

Chapter 12: Organisational policies

Establishment of Implementation Committee

- 1 (a) The National Executive will establish an Implementation Committee to determine how to implement Recommendation 77 of the National Review 2010 that the structure of the National Conference be changed to enable the increased participation of rank and file members through direct election of a component of the National Conference. The Implementation Committee will have regard to the 2010 National Review, the National Principles of Organisation, and state arrangements.
- (b) The National Executive will determine the composition and reporting arrangements of the Implementation Committee.
- (c) The report of the Implementation Committee referred to in subsection (a) must be determined by the National Executive by a three quarters majority of all voting members no later than 3 December 2012.

Implementation of platform and policy commitments

- 2 Federal and state ministers must report back to their respective Party Conferences on the implementation of platform and policy commitments.

Composition of state conferences

- 3 State branches should increase or maintain the size of state conferences, which should have greater rank and file involvement.

Affiliation of unions

- 4 Each state branch should develop an equitable basis of determining union entitlement for representation at relevant state level Party units. This shall not prevent state branches making reasonable special arrangements for the representation of small unions.

Dialogue with local union activists

- 5 All Labor MPs must establish dialogue with local union activists in their electorates, including frequent meetings with those union activists who work in their area. Senators and MLCs must be invited to attend such meetings.

Organisation and training

- 6 (a) In addition to geographically based local branches within state and federal electorates, state branches should consider different forms of rank and file organisation, such as:
 - (i) occupation, workplace and employment related branches,
 - (ii) university and TAFE campus branches,
 - (iii) policy forums (including online forums), and

- (iv) Labor policy action caucuses or equivalent policy structures
- (b) The number of local branches in metropolitan areas should be consolidated to provide for larger meetings and better branch organisation.
- (c) MPs and state branches should respond to branch correspondence promptly so that branch members know their contribution has been considered.
- (d) State branches should ask branches to nominate either a women's officer or contact person to assist the development of equitable participation for women in the Party.
- (e) MPs and state branches should respond to correspondence from Party members and Party units promptly, so that Party members know their contribution has been considered. Before visiting an electorate, ministers and shadow ministers should notify the relevant Party units in that area.
- (f) State branches should form supporters clubs, and explore the possibility of the creation of an associate class of membership as a way of broadening involvement in the Party.
- (g) Labor Connect should be expanded as a membership organising and campaigning tool and as a means for members to contribute to and participate in Party policy development

Central policy branches

- 7 (a) State branches may establish central policy branches or forums in capital cities and major regional centres.
- (b) The National Secretariat should assist central policy branches by providing lectures, presentations and seminars online for Party members.

State policy forums

- 8 (a) State branches should model their policy committees on the National Policy Forum to the extent that they should incorporate:
 - (i) a formal parliamentary component,
 - (ii) a trade union affiliate component, and
 - (iii) a link to grass-roots members and grass-roots policy structures.
- (b) All Party members should be eligible to attend state policy committee meetings to contribute specialised knowledge and expertise on policy issues. Policy committees should, where feasible, conduct forums and consultations in regional centres.
- (c) Resolutions passed by Party units should be circulated to the relevant ministers and shadow ministers, state policy committees and the National Policy Forum for consideration and response.

Policy development

Online branches

- 9 (a) The National Secretariat should establish a National Online Policy Branch.
- (b) Attendance at the National Online Policy Branch does not satisfy attendance requirements for voting in Party elections, unless a state branch's rules expressly provide that it does.

Grass roots policy structures

- (c) State branches must investigate new grass-roots policy structures.
- (d) State branches are encouraged to provide for the establishment of a “Labor Policy Action Caucus” or “Labor PAC” where a group has:
 - (i) thirty financial Party members (or some other number as determined by the relevant state branch);
 - (ii) a patron from both the state and federal parliamentary caucuses, unless otherwise determined by its Administrative Committee; and
 - (iii) a statement of its name, objectives and rules, approved by its Administrative Committee.
- (e) Labor PACs should enjoy the same level of support from state branch offices that constituent units enjoy in that state. In particular, they should be permitted to:
 - (i) promote policy forums in Party publications and bulletins;
 - (ii) put motions directly to Party conferences, the National Policy Forum, and state branch policy committees; and
 - (iii) convene meetings and functions.
- (f) Labor PACs should in no way supplant local branches, many of which continue to provide Labor with a vital link to their communities. Rather, Labor PACs should be a complementary initiative. No powers or resources should be given to Labor PACs that are not also given to local branches.
- (g) Party officials should support these new arrangements. As PACs mature and become part of the party’s structures, party officials should:
 - (i) list Labor PACs on application forms for membership (so new members can sign up to them immediately); and
 - (ii) provide administrative support for elections and the maintenance of membership lists, as they do for local branches.
- (h) The administrative, financial and fundraising regimes that govern Labor PACs should be determined by each state branch.

Engagement between MPs and members

- (i) Except in an election year, ministers and shadow ministers should participate in at least three of any of the official policy engagements each year that are attended by 30 or more Party members or affiliated union members. Of these:
 - (i) at least one should be in a non-metropolitan area;
 - (ii) at least one should be online; and
 - (iii) for federal ministers or shadow ministers, at least one should be outside their home state.

Preselections

- 10 (a) In order to ensure that candidates and MPs fulfil local responsibilities, state branches should:
 - (i) develop a system for reporting the activities of MPs to their federal electorate bodies; and

- (ii) introduce Public Office Selection Forums for all lower house candidates.
- (b) All eligible voters and financial Party members who live in the electorate for which a lower house candidate is being selected should be eligible to attend and participate in a Public Office Selection Forum.
- (c) Public Office Selection Forums should be held on the day of voting. They should consist of formal speeches by the candidates and small group question and answer sessions.

Australian Young Labor

- 11 Every state Administrative Committee or state Executive should consider co-opting a non-voting member or members of Young Labor.

Indigenous Labor Network

- 12 That each state branch form an Indigenous Labor Network. Membership should be open to all Indigenous people who are members of the ALP. Non-Indigenous ALP members can nominate to be associate members.

General membership system

- 13 (a) Each state should adopt a system to allow applications to be processed and accepted by the head office thus allowing potential expansion of a general membership system.
- (b) A general member initially has only the right to take up at their initiative the process of becoming a full member through the branch membership system. The general members are to be encouraged to contribute to the Party in whatever way they can and they are bound to assume the responsibilities of supporting the Party both privately and publicly.
- (c) Any general member of five years or more standing could be considered for preselection provided the majority request of all Party members in their respective electorate was made and/or the majority request of that state branch Administrative Committee or Executive was made. (for guidance to the state branches)

National organisation – ongoing review

- 14 (a) That the National Executive take responsibility for an ongoing process of organisational review. The National Executive should establish a Standing Committee to initiate proposals, or receive submissions from members and affiliates, on the Party's rules, structures and political effectiveness.
- (b) That an ongoing National Organisational Review Committee (ORC) be established with appropriate delegated powers under the guidance of the National Executive to continue the process of improving the effectiveness, participation and accountability of the Party's organisation.
- (c) That the ORC undergo a consultative process with state branches, union affiliates, Party units and members on strategies to achieve the following objectives:
- (i) strategies to increase the level of ALP branch membership;
 - (ii) strategies to encourage more trade unions to affiliate to the ALP and to involve unions more effectively in the Party's decision-making processes;

- (iii) strategies the ALP should consider in order to defeat coalition party proposals to undermine the existing arrangements for trade union affiliation; and
 - (iv) strategies to increase the participation of women at all levels within the ALP.
- (d) That the National Secretariat provide adequate resources for the committee to meet its objectives.

Preselections

- 15 State campaign directors should consult the Leader and the National Campaign Director before the selection of candidates in both target and safe Labor seats to discuss quality potential candidates. This process should begin at least 18 months prior to the next election. It is the responsibility and obligation of Party officers and other influential figures within the Party to ensure that quality candidates are preselected in all seats. The Party must also actively identify and encourage candidates from a wide range of occupations and life experiences.

Member engagement

- 16 That, as a first step towards re-engaging with Party members, the National Secretariat conduct the first national survey of Party members to seek their views, expectations and attitudes to the Party. Suggestions about improving Party organisation should also be sought. That the results of the survey be published in summary form to members.
- 17 That the National Executive discuss and determine a membership growth target for increasing membership over the next five years, with progress targets set for each year. That membership numbers achieved be reported on an annual basis to the membership.
- 18 That the Party establish a cost-effective national campaigning organising and training academy to boost the skills, awareness and knowledge of members to allow them to better participate in Party-building and recruitment activities.
- 19 That a system of small, annual grants be established at a national level to assist with Party-building activities. That local branches be encouraged to apply for grants and the scheme be overseen by a panel of senior Party members, removed from the day-to-day affairs of the Party.
- 20 That the Party at a national level institute a Labor Community Dialogue program as has occurred at state levels of the Party, to facilitate access and discussion between the Party, community organisations and community leaders, and that this be supported by an active series of online engagement opportunities that would connect progressive community organisations with the Party at both a membership and parliamentary level.

Affiliated unions

- 21 That, in order to encourage the participation of more union members in the Party, affiliated unions be requested to ask members on joining or renewing their membership to become involved in the Party, through such means as voting in primaries (if applicable), representing the union at Party conferences and joining the Party.

Party reform

22 (a) ***Broaden the Party by recruiting 8000 new members***

The Party's most critical connection to the community is its members.

Yet in recent decades the Party has endured a steady decline in membership. This decline is the great organisational challenge of our generation. Strong member participation is the lifeblood of organisations such as trade unions, community organisations, faith-based groups and sporting clubs. It is members who provide Labor with its most direct, most fundamental connection to the community.

We were the people's party, and we need to be again.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard set an ambitious target for Australian Labor to broaden its base by recruiting 8000 new members in 2012.

National Conference therefore:

- (i) approves Prime Minister Gillard's target to recruit 8000 new members in 2012;
- (ii) encourages state branches to implement a community organising model to empower members and supporters to recruit, organise and campaign locally; and
- (iii) encourages state branches to report their recruitment figures to the National Executive.

(b) ***Reduce excessive membership fees***

In some state branches, membership fees are higher than for comparable organisations. This discourages the involvement of young people and low-wage workers.

National Conference therefore encourages state branches to:

- (i) review their membership fees; and
- (ii) consider offering discounts for Young Labor members and affiliated union members, where they do not already do so.

(c) ***Launch a National Labor Community Dialogue program***

Labor Community Dialogue programs have been launched at a state level. These programs seek to build stronger links between Labor and the community sector with the objective of:

- (i) developing broader consultative capacity to support and inform Labor's policy development;
- (ii) building lasting networks of mutual support for Labor, Labor members, Labor's elected representatives and the community sector; and
- (iii) enhancing Labor's presence within the community.

These partnerships are mutually beneficial for Labor and progressive community organisations. National Conference therefore directs the National Secretariat to:

- (i) launch and provide ongoing support for a National Labor Community Dialogue program; and
- (ii) co-ordinate the activities of the National Labor Community Dialogue program with those of Labor Connect to develop a streamlined approach to community outreach.

(d) ***Support branches and Labor PACs in working with the community***

While many of our Party members volunteer in community and school organisations, branches and formal Party structures can be detached from these groups.

National Conference therefore encourages each branch and Labor PAC to “adopt” a community organisation, and actively engage in that group’s activities and mission.

The branch or Labor PAC could adopt a new organisation each year, while still maintaining links with previous “adoptees”, or build an enduring relationship with one group over a number of years.

This proposal will:

- (i) connect our members with their community in a tangible and meaningful way;
- (ii) enhance the community’s understanding of Labor and our members’ understanding of their community;
- (iii) realise Labor values at a grass-roots level;
- (iv) broaden guest speaker opportunities for the branches and Labor PACs; and
- (v) extend the community dialogue concept to every member of the Party.

(e) ***Strengthen the Party’s connections to the union movement***

Although trade union members share some of the same values as Labor members, they are often not Party members and often do not vote Labor. To grow our Party, we need to engage, activate and recruit union members.

National Conference therefore directs the National Secretariat to work with affiliated unions to:

- (i) develop a political engagement strategy based on the model already developed by a number of unions; and
- (ii) engage union members and encourage them to participate in Party activities.

The 2007 federal election campaign was aided by effective co-ordination between Labor and affiliated unions. It is worthwhile establishing a process to ensure consistency and transparency between Labor and union campaigns.

National Conference therefore directs the National Executive to form a combined Campaign Reference Group with affiliated unions.

(f) ***Make voter engagement central to Labor campaigns***

As a broad labour movement, we will always be able to activate more supporters than our conservative opponents.

We must take advantage of this.

The philosophy is simple: we need to activate more members and connect with more voters more often. By reconnecting with our base through large scale direct voter contact, we can strengthen our membership and our electoral position.

National Conference therefore encourages state branches to:

- (i) implement a community organising model to empower and equip members and supporters to recruit, organise and campaign locally; and
- (ii) report their budgets and organising activities to the National Executive.

Under this community organising model, Party members will be provided with more resources, training and support, so that they can identify Labor supporters, recruit new members, hold local events, run local campaigns, communicate and engage with voters, and produce and distribute material.

As part of the community organising model, Australian Labor will expand its direct voter contact system, which was trialled during the South Australian, Victorian and NSW state elections. This will enable members from all over Australia to help on campaigns at the click of a button.

National Conference directs the National Executive to establish an Organising Committee to consider developments in community organising and campaigning, and make recommendations about community organising and campaigning initiatives to the National Executive. The Organising Committee will contain representatives from trade unions, rank and file members, the Parliamentary Party and the organisational wing of the Party, appointed according to the principles of proportional representation.

National Conference directs the National Secretariat to continue to prioritise the upgrades of Electrac and LaborConnect, and investigate further integration with party databases and extranets.

(g) *Support state branches considering direct election*

To make our Party more active, we need to increase participation amongst rank and file members.

One proposal for strengthening rank and file involvement is to provide the option of directly electing National Conference delegates in a ballot of financial members in an electorate.

Different models for electing delegates to Party conferences are used in different states and territories. Each of these models reflects the unique political environment in that state.

National Conference therefore:

- (i) recognises that each state branch will approach the election of National Conference delegates differently;
- (ii) supports state branches that are considering direct election;
- (iii) recognises that the National Principles of Organisation require that state branch conferences comprise 50 per cent trade union representation, and 50 per cent Party constituency representatives;
- (iv) reaffirms that this principle of 50/50 representation must continue;
- (v) affirms that the local determination of National Conference delegates should not come at the expense of trade union representation; and
- (vi) affirms that some of the National Conference delegation should continue to be elected in such a way as to ensure the principle of 50/50 representation is maintained.

(h) *Increase recognition of member contributions*

Australian Labor relies on rank and file members volunteering their time to recruit, organise and campaign for the Party.

To encourage active participation by members, we need to demonstrate that their contributions are valued.

Rank and file member awards have been established at the state level to recognise dedicated Party members.

National Conference therefore directs the National Secretariat to establish annual national awards to recognise the commitment and service of outstanding Party members.

(i) *Introduce new mechanisms for member feedback*

Any successful membership-based organisation must work hard to listen to its members and engage with their thoughts and ideas.

National Conference therefore:

- (i) supports the recommendation in the National Review that calls for the first national survey of members; and
 - (ii) encourages state branches to develop entry surveys and exit surveys for all Party members.
- (j) ***Support more issues-based activism***

The success of “Get Up” and “Say Yes” shows Australians want to engage in issues-based activism, particularly young Australians.

While Labor PACs will provide a formal mechanism for members to mobilise on specific issues, many of our members may:

- (i) not have the time to be involved in a Labor PAC;
- (ii) be interested in multiple issues; and
- (iii) prefer an informal, individual response to issues.

National Conference therefore encourages state branches to offer members the opportunity to sign up to become advocates for particular Labor policies.

Members who sign up would be provided with a tool kit of resources, such as talking points and flyers, which they could use to communicate, mobilise third-party advocates and potentially attract new members. Consideration should also be given to providing members with the advice and tools to conduct social media campaigns.

Increased representation of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in public office

23 The ALP is committed to increasing the representation of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in public office positions the Party holds. To achieve this, National Conference empowers state branches to make affirmative action rules, in consultation with their state Indigenous Labor Network, for the preselection of public office holders that require a minimum of relevant positions to be held by Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders. The minimum level that can be set by such affirmative action rules is 5%.

To support state branches in the implementation of this strategy, National Conference requires state branches to:

- ensure that application and renewal forms ask prospective and existing ALP members whether they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and
- maintain a contact list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members that can be provided their Indigenous Labor Network.

Review of the socialist objective

24 The Party’s principles and objectives were last reviewed properly at a special National Conference in 1981. Australia and the world have changed substantially since that time.

The 1981 debate was preceded by a comprehensive and substantial consultation process.

This Conference resolves to commence a review of our socialist objective, with a view to replacing the existing language with the most appropriate and modern set of principles and objective for the Australian Labor Party.

This review shall be led by a broadly representative panel, appointed by National Executive at their first ordinary meeting after this Conference. Terms of reference are to be finalised by National Executive, but are to include:

- an obligation to seek input from all members and affiliated unions of the Party;
- an obligation to undertake a process of active discussion and consultation; and
- an obligation to circulate draft proposals and identify those proposals that are most likely to be adopted by consensus.

Affirmative action

- 25 The National Executive and Administrative Committees should consider electing or appointing full-time Party officials in groups of at least 3 so that the affirmative action requirements of clause 19 of the National Constitution apply.