disadvantaged if they partner up with another disabled or non-disabled person and improving the levels of support provided by the Disability Allowance and the Child Disability Allowance.

Universal design has many benefits for disabled people and beyond, such as diverse renters, people over 65, people who get injuries, and for multi-generational families. We will increase universal design because we know the higher upfront costs are offset by benefits for the lifetime of the house and for the many different people who will live in it over time. We will increase percentage of new public housing builds with Universal Design from 15% to 25% over time, delivering 20% by 2027.

Accessibility to transport allows disabled people to work, have a home, participate in their communities, get an education, and live fuller lives. We will work with local councils and operators so that all public transport services in major cities and regions are fully accessible for more hours, and accessible services are available outside major cities.

We will work to increase the number of mobility vehicles available 24/7 in major cities so Total Mobility users have greater quality of access. We will also continue to support and grow Total Mobility so it increases equality of access outside major cities particularly in rural areas, and meets the needs of disabled people now and into the future.



## Strong Pacific communities

Within New Zealand, we have a large Pacific population that makes up almost 8% of the population. It is important that our New Zealand Pacific peoples can access and participate in Pacific culture. We know that young Pacific people who are strong in their language and culture, are more likely to succeed in education, secure higher paying jobs, build greater personal resilience, and contribute greatly to their wider community. Labour will advance the All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Strategy and the Lalanga Fou goals: thriving languages and cultures; prosperous communities; resilient and healthy peoples; and confident and thriving youth.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Implement the Pacific Languages Strategy.
- Introduce a Pacific Community Wellbeing and Resilience Fund.
- Implement the Pacific Employment Action Plan.
- Implement a diabetes prevention and treatment programme for Pacific communities in South Auckland.

Labour will continue to focus on Pacific wellbeing through supporting culturally responsive housing programmes, alongside our broader Housing policy.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Prioritise Pacific aspirations for homeownership by continuing the Pacific Housing initiative.
- Support community housing providers to build and maintain more accessible sustainable and appropriate housing.
- Offer wrap-around services to public, social, and community housing tenants to enable stability and community support.

We will empower Pacific peoples to be in full control of their health and wellbeing. Our continuing health reforms mean Pacific people now have their own health strategy for the first time, and our broader Health policy will ensure that timely high-quality services are reaching Pacific peoples, wherever they live.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Implement the directions and long-term priorities of 'Te Mana Ola: The Pacific Health Strategy'.
- Grow and supporting strong Pacific health leadership and a resilient health workforce that reflects the population it serves.
- Support Pacific health care providers to enable care closer to home,
- Pay special attention to Pacific women's care especially endometriosis and early detection of cancer.

We understand the pivotal role education plays in opening opportunities for Pacific children and young people.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue taking action to ensure diverse Pacific learners and families are safe, valued, and equipped to achieve their education aspirations.
- Focus on Pacific bilingual and immersion education and on Pacific languages in education, as part of the 2023 refresh of the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030.
- Develop a culturally responsive workforce and grow, retain and value highly competent teachers, leaders and educational professionals with diverse Pacific whakapapa.
- Scale up existing effective and innovative programmes which support greater recruitment, retention, and achievement by Pacific people in tertiary education.

## Empowering ethnic communities

New Zealand is a diverse and inclusive country. Our ethnic diversity is a source of strength, bringing new insights, skills, and opportunities to our society. To fully harness these benefits, we need to provide a supportive environment for New Zealand's ethnic communities to settle and prosper. Labour aims to support everyone to reach their full potential in life, while retaining a connection to their heritage, culture, and language.

We recognise in particular that ethnic communities in New Zealand seek opportunities to live in welcoming and safe communities, to succeed and contribute back to New Zealand, to be treated fairly and on their merits, and to build lives in a respectful and tolerant community.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Ensure ethnic communities have greater recognition and inclusion in government decision-making, including by strengthening the Ethnic Communities Graduate Programme, and building civic engagement across various leadership levels through a capacity-building programme.
- Support ethnic communities, including by better supporting ethnic media and representation of ethnic communities in mainstream media, boosting funding to ethnic communities for family and sexual violence, and growing ethnic women's leadership capacity.
- Eliminate the gap in employment rates and pay rate gaps between ethnic and non-ethnic populations, including by removing barriers to employment for ethnic communities, better supporting migrant workers who are exploited, and publish ethnic pay gaps for companies a certain size or above.
- Ensure ethnic communities are better served as patients and service-users, including through better funding to community groups providing health and social services to ethnic groups, more translation services and health promotion

efforts, and ending discrimination against overseas-trained health professionals.

## Supporting seniors

New Zealand has an ageing population. This means more of us are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. We need to ensure New Zealand has the resources and support for our older people while also embracing the opportunities that an ageing population and longevity brings.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Protect superannuation by keeping the age at 65 and continuing to index Superannuation to wage growth.
- Continue to implement the Better Later Life Strategy, which promotes a society where people can age positively and where older people are highly valued and recognised as an integral part of families and communities.
- Continue the implementation of the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan, building on our endorsement and initial Budget 2022 \$12m funding to deliver post-diagnostic support trials for new diagnoses and to enable innovative respite care.
- Reform the Retirement Villages Act to make it more affordable for residents without reducing services.
- Build on our commitment to provide Kāinga Ora public homes designed specifically to meet the needs of older New Zealanders, such as the Highbury Triangle development in Avondale, Auckland.
- Extend the age of breast cancer screening to 74 years.
- Support professional development and workforce growth within primary healthcare to provide advanced care planning, palliative care services, dementia services, home care services, chronic condition management and mental healthcare services.

## Our Rainbow community

From Homosexual Law Reform to Civil Unions and Marriage Equality, Labour has long been with our Rainbow communities and fighting for equity and justice. We will continue to do this, creating a more inclusive and accepting New Zealand.

Labour will provide better access, support and treatment for our Rainbow communities through our health system and ensure our healthcare system is responsive to the needs of trans, intersex and gender diverse people. We will strengthen public and population health responses, such as rolling out the HIV Action Plan which ensures communities at greater risk can access PrEP, strives to eliminate local transmission of HIV and ensure people with HIV have healthy lives free from stigma and discrimination, and quicker responses to emerging threats like Mpox.

Discrimination continues in some areas of public policy and service delivery, despite progress over the past few decades. We will make sure central government policy formation and service delivery upholds the rights of Rainbow people and is fully responsive to Rainbow community rights and needs.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Improve our primary care response for the rainbow community and roll out Budget 2022's funding allocated for eight primary healthcare providers for gender affirming care. We will also develop and deploy a nationwide informed consent model for gender affirming healthcare and will fund people's treatment within this model as appropriate to standards of care. We will review the cost of gender-affirming surgeries and treatment with a view to lowering the cost and more equitable access.
- Develop and implement a child rights-based healthcare protocol for intersex children so that no one is subjected to unnecessary medical or surgical treatment during infancy or childhood, and binary gender assignment is not automatically presumed to be the best-case outcome.

- Acknowledge the emerging evidence of discrimination and convene a Blood Donation roundtable, bringing together advocates, experts and specialist organisations to explore the latest evidence regarding Donor Behavioural Criteria; particularly the three months stand down period that applies for sex workers and men who have sex with men”
- Respond to the Law Commission's Ia Tangata review of protections in the Human Rights Act 1993 for people who are transgender, non-binary, and with innate variations of sex characteristics. We have asked the Law Commission to do more work in that space, because we want all New Zealanders to live free of discrimination regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Introduce new ways of ensuring government agencies are fully aware, responsive, and inclusive of Rainbow community rights and needs, in policy formation and service delivery. We would introduce new ways of coordinating resources and expertise to address community needs.

We will work with schools and teachers so that every Rainbow student has a safe environment to learn and thrive. A re-elected Labour government will accelerate the progress made since 2017, by:

- Encouraging the adoption of the Ministry of Education's sexuality education guidelines for principals, Boards of Trustees, and teachers. The guidelines outline how schools should go about teaching to support the inclusion and wellbeing of students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.
- Providing ongoing professional development for teachers, including understanding sexual orientation, gender diversity and variations of sex characteristics, bullying and the UN Convention on the rights of the Child.

- Ensuring the curriculum and environments in schools are safe and inclusive for all through promoting gender neutral bathrooms and uniforms, and Rainbow inclusive curricula.

Labour will establish a Rainbow refugee quota, broaden immigration criteria around tier-one families to be more inclusive, and support gender diverse migrants and refugees better.

Rainbow people who live outside our major cities can still face major discrimination and stigma and lack enough opportunities to gather and support each other throughout the year. Pride events are incredibly important for celebrating our community, meeting other Rainbow people, and helping people become vibrant contributors to their communities. We will better support Rainbow people outside major cities to meet other Rainbow people and become vibrant contributors to their communities and provide long-term support to NGOs.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Investigate how best to support Rainbow the sustainability of Rainbow community events that occur outside our largest cities.
- Provide regular and long-term funding for NGOs that support young people and all Rainbow people to be happy affirmed versions of themselves.

## Leaders of tomorrow

We want New Zealand to be the best place in the world for children and young people. The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy sets out a shared understanding of what children and young people need and want to be well, and what we can and should be doing to support them. It will guide Labour's work to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in New Zealand.

A re-elected Labour government will:

- Continue the successful Mana in Mahi and He Poutama Rangatahi programmes to support people upskilling and getting people into work and make Apprenticeship Boost permanent.
- Maintain the Healthy School Lunch programme and the successful nurses in school programme.
- Expand Mana Ake – Stronger Together beyond the Canterbury region over the next five years ensuring every primary and intermediate age child has access to dedicated mental health professionals.
- Strengthen healthy home compliance and enforcement efforts by Tenancy Services, and regulate property managers.
- Continue our programme to address period poverty through providing free access to period products in schools.
- Work to strengthen the student voice in the school and tertiary education system.

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