

# THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM

# CCHQ 2016



14 June 2016

Mr Corey Irlam  
RainbowVotes Coordinator  
Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby  
PO Box 21305  
Little Lonsdale Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 8001

Dear Mr Irlam

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. On behalf of the Coalition Members of Parliament and candidates I am pleased to respond to your survey.

Australia's future depends on how well we can continue to grow and shape our economy.

Only the Liberal and National Parties have an **economic plan** to do that and ensure Australia's future.

We have a clear plan to transition the economy from the mining and investment boom to a stronger and more diverse economy.

The key elements of our national economic plan for jobs and growth are:

- An Innovation and Science programme bringing Australian ideas to market. This means greater investment and more jobs and opportunities for our young people;
- A New Defence Industry plan that will secure an advanced defence manufacturing industry in Australia. This will create thousands of new hi-tech, higher paying jobs;
- Export Trade Deals that will generate more than 19,000 new export opportunities. These will create many more jobs for our urban and regional families;
- New Tax Incentives, which will include tax cuts for more small businesses. More than two million businesses can benefit, to deliver more growth and jobs; and
- A Strong New Economy with more than 200,000 jobs expected to be created.

Our national economic plan and management is already paying dividends. Last year our economy continued to grow creating almost 300,000 new jobs, many of them in small business.

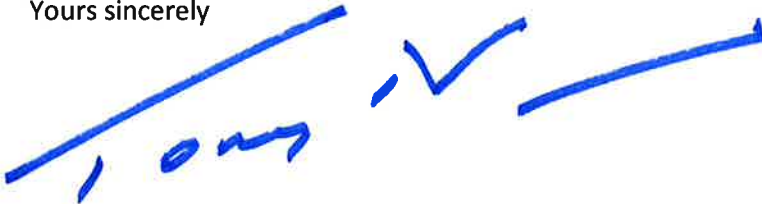
We cannot put economic growth and the jobs that come with it at risk with a return to Labor and their debt and deficits, high taxing, big spending ideas.

Only a Liberal and National Party Government can protect Australia's future.

Once announced, our policies will be available at [www.liberal.org.au](http://www.liberal.org.au) and [www.nationals.org.au](http://www.nationals.org.au).

Thank you for communicating the Coalition's commitments to your members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Nutt', with a checkmark above the name.

Tony Nutt  
National Campaign Director

## COALITION RESPONSE TO RAINBOWVOTES

### LGBTI Youth

The Coalition Government believes no one should feel unsafe at school. National and international research shows that a supportive and inclusive school environment is essential for all students to be healthy and happy and achieve their potential. Commonwealth funding to schools is dependent upon them complying with State and Territory school registration requirements, which include compliance with relevant legislation including anti-discrimination legislation.

The previous Government committed, in a four year contract, to funding the Foundation for Young Australians to develop and implement the Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) programme nationally. The funding supports the development and provision of resources and training for schools that choose to participate in the programme.

The SSCA programme has two very worthy objectives. First, to prevent homophobia and transphobia bullying in schools and promote an inclusive learning environment. Second, to support students who face personal issues in terms of their gender identity and sexual orientation.

While SSCA has been developed to align with the Australian Curriculum, schools make their own decisions to utilise any of the SSCA resources and approaches as they see fit. At its core, this is a programme that is funded with the objective of reducing discrimination and promoting tolerance. We should all agree that we should be working towards school environments where there is no discrimination and students feel included. However, it is also important that all resources used in schools are age appropriate and educationally sound.

People have different personal views, both for and against, the SSCA programme. It is for this reason that the Coalition Government commissioned an independent review of the appropriateness and efficacy of its resources.

The purpose of the review by Professor Bill Loudon, Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Western Australia, was, in part, to give confidence to parents and the school community in the SSCA programme and its objectives.

The review aimed to ensure that the programme was age appropriate and aligned to the Australian Curriculum and found improvements could be made.

As a result, the Government has made changes to ensure these two criteria were met.

It is hoped that these changes will encourage schools who have not yet signed on to the SSCA programme to consider joining the coalition of safe schools, confident in the appropriateness of the resources.

The review findings and the Australian Government's response can be found at [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au).

Further information on the different kinds of Australian Government support that are provided against all forms of bullying can be found at [www.safeschoolshub.edu.au](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au).

## **Marriage**

The Turnbull Government believes that a decision on same-sex marriage should be made by a vote by all Australians via a plebiscite as soon as possible after the election.

The Prime Minister has publicly supported same sex marriage for a long time and will be voting in favour of same sex marriage.

If the majority of Australians vote 'yes' in the plebiscite, the Parliament should respect that decision and legalise same-sex marriage in Australia.

## **Representation and Engagement**

The Australian Human Rights Commission is the nation's independent human rights body. It works to find practical and long-term solutions to the human rights issues facing all people in Australia, including the LGBTI community, and aims to build greater understanding and respect for human rights in the community.

The Coalition appointed a full time Human Rights Commissioner, Tim Wilson, who was a strong advocate for the LGBTI community. The new Human Rights Commissioner, Ed Santow, will continue this important advocacy role for the LGBTI community.

The Commission's 2015 report, *Resilient Individuals: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Intersex Rights*, built on earlier findings that LGBTI people in Australia experience disproportionately high rates of structural, institutional and interpersonal discrimination and harassment.

The Commission is working closely with key stakeholders to end discrimination and harassment against LGBTI people and to promote initiatives focused on reducing the unacceptably high rates of anxiety and depression experienced by LGBTI Australians.

The Coalition does not have a dedicated spokesperson for LGBTI Australians. Issues facing the LGBTI community are handled across Government according to Ministerial responsibilities and administrative arrangements. Issues relating to LGBTI equality generally fall within the Attorney-General's portfolio. Government funding for community bodies, including LGBTI stakeholders, are subject to normal competitive grants processes.

If re-elected, the Coalition will continue to consult with the LGBTI organisations across the broad range of policy issues affecting LGBTI Australians.

## **Equality and Non-Discrimination**

The Coalition is strongly committed to ensuring that rights of LGBTI people are protected and that they can live free from discrimination. We believe LGBTI people should be treated with the same respect as any other member of the community.

The Coalition supported the removal of discrimination against same-sex couples in Commonwealth laws and the *Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013* which established sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status as protected grounds under the Sex Discrimination Act. Since 2013, the Coalition Government has also

been working with the States and Territories to remove any remaining discrimination against LGBTI people in their legislation.

A foundation principle of the Coalition is to value families. The Coalition does not seek to proscribe the nature or makeup of these families. We took the lead in proposing amendments to the *Family Law Act* which were subsequently adopted by the Labor Government to recognise same-sex families. The Act now recognises the non-birth mother of a child born through artificial conception procedures as the parent of the child.

The Coalition will continue to design laws that appropriately balance the rights and freedoms of the LGBTI community and religious communities to advance the freedoms of all consistent with Australia's liberal democratic traditions. We retain a strong commitment to non-discrimination in the provision of healthcare, education, employment and welfare services by service providers.

### **Data and Research**

The Coalition is supportive of statistical collection relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status where these factors are relevant to the health and welfare of the LGBTI community. Decisions on data collection are ultimately the responsibility of agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

We are supportive of the progress that ABS have made in this regard, with the release of a new Standard for Sex and Gender variables in February 2016 and the introduction of an 'other' option for gender in the upcoming 2016 Census.

### **Health**

The Turnbull Coalition team is committed to building a 21<sup>st</sup> century health system for all Australians regardless of their sexual orientation or economic status. Our objectives are to ensure that consumers are at the centre of all decisions and reforms; that patients have better health outcomes; and that health services are well-integrated, efficient and better delivered.

The Coalition is delivering integrated care to Australians with mental health issues, including members of the LGBTI community, thanks to a once-in-a-generation national reform that will see greater focus on personalised care. The Coalition's reforms take a 'whole-of-system' perspective, where Commonwealth-funded services will complement rather than duplicate State and Territory mental health care services.

With Primary Health Networks (PHNs) playing a key role, these reforms will facilitate co-investment by States and Territories and other key community, academic and private partners in regionalised service development and suicide prevention for all Australians including LGBTI people. Key reforms in mental health will be co-ordinated with other major primary care-based general health reforms, including Health Care Homes.

Community mental health services will be delivered in a 'stepped care' approach. This means that patients receive the appropriate level of care, matched to the severity of their illness. Trials of co-ordinated care packages begin in July 2016 at a number of PHN lead sites across the country.

Included in the Coalition's mental health reforms is a new National Suicide Prevention Strategy to address the current fragmented approach to suicide prevention and focus on effective strategies that help prevent suicide and reduce suicidal behaviour.

The Coalition has also made a joint commitment with State and Territory Governments to develop a Fifth National Mental Health Plan to promote leadership and collaboration in agreed key areas, including suicide prevention. A key focus for the Coalition is the need to ensure a broader focus for good mental health, that includes housing, social services, family support, employment and education-based initiatives at all levels of Government.

In addition to these services, the Coalition has extended funding for the MindOUT! National LGBTI mental health and suicide project run by the National LGBTI Health Alliance to 2016-17. MindOUT! addresses the high rates of depression, anxiety and suicide amongst LGBTI people. The Coalition has also extended funding to Q-Life, a teleweb counselling and referral service for the LGBTI community.

A re-elected Coalition Government will continue to invest in preventative health activities targeted at the specific needs of the population, including LGBTI people.

Under the Coalition, work is progressing on the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions which will supersede the National Chronic Disease Strategy 2005. This national framework will recognise links between National and State-based chronic condition strategies and consider how best to deliver co-ordinated, integrated and multidisciplinary care.

## **HIV/AIDS**

The Coalition recognises that HIV infection is a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of all Australians. There is an urgent need to remain vigilant to stop the spread of HIV. Those who have the illness deserve our support and our efforts to reduce the stigma associated with the illness.

For this reason, the Coalition is committed to delivering on the actions and objectives of the Seventh National HIV Strategy 2014-2017, a strategy developed in conjunction with State and Territory Governments and community organisations. Through this strategy, the Coalition is addressing the key challenges and underlying reasons for rising rates of Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI), including the need to reinforce the safe sex message.

A Coalition Government will build on this work through an Eighth National HIV Strategy, to be developed in conjunction with the States, Territories and community groups over the next two years.

The AIDS 2014 Legacy Statement was endorsed by the Coalition Government in 2014 at the COAG Health Council meeting and includes a commitment to working towards the virtual elimination of new HIV infections in Australia by 2020. The Seventh National HIV Strategy reflects this 2020 timeframe.

The testing, treatment, care and funding of medication, pathology, diagnosis and medical services under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the Medical Benefits Scheme is a priority for

the Coalition Government. We will continue to make new technologies and treatments available to improve the health outcomes of people living with HIV.

Under the Coalition, access to HIV testing has increased by allowing the future supply of in-vitro medical devices for HIV home self-tests. Access to HIV antiretroviral therapies (ART) has also improved under the PBS. This means that people on HIV treatment are now able to access their medication through community pharmacies instead of visiting a hospital.

As well as substantial funding for medications, pathology and diagnostic services, the Coalition has provided \$28.5 million between 2013 and 2016 for BBV and STI research. This is in addition to research funded through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Australian Research Council (ARC).

The Coalition has also provided \$59.19 million from 2014-15 to 2017-18 to support delivery of education and prevention activities linked to the national BBV and STI Strategies and activities that assure the quality of the Australian blood supply. This includes \$22.45 million from 2014 to 2017 to address the rising rates of HIV and STIs through the BBV and STI Prevention Programme.

### **Family Violence**

Ensuring the safety of all Australians including LGBTI people is a key priority of the Turnbull Government. Domestic and family violence cannot be excused or justified under any circumstances and is a cultural problem the Government is addressing. All victims, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, need compassionate and highly responsive support. All perpetrators must be held accountable for their violence.

While the Government recognises that anyone can experience domestic and family violence and sexual assault, evidence shows the majority of victims are women and the majority of perpetrators are men. Data from the 2012 Australian Bureau of Statistics *Personal Safety Survey* analysed by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) shows one in four women have experienced violence at the hands of a partner or a former partner, compared to one in 20 men. Both men and women are three times more likely to be assaulted by a man than a woman. These statistics support the need to focus resources on women and their children experiencing violence. More information can be found at [www.anrows.org.au/publications/compass/PSS](http://www.anrows.org.au/publications/compass/PSS).

The Coalition Government has made addressing domestic violence a national priority and we currently spend more than \$275 million per year across a range of portfolios to make Australian communities safer. We have committed \$100 million in the 2016-17 Budget to deliver the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. This builds on the \$100 million Women's Safety Package announced last September.

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

The Coalition Government is fully committed to implementing the NDIS. This is a long-term commitment for all people with disability, including the LGBTI community, who require reasonable and necessary support to live a fulfilling life. We have successfully managed the roll-out of the NDIS, to ensure that it is being delivered on time and on budget.

The Coalition Government has now reached agreements for the full roll out of the NDIS with seven States and Territories - New South Wales (NSW), Victoria, Queensland, South Australia (SA), Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.

Together these agreements provide certainty for around 90 per cent of the 460,000 Australians expected to be eligible for the NDIS.

In Western Australia, we have agreed to extend the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and WA NDIS trials for an additional year, and expand them into new locations. This will give certainty to nearly 11,000 current and future participants of the WA trials that they can expect ongoing support.

The Commonwealth and the Western Australian Governments have agreed to finalise arrangements for the full roll-out of the NDIS in Western Australia by the end of 2016 for commencement of full transition from 1 July 2017.

## **Ageing**

The *National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy* was developed to inform the way the Government responds to the needs of older LGBTI people and supports the aged care sector to deliver care that is sensitive, appropriate and inclusive.

It is recognised that LGBTI Australians have specific needs, particularly as they age, stemming from decades of inequitable treatment and social isolation as a result of stigma and family rejection.

The Government has established a Departmental working group to guide the implementation of the Strategy. Organisations with expertise in aged care for LGBTI communities are represented on the working group.

The working group has been established to provide a platform for members to openly discuss key issues and concerns within the sector.

Reporting on the outcomes and achievements of the strategies is due in June 2017.

\$7.1 million over 5 years (2012-13 to 2016-17) has been provided to support LGBTI people by increasing availability of information and delivery of specific sensitivity training for aged care workers.

Since the 2013 election of the Coalition Government:

- funding to Aged Care has increased by more than \$3 billion;
- the number of residential care places has increased to over 204,000; and
- an additional 23,524 home care packages have been made available.

The number of beds and packages is increasing every year in line with a population based planning ratio, with funding for the overall aged care sector continuing to grow by a further 7 per cent per year.

The Turnbull Government is committed to delivering a plan to create a consumer-driven market approach to aged care, one which can also protect special needs groups and in geographic areas



where it is not always practical for providers to be 'on the ground.' Through our integrated approach to reform, we are also committed to supporting a diverse range of providers to be responsive to the care needs of older Australians.

### **Trans and Gender Diverse Issues/Intersex Issues**

Access to stage 2 hormone treatment is currently available on the PBS under certain conditions. The Coalition has no plans to amend the PBS availability of testosterone where the use is medically indicated.

Issues surrounding intersex surgeries are governed by State legislation. A re-elected Coalition Government will continue to work with the States to ensure intersex issues are properly understood in the context of medical practice.

The Coalition has no plans to change the 2013 *Australian Government Guidelines for the Recognition of Sex and Gender*.

### **Foreign Affairs and Immigration**

Australia is a tolerant, inclusive country committed to democracy, the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms. The Coalition's foreign policy gives expression to these values.

A Coalition Government will continue to promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as called for in the United Nations Charter. We stand with like-minded countries in opposing all forms of violence and intolerance directed towards people on the basis of their sexual orientation, relationships status, gender identity or intersex status.

We will continue to make public and private representations on matters affecting the LGBTI community, at a ministerial or diplomatic level where appropriate.

The Government publicly condemned the murder of Mr Xulhaz Mannan, a prominent LGBTI activist in Bangladesh, calling on authorities to swiftly investigate the attack and ensure those responsible were brought to justice.

The attack on the LGBTI community in Orlando, Florida was deeply distressing and has strengthened our resolve to defeat those who threaten our way of life. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of the attack, as well as their family and friends.

The Coalition Government is campaigning for Australia to be elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2018-2020, to support our efforts to advance the aims of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights worldwide.

Under the Coalition, all protection claims are assessed on their own merits. As such, protection claims on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status are treated in the same way as all other claims for protection.

LGBTI individuals may be assessed as engaging Australia's protection obligations primarily through their membership of a particular social group but may also be linked to other grounds, notably

political opinion and religion, depending on the circumstances. Whether they do, in relation to a particular application will depend on the circumstances of the case.

Well established guidelines assist Department of Immigration and Border Protection decision-makers in assessing protection claims. These guidelines are in line with international best practice and assist decision-makers to effectively assess and address any gender dimension raised in claims.

Decision-makers training covers assessment for membership of a particular social group and incorporates relevant legal cases. Training also includes a strong focus on procedural fairness, including the avoidance of bias or apprehension of bias, as well as appropriate interview and case management techniques. Decision-makers also participate in training specifically related to sexual and gender minority (SGM) and LGBTI issues relevant to the assessment of protection claims.

### **Intersectionality**

The Coalition recognises that LGBTI people come from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. We will continue to support and work towards a society of mutual respect for all people regardless of their individual characteristics. When required, we will consider appropriate support for LGBTI-specific strategies as part of broader Government programmes to promote community cohesion.

The Coalition has an expectation that new residents will embrace our diverse communities and demonstrate respect for all other members of those communities. We will continue to support a culture that advances these important principles. If violence occurs towards LGBTI people, it will be dealt with through traditional law enforcement.