

Dear Nicky,

I write to you in response to your survey request with a deep appreciation for your unwavering advocacy and partnership in advancing the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ Australians. Your dedication plays a vital role in shaping policies that foster a more inclusive and equitable Australian healthcare system.

As you can appreciate, Labor has received thousands of formal correspondence and survey requests over the duration of the federal election campaign. For this reason, we are not able to respond in full to all such requests.

The Albanese Labor Government has taken significant steps to address health disparities within the LGBTIQ+ community. As you would be aware in December 2024, we launched the National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People, developed through extensive consultation with community members, healthcare providers, and LGBTIQ+ organisations. This Action Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to improving healthcare access, mental health support, and overall wellbeing for LGBTIQ+ individuals. We also note the significant work of the HIV Taskforce resulting in the Ninth National HIV Strategy 2024-2030.

I am sharing with you the Australian Labor Party's response to the Equality Australia 2025 Federal Election Survey, which outlines our ongoing commitment to advancing the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ Australians. Additionally, as you would be aware, the Australian Labor Party participated at the Rainbow Votes Election Forum on April 15th of which you were a partner.

We acknowledge the attached response to Equality Australia does not outline our position on all your questions outlined in your survey however we do wish to draw your attention to our election commitment announced on 14th April to provide \$10 million investment to further strengthen Medicare for the LGBTIQ+ community. This initiative aims to enhance access to culturally safe and inclusive care, ensuring all Australians receive access to high quality primary health care services.

We have also committed to ongoing community advisory arrangements to guide the implementation of the Action Plan and inform relevant policy decisions, including future funding arrangements.

Your continued collaboration and advocacy are invaluable as we work together to create a healthcare system that is truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of all Australians. We look forward to our ongoing partnership in this important endeavour if an Albanese Labor Government is re-elected on May 3rd, 2025.

Sincerely,

ALP Campaign 2025



Equality Australia Survey – ALP Response

1. What steps will your party take to implement and fund the National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People, including mental health, suicide prevention, and inclusive healthcare?

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to fostering an inclusive society where every individual, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics, can thrive.

That is why the Albanese Labor Government has worked in genuine partnership with LGBTIQ+ communities to provide a pathway to address entrenched health disparities and deliver better health and wellbeing for LGBTIQ+ people. To deliver the system-wide change required to achieve this – the Albanese Labor Government committed to developing the first ever National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People (the Action Plan).

Launched in December 2024, the Action Plan sets out an ambitious plan to improve the care and support LGBTIQ+ people receive and deliver better physical and mental health outcomes across the community. The Action Plan is the result of the largest national consultation into LGBTIQ+ wellbeing ever undertaken by any Australian government. Guided by an expert advisory group, the Action Plan was co-designed with community members, health care providers and key LGBTIQ+ community organisations.

The Albanese Labor Government has already made a significant investment to support the implementation of the Action Plan, including:

- Establishing a \$13 million grants program to scale up dedicated LGBTIQ+ services and support successful initiatives that build the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Investing \$2 million to collect data to underpin priority areas for action through La Trobe University's 'Private Lives' and 'Writing Themselves In' health and wellbeing surveys.
- Providing \$500,000 to expand InterAction for Health and Human Rights InterLink program, a community-led professional psychosocial support service for people with innate variations of sex characteristics.

A re-elected Albanese Labor Government has committed \$10 million to subsidise training for primary healthcare providers to acquire the skills and knowledge to deliver culturally safe and inclusive primary healthcare. This investment will improve access to inclusive healthcare for all Australians. It will also develop a national accreditation program that will support LGBTIQ+ programs to find healthcare that is inclusive and suitable to their needs.

The Government has also committed to ongoing community advisory arrangements to guide the implementation of the Action Plan and inform relevant policy decisions, including future funding arrangements. This builds on the success of the Expert Advisory Group established to support the development of the Action Plan.

The Government continues to provide funding for programs that support LGBTIQ+ communities, including qheadsapce and QLife which was recently the recipient of additional top up funding in response to the increased demand for services.

A re-elected Albanese Labor Government will continue the commitment it has demonstrated throughout this term to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ communities.

These commitments fall under several of the priority areas of the Action Plan, including:

- Build system wide leadership and cultural change
- Enhance accessibility, availability and safety of healthcare services
- Ensure workforce capability and capacity across both mainstream and LGBTIQ+ services.

2. Will you take a strong stance against LGBTQ+ conversion practices, and take action to address practices which attempt to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity?

The Albanese Labor Government opposes damaging and discredited conversion practices and believes that all Australians deserve to be respected, regardless of their sexuality, gender, or sex characteristics.

Several Labor state and territory governments have introduced laws prohibiting conversion practices, including Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT - which we support.

The regulation and/or criminalisation of these practices is a matter for states and territories.

3. What measures will your party take to improve access to gender-affirming healthcare?

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to supporting, protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of all Australians, including trans and gender diverse people. Ensuring that all Australians receive the best, high quality, evidence-based care is a priority for the Government.

That is why the Albanese Labor Government announced \$22 million in research funding in 2023 towards improving healthcare for LGBTIQ+ Australians, with several projects relating to increasing the evidence base for models of care for gender affirming care:

- \$5 million to Murdoch Children's Research Institute for "Improving health outcomes via the Australian Research Consortium for Trans Youth and Children (ARCTYC)"
- \$1 million to the University of Melbourne for a "Co-designed shared care model of care for gender affirming hormone therapy (COSMAT Study))"
- \$1 million to the University of Melbourne for "Defining and measuring 'whole-of-self' affirming care to evaluate a multidisciplinary, patient-centred, and sustainable model of care for trans young people experiencing intersectional disadvantage"
- \$990,000 to the University of NSW for "A 'whole-of-setting' model of care for trans and gender diverse people in prison"

In line with the Albanese Labor Government's responsibility to ensure all Australians are receiving best practice, evidence-based care, it was announced that the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) will undertake a comprehensive review of the Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents and will develop new national guidelines.

The NHMRC is the nation's leading expert body in health and medical research and has a statutory responsibility for developing and supporting high quality guidelines for clinical practice. The new national guidelines will be developed to the NHMRC's standards of guidelines and the international GRADE (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation) approach to ensure world-class, evidence-based review.

AusPath and Transcend had been calling for these Guidelines to be updated as it had been some time since the Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents were developed.

This approach is supported by the Action Plan – Action 3b to develop guidelines to support evidence-based health care for LGBTIQ+ people where there are identified gaps or needs.

In terms of care delivery, the provision of public gender dysphoria services to young people in Australia is led by the states and territories, who are responsible for relevant services. This includes specialist gender services in a number of jurisdictions providing a multidisciplinary approach tailored to individual circumstances and needs.

Medicare rebates are available for some private gender dysphoria services, such as patient consultations and surgical procedures if the treating practitioner deems the procedure to be clinically relevant for the care of a patient. The independent Medical Services Advisory Committee is currently reviewing Application 1754 which proposes new and amended MBS items for gender affirming surgeries. Public consultation closed on this Application on 14 February 2025. The Government will consider the recommendations of this review as part of the ongoing MBS Continuous Review.

4. Will your party commit to continuing to work towards ending HIV transmission in Australia, including through implementing all recommendations in the HIV Taskforce Report (2023)?

Yes, the Albanese Labor Government is committed to continuing to work towards ending HIV transmission in Australia and delivering on the HIV Taskforce Report (2023). Australia is a global leader in the HIV response, and we continue to have one of the lowest rates of HIV.

Our commitment to ending HIV transmission in Australia was demonstrated by Minister Butler's action to establish the HIV Taskforce in 2022. The Taskforce aimed to renew Australia's efforts to end the HIV epidemic and achieve virtual elimination of HIV transmission in Australia by 2030. Through the partnership of people with lived experience, governments, community organisations, researchers, and peak bodies (including Health Equity Matters), the HIV Taskforce Report was published in November 2023. The Albanese Labor Government then committed \$43.9 million in the 2024-25 Budget to respond to the recommendations for the HIV

Taskforce. This included funding for better prevention, testing, workforce training and information.

We have ensured ongoing commitment to these recommendations by incorporating many of them in the Ninth National HIV Strategy 2024–2030, which was released by the Albanese Labor Government in December 2024. This Strategy sets a strong direction for our national goal of virtual elimination of HIV transmission by 2030. It is ambitious but achievable.

We want to ensure everyone affected by or living with HIV can have healthy lives, free of stigma and discrimination. Our goal is virtual elimination of HIV transmission in Australia. But that will not be the end of Australia's response to HIV. Beyond 2030, we will continue to pursue better health outcomes and maintain our reputation as a world leader in public health.

5. Will your party commit to modernising and strengthening anti-discrimination laws, including by narrowing unfair religious exemptions that permit discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in workplaces, schools and services?

Labor believes no Australian should be discriminated against because of who they are or what they believe.

Consistent with the Prime Minister's commitment before the 2022 election, this term draft legislation was developed which would –

- prevent discrimination against people of faith;
- act to protect all students from discrimination on any grounds; and
- protect teachers from discrimination at work, whilst maintaining the right of religious schools to preference people of their faith in the selection of staff.

The Prime Minister made it clear that bipartisan support was needed to progress these reforms, to ensure the protections we seek will be lasting.

We could only proceed with this legislation if it would unite Australians and not divide us.

Unfortunately, the Coalition refused to engage with the Government at all on possible amendments to the draft bill. This is an important, complex and sometimes controversial area of law.

That is why Labor supports a bipartisan approach to these issues – because we believe that, wherever possible, efforts to enhance anti-discrimination protections should be done in a way that brings Australians together.

6. What steps will your party take to address escalating hate and violence against LGBTIQ+ communities?

The Albanese Labor Government has passed the toughest laws Australia has ever had against hate crimes. The offences established by the Hate Crimes Bill include the strongest protections ever legislated by the Australian Parliament for the LGBTIQ+ community. The Bill established new offences for advocating or threatening violence against LGBTIQ+ persons and their family

members with penalties of up to 7 years imprisonment. The offences came into force in February.

The Albanese Labor Government will also establish a Hate Crimes and Incidents Database. The Standing Council of Attorneys-General agreed in February that the Federal Government would lead a national working group and consult with affected community groups on the design of the Database.

The Albanese Labor Government has made ending all forms of gender-based violence a national priority – this includes LGBTIQ+ people and children. The Albanese Labor Government has invested in a range of programs and initiatives to reduce – and ultimately end- gender-based violence against LGBTIQ+ people and children. This includes frontline services, prevention, peer support, awareness raising, community-led projects, advocacy, and research. Some of these initiatives include:

- Funding for ACON and LGBTIQ+ Health Australia to conduct prevention and community-led projects and website resources;
- Investing in a program through Our Watch which partners with Rainbow Health Australia to develop a national framework to provide service providers with a deeper understanding of the drivers of gender-based violence against the LGBTIQ+ community, which will be due late 2026; and
- Allocating 15 of our 500 new frontline family, domestic and sexual violence workers to specifically support LGBTIQ+ people experience violence.

7. Will your party implement the recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights in its report on the Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework (2024), to introduce the first federal human rights legislation for Australia?

The Albanese Labor Government believes that all people are entitled to respect, equality, dignity and the opportunity to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of our nation and is committed to ensuring that Australia's human rights framework appropriately protects these fundamental human rights. By protecting and promoting human rights, the Government will ensure that all Australians are able to participate fully in our democracy, our economy and our society.

On coming to office, the Albanese Labor Government acted quickly to support the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission by restoring integrity to the process of president and commissioner appointments through the passage of the Australian Human Rights Commission Legislation Amendment (Selection and Appointment) Bill 2022.

In March 2023, the Attorney-General asked the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (the Committee) to conduct a review of Australia's Human Rights Framework. The inquiry has now completed and delivered its report to the Parliament. The Government is considering the recommendations in the report and will respond in due course.

8. Will your party establish a Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ people to oversee and promote these protections?

The Sex Discrimination Commissioner has the responsibility to promote and advance the rights of Australians by tackling discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status and all other protected attributes in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

9. Will your party implement the Australian Human Rights Commission's recommendations in the Ensuring health and bodily integrity report (2021) to prevent unnecessary medical interventions on intersex people through national, or nationally consistent, legislation?

Jointly answered with Question 10 and 19.

The Albanese Labor Government believes all people are entitled to respect, dignity and the opportunity to participate in society regardless of their personal attributes, and to do so free from discrimination. We note the Albanese Labor Government invested \$500,000 to expand InterAction for Health and Human Rights InterLink program.

In 2013, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) was amended by the Labor Government to include sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status as protected grounds of discrimination. These legal protections are complemented by the Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender, which commenced in July 2013. The guidelines recognise that individuals may identify as a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth, or may not identify as exclusively male or female, and that this should be reflected in records held by the government. The guidelines also standardise the evidence required for a person to change their sex/gender in personal records held by Australian Government departments and agencies.

Labor remains committed to protecting all Australians from discrimination. Our record reflects this deep commitment. The Albanese Labor Government will continue to engage with intersex people and advocates, including to ensure that the Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender align with legal protections provided under the Sex Discrimination Act.

Where the community provides feedback, Labor will listen and engage.

Medical interventions for people with innate variations of sex characteristics including matters relating to medical consent legislation and the operation of public hospitals in Australia are mainly the responsibility of state and territory governments.

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia has jurisdiction in some circumstances to make orders about whether undergoing a medical procedure would be in the best interests of the child.

10. What steps will your party take to ensure redress and support for intersex people who have experienced harmful medical practices?

Jointly answered with Question 9 and 19.

11. Will your party ensure equal legal recognition and access for rainbow families, including reforms to surrogacy laws, Medicare-funded fertility treatments for all patients, and inclusive policies, forms and processes across federal agencies?

The Albanese Labor Government has made it more equitable for rainbow families, by expanding the definition of infertility from purely medical to social as well.

This change means women in same sex relationships and single women now have access to Medicare rebates for IVF.

These laws were changed in recognition that the health system was rooted in outdated societal models and must evolve to meet the needs of today's diverse communities.

12. Will your party have a dedicated Minister or spokesperson for LGBTIQ+ communities, and/or establish an office, branch or unit of government, or advisory council dedicated to LGBTIQ+ issues?

Jointly answered with Question 13.

'No one held back, no one left behind' is a principle Prime Minister Albanese and his Government are guided by. Accordingly, due and proper consideration is given to the impact of government policy on all Australians, including LGBTIQ+ people.

Albanese Labor Government Ministers and their offices remain readily available for engagement with community stakeholders.

The Albanese Labor Government has established advisory bodies on a case-by-case basis, noting different stakeholders hold varying relevant expertise. For instance, the Expert Advisory Group for The National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People; or the HIV Taskforce.

The Albanese Labor Government has committed to ongoing community engagement and advisory models should we be re-elected.

13. Will your party develop a whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ strategy?

Jointly answered with Question 12.

14. Will your party develop an LGBTIQ+ foreign policy strategy, covering multilateral and bilateral advocacy and international development assistance?

The Albanese Labor Government believes LGBTIQ+ Australians deserve the same human rights, equality, respect and safety as every other Australian.

The Albanese Labor Government works closely with, and supports, LGBTIQ+ Australians, advocates and the diversity of organisations that represent their interests, to develop policy

that meets the specific needs of the LGBTIQ+ community to ensure equality with broader Australian society. This commitment is also reflected in the Albanese Labor Government's support for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people internationally.

In 2023, at the direction of Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade consulted across our region and with Australia's LGBTIQ+ community to identify the areas in which we are best equipped to make a difference under a dedicated strategy.

In 2024, Australia co-led a resolution in the Human Rights Council calling for enhanced efforts to combat discrimination, violence and harmful practices against intersex people. This was the first resolution of its kind for the United Nations, and was brought jointly by Australia, Finland, South Africa and Chile.

A re-elected Albanese Labor Government will finalise and implement a dedicated LGBTIQ+ human rights engagement strategy, ensuring our bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, development and humanitarian assistance helps support the priorities and needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

15. Will your party increase dedicated staff resourcing for LGBTIQ+ issues within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including a special envoy or ambassador on LGBTIQ+ rights?

In our first term (in 2022), the Albanese Labor Government established an Ambassador for Human Rights, to lead Australia's international advocacy for human rights, with a specific focus on LGBTIQ+ equality. This new role is also supported by Australia's Ambassador for Gender Equality. A re-elected Albanese Government will continue to advance LGBTIQ+ equality and rights internationally, including our ongoing support for the Inclusion and Equality Fund.

16. Will your party increase Australian aid funding for LGBTIQ+ communities, including dedicated funding for LGBTIQ+ civil society?

In 2023, the Albanese Government established the Inclusion and Equality Fund, Australia's first dedicated fund for supporting LGBTIQ+ civil society and human rights defenders and addressing social stigma and discrimination around the world, with a focus in the Indo-Pacific region. This fund has supported the Global Equality Fund and provided emergency assistance to human rights defenders and support to LGBTIQ+ organisations in our region who are working to catalyse change.

In April 2024, the Fund supported Fiji to host the largest ever gathering of Pacific LGBTIQ+ civil society, at the Pacific Human Rights Conference.

The Inclusion and Equality Fund is now at its next phase, supporting grassroots civil society partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

A re-elected Albanese Government will continue to provide dedicated funding for LGBTIQ+ civil society in the Indo-Pacific, and to advocate for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people globally.

17. Will your party ensure asylum claims on the basis of LGBTIQ+ status are treated appropriately and in line with best practice?

LGBTQI+ refugees are prioritised for resettlement within Australia's Humanitarian Program, alongside other vulnerable cohorts within refugee populations such as women and children.

Whether an asylum seeker engages Australia's protection obligations is assessed in accordance with Australia's domestic legislation and non-refoulement obligations under international treaties.

Each case is assessed on its merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and the most current and relevant country of origin information. Principles of procedural fairness apply to visa decisions, and applicants have access to merits and judicial review.

18. Will your party ensure that all LGBTIQ+ sub-populations are properly counted in the Census, workplace equality indicators, and other national datasets, and provide funding for ongoing research into LGBTIQ+ experiences?

We value every Australian, regardless of their faith, race, gender or LGBTIQ+ status. We will:

Ensure that the 2026 Census collects data for the first time on gender and sexual orientation, in line with the ABS recommendation to Government.

Continue to work with the intersex community about ways of gathering additional information in other ABS surveys.

Work to understand intersectional pay gaps through data collection approaches that are safe and preserve privacy.

Continue to work to understand LGBTIQ+ experiences in health and wellbeing through improved data, research and evaluation.

In addition, the Albanese Labor Government has invested \$2 million in La Trobe University's 'Private Lives' and 'Writing Themselves In' health and wellbeing surveys, through the Albanese Labor Government's *National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People*.

19. Will your party review and update the Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender to reflect accurate terminology in relation to intersex people, and to streamline the process of updating records?

Jointly answered with question 9 and 10.

20. Will your party establish funding pathways for reliable, ongoing funding for LGBTIQ+ community organisations?

The Albanese Labor Government's commitment to supporting LGBTIQ+ organisations and initiatives in its first term speaks for itself – including investments made across portfolios of health, social services, Attorney-General and tourism.

21. Are there any additional commitments your party would like to make to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ people in Australia?

This election, the Albanese Labor Government has committed:

- \$10 million for LGBTIQ+ primary health care training and accreditation
- \$250,000 to support JOY Media and its volunteers to continue to serve, inform and connect the LGBTIQ+ community across the country, with daily content over its broadcast FM and DAB+ radio, website, podcasts and social media platforms.
- \$78,000 Star Observer, QNews and OutInPerth to foster community connection and amplify community voices; and
- Establish ongoing community engagement for National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People and other relevant policies