

THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

OUR PLAN FOR
**Multicultural
Communities**

**GETTING
IT DONE** 
for Regional Australia

Key points

Australia is the most successful multicultural nation in the world.

The Coalition Government will keep it that way – with a plan for a **strong economy that ensures a stronger future for all who call Australia home.**

Only a strong economy secures the essential services that all Australians rely on.

Like a stronger Medicare, where bulk billing is at record levels, meaning **nearly nine in 10 visits to the GP are free.** And listing 2,900 new or amended **life-saving and life-changing medicines** in a stronger Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

And **stronger schools and hospitals**, benefiting from record new funding agreements.

Under the Coalition, **over 1.9 million more Australians are in work.** Despite the pandemic, unemployment is now just 4 per cent – the lowest in 48 years. And we have a plan to create another 1.3 million jobs over the next five years.

Taxes are lower. **Small and family businesses – the backbone of our multicultural communities – are stronger.**

One in every three small and family businesses in Australia was started by a migrant.

And in today's increasingly volatile world, our borders are secure – and we're investing a **record \$270 billion in the defence capability** of our nation.

Australia has benefited enormously from the strong economic contribution of migrants over generations, and our plan will see this continue. Our success is also built on the strong social cohesion that helped keep Australians together during the pandemic.

Our multicultural communities have wholeheartedly supported the national pandemic response, with strong leadership and many sacrifices, such as separation from family overseas and disruption to traditional gatherings.

This patience, resilience, kindness and care have made a huge difference.

The Coalition Government will continue to invest in protecting, and further strengthening, social cohesion.

We will keep Australians strong and united by ensuring all who arrive on our shores continue to feel heard, and are supported to participate in every aspect of national life.

In this way, every Australian is given the opportunity to buy in and draw strength from our shared values – such as mutual respect and individual responsibility.

It's what makes us the strongest multicultural nation on Earth.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Invest in our multicultural communities and leaders to ensure all Australians' needs are heard and addressed across all levels of Government.

- Provide \$5 million to multicultural and religious community groups to make their places of worship and gathering safer and reduce youth disengagement and anti-social behaviour.

- Continue improving access to services for migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants.
- Protect the rights of faith-based cultural communities.
- Continue deep community engagement to ensure all Australians are heard.
- Support multicultural communities to celebrate and share their culture with the wider Australian community.
- Recognise the exceptional contribution of our multicultural communities.

- Support multicultural media and in-language news services, including \$5 million through the Public Interest News Gathering program to support eligible local newspaper publishers with the rising costs of newsprint, including multicultural, First Nations and independent suburban newspaper publishers.

Our Plan

1. Building stronger communities

Together, we share a common interest and commitment to Australia's prosperity, security and unity. The Coalition Government will continue to support multicultural communities to enable greater integration and social participation in Australian life.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Invest **\$5 million** to establish a new round of the Safer Communities Fund. The Fund will support **multicultural and religious community groups** to upgrade their physical security infrastructure or undertake community activities and events focused on building community cohesion. The goal is to reduce youth disengagement and anti-social behaviour in these communities.
 - This builds on our additional **\$50 million** investment to support local governments and community organisations to address crime and anti-social behaviour through Round 6 of the Safer Communities Fund.
- Expand the Strong and Resilient Communities grant program with **\$45.1 million** to support an additional 120 community-driven projects to increase the social and economic participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged people.
- Expand the Stronger Communities Programme with a **\$29.2 million** investment to provide funding of \$2,500 to \$20,000 for small capital projects that deliver social benefits for local communities.

2. Strengthening Social Cohesion

Our nation's strong social cohesion is a national asset, a big part of why we're the world's leading multicultural society. Despite the tough times of the pandemic, Australians have stayed together. The value and trust we place in our neighbours and local communities has only become stronger.

A re-elected Coalition Government will build on our **\$62.8 million social cohesion investment** that is strengthening community unity and resilience as we emerge from the pandemic. This investment is supporting:

- the promotion of Australian values, identity and social cohesion, and helping to counter misinformation and disinformation online.
- enhanced engagement with multicultural communities.
- a research program to inform initiatives to strengthen social cohesion.

This follows our \$71 million package of social cohesion measures announced in 2019-20.

3. Equitable access to health care

With record funding, the Coalition Government is ensuring equitable access to health care for multicultural communities.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Invest **\$17.8 million** to provide mental health support to multicultural communities across Australia, including:
 - **\$10 million** in top-up funding for the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma.
 - **\$7.8 million** for translating and interpreting services through Primary Health Networks (PHN).
- Ensure timely, accurate and tailored health information with a **\$10.6 million** investment in a CALD Health Advisory Group to engage Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. This builds on the success of the CALD COVID-19 Health Advisory Group, established to support government-CALD community engagement during the pandemic.
- Invest **\$5.9 million** to support priority populations, including CALD communities, to catch up on missed health screenings.
- Improve access to allied health services for deaf and non-English speaking Australians through a **\$4.4 million** four-year investment.

4. Safer communities for women and children

Everyone deserves to feel safe and protected in their homes, at work and in their communities.

The Coalition Government will continue its world-leading reforms that protect children, women and families online, including building eSafety capability in schools, ensuring strong parental controls on smartphone and tablet devices, and legislating our tough anti-trolling laws.

We are strongly focused on the security of women from diverse cultural backgrounds and those in Australia on visas, who may find it more difficult to seek help.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Invest **\$104.4 million** in the national prevention organisation, Our Watch, to improve its reach in diverse and multicultural communities.
- Invest **\$20.3 million** for direct support to women on temporary visas experiencing violence. This includes:

- Payments of up to **\$3,000** per person/family to cover expenses such as accommodation and medical care.
- **\$7 million** over two years for nine Women's and Community Legal Services across Australia to help women access legal assistance and migration support.
- Allocate **\$2 million of our expanded Online Safety Grants program** to projects that support online safety education, awareness and training for women and girls in CALD communities.
- Invest **\$9 million** to continue a range of community-based prevention activities, including CALD-integrated referral programs and support for men as new parents.
- Invest **\$8 million** for the Support for Trafficked People Program, supporting victims of human trafficking.
- Invest **\$1.7 million** to support community-led approaches for the prevention of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C), and to train the health workforce to address the health impacts of FGM/C.

5. Community harmony through sport

Sport is a pillar of our local communities.

It is not only vital to our health and well-being, but a driver of social cohesion and community harmony.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Provide **\$4.4 million** to Cricket Australia to deliver multicultural participation programs. This is fulfilling the legacy objectives of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20 World Cup 2022.
- Provide **\$2.6 million** for the FIBA World Cup Legacy program to deliver a grant to Basketball Australia to support programs encouraging diversity and inclusion.

6. Protecting the rights of faith and culture

The Coalition Government believes that freedom to practise religious beliefs without discrimination is fundamental to who we are and who we must be as a tolerant, multicultural, and multi-faith liberal democracy.

The Religious Discrimination Bill provides protections to people of faith to ensure they are not discriminated against on the basis of their belief, similar to the protections provided on the basis of sex, age, race and disability.

A re-elected Coalition Government will pursue passage of the Religious Discrimination Bill as stand-alone legislation in the next Parliament.

7. Recognising our exceptional multicultural communities

To recognise the ongoing and exceptional contributions of individuals, groups and community organisations, **a re-elected Coalition Government will** establish the Social Cohesion Awards.

There will be an award in each category (below) for every state and territory, from which a national winner will be chosen:

- **Community Award** for activities that unite and support the community.
- **Intercultural Award** for contributions to build greater understanding, acceptance, belonging and connection across Australia's diversity of communities and faiths.
- **Media Award** recognising contributions by community media organisations to support social cohesion.
- **Youth Award** recognising contributions by people aged 30 or under who demonstrate leadership in social cohesion.

8. Supporting trusted news for multicultural Australia

The Coalition is providing the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) with the resources it needs to keep multicultural Australia informed and to expand its in-language services.

The SBS is the world's most linguistically diverse public broadcaster, delivering services across television, radio and digital in more than 60 languages.

It provided an essential role for multicultural communities during the COVID-19 pandemic by translating essential health information and is continuing to play a critical role in our society by providing trusted in-language news and entertainment to Australian audiences.

The Coalition also recognises the critical role independent multicultural media outlets play in keeping communities informed.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Provide the SBS with \$959 million over the next three years – an increase of \$62 million over the current three year funding period.
- Continue delivering our additional investment in the SBS to provide expanded in-language news services, including SBS-produced Mandarin and Arabic news bulletins.

- Provide \$5 million through the Public Interest News Gathering program to support eligible local newspaper publishers with the rising costs of newsprint, including multicultural, First Nations and independent suburban newspaper publishers.

Our Record

Strong pandemic support for communities

The Coalition Government provided a range of support for Australia's multicultural communities during the pandemic.

We worked closely with multicultural agencies and the national CALD Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group to deliver the right information and the strongest support. This included translating vital health advice into more than 60 languages. We also established an anti-racism information campaign in response to unacceptable instances of racism.

From 1 April 2020 to 30 April 2022, the Department of Home Affairs Community Liaison Officer network undertook more than 23,100 engagements with multicultural community stakeholders.

The Coalition Government's COVID-19 vaccination campaign included translated advertising in 32 languages across television, radio, print, social media and pharmacies and grocery stores. We also ensured the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder was available in 16 languages to help to find and book a vaccination appointment.

Our Government invested \$1.2 million in a small grants program for multicultural communities to design and lead grassroots COVID-19 communication.

With the success of these grants, the Department of Health extended the funding to promote the uptake of booster shots and vaccinations for 5-11 year olds, address community concerns about vaccines, and provide relevant and accurate information about the vaccination program.

The Coalition Government also harnessed its partnerships with Migration Council Australia, the Settlement Council of Australia, Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network to convey critical vaccine information to CALD communities.

Support for women and girls

The Coalition Government has a strong record of supporting women and children on temporary visas who are experiencing family, domestic or sexual violence.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the Coalition Government invested **\$29.3 million** in migrant and refugee women's safety, social inclusion and economic participation, including:

- **\$26.8 million** to boost grassroots support to refugee and migrant women through the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program.
 - In 2019-20, SETS supported over 26,000 female clients, with many also participating in group sessions.
- **\$2.5 million** to support temporary visa holders through establishment of a dedicated Domestic and Family Violence support team in the Department of Home Affairs.

To provide additional support to partner migrants, the Coalition Government also extended the family sponsorship framework to Partner visas, strengthening the existing family violence provisions within the Partner visa program. The introduction of an English language requirement for Partner visa applicants and permanent resident sponsors also further supports integration and access to key services.

Keeping Australians together

Keeping Australians together is a priority for the Coalition Government. That means taking action to maintain and enhance our social cohesion.

We're investing in our multicultural communities and leaders to ensure all Australians' needs are heard and addressed. We'll continue to work closely with community groups to build on the goodwill and resilience demonstrated in the pandemic, ensuring Australians stay safe, connected and informed. This will include more direct investment, to strengthen inter-community settlement initiatives and connections.

- Invested **\$8.1 million** for round three of the Fostering Integration Grants program, delivering grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000 for projects that promote social cohesion by supporting deeper integration of multicultural communities locally.

This builds on the five-year, **\$62.8 million** investment in the 2020-2021 Budget to strengthen Australia's social cohesion and community resilience in the COVID-19 recovery. The funding included:

- **\$37.3 million** over four years to promote Australian values, identity and social cohesion, and to counter misinformation and disinformation online.
- **\$17.7 million** over four years to enhance engagement with multicultural communities.
- **\$7.9 million** over four years to establish a research program to inform initiatives to strengthen social cohesion.

This built on our **\$71 million** social cohesion package that was announced in March 2019.

Our local community investment includes:

- More than \$1.3 million to support multicultural associations and organisations in the Northern Territory.
- More than \$9 million to almost 400 community language schools to help students learn and use a language other than English, and connect young Australians to the cultures of their community.
- More than \$11.3 million to encourage social and economic participation, and promote cross-cultural understanding and the uptake of Australian values, for new migrants and multicultural communities through the Fostering Integration Grants program.

The Coalition Government is reinforcing our values and strengthening our unity. Our record includes:

- An updated Australian Values Statement signed by most visa applicants, articulating the core values that underpin our society and social cohesion.

- An updated Australian citizenship test to include questions about the core values so important to our success and keeping us together.
- Boosting our successful Community Liaison Officer network to include more officers with dual language skills – including in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese – to enhance our engagement with communities at a grassroots level.
- Investment in research that helps us understand and track our social cohesion in a more sophisticated manner.

We have also ensured multicultural media is appropriately and proportionately used for government advertising campaigns. In 2020-21, \$8.2 million was invested in multicultural media and a further \$3.3 million in Indigenous media – around 8 per cent of the total government advertising spend.

More support for settlement programs

The Coalition Government is committed to helping migrants make a new home in Australia. We are also driving better settlement and integration for refugees and humanitarian entrants.

We will continue to **improve access to services for migrants, refugees and humanitarian arrivals**. Our **\$37.3 million** investment in new measures recognises the importance of social participation and financial independence:

- A lower cost Community Support Program (CSP) to drive community-based settlement initiatives for refugee and humanitarian entrants.
- **\$9.2 million** to create a new Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot that will trial community-based sponsorship of refugees and humanitarian entrants who have no Australian links.
- **\$24.6 million** in a four-year program to support social enterprises that create new job opportunities and pathways to employment for refugees.
- **\$3.5 million** over four years to address significant gaps in national outcomes data on refugee and humanitarian populations.

Under our reforms to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), migrants will attain higher levels of English language proficiency. Initiatives include:

- **Removal of the 510-hour limit** to enable more migrants to access English classes for longer or until they reach a higher level of proficiency.
- Modernising the program and increasing flexibility for students by providing greater access to online classes and resources.
- Removing time limits on registration, commencement and completion of tuition for eligible migrants, to enable more migrants to access free English language classes.

Help for the people of Afghanistan and Ukraine

Under the Coalition Government, Australia remains one of the most generous humanitarian resettlement countries, providing a new home and support for those in most need.

We have responded swiftly to global crises with specific visa and settlement initiatives for humanitarian entrants from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

We have committed to provide at least 31,500 places for displaced and at-risk Afghan nationals over the next four years, with a significant settlement support program implemented to support these entrants.

Additionally, we are also providing generous temporary humanitarian visa and settlement support to Ukrainians fleeing Russian aggression.

The Coalition Government has:

- Established a three year Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas for Ukraine nationals who wish to join family and friends in Australia, which provides access to work and study rights, health services including Medicare, and social and settlement support services.
 - The Coalition Government has committed to providing a permanent visa pathway at the end of three years for those who wish to settle in Australia permanently.
- Invested **\$500,000** in the 2022-23 Budget to establish the Ukrainian Community and Settlement Support Program – providing grants to Ukrainian-Australian community organisations to help those arriving after the conflict in Ukraine.
- Invested **\$28.8 million** over two years for an Afghan settlement support package, including:
 - **\$8 million** in grant funding to support community-led organisations to deliver grassroots and personalised support to arrivals.
 - **\$6.4 million** to boost the capacity of specialist legal services to support evacuees to transition to permanent visas.
 - **\$4.8 million** towards employment coaching and mentoring for skilled evacuees. Supporting them as they navigate skills recognition, education pathways and secure suitable employment.
 - **\$7.9 million** to increase access to specialist mental health services for those who have suffered torture and trauma.

Stronger social cohesion

Under the Coalition, Australia's strength as the most successful multicultural nation in the world is only growing.

Since the start of 2020, the Coalition Government's increased social cohesion funding has led to a **358 per cent increase in government engagements with multicultural communities (to January 2022)**.

This has significantly improved multicultural input in government decision-making.

Australians embrace our cultural diversity. We are a country for all, with individual differences but a unique sense of belonging. The *Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion 2021* report found:

- 86 per cent of respondents supported multiculturalism and believed migrants were good for the economy.
- Personal experiences of discrimination and racism remained stable (16 per cent), with declining negative attitudes towards individual groups.
- 60 per cent of respondents recognised racism and discrimination as a significant issue.
- 71 per cent of respondents indicated they were happy with their financial future, and had high levels of optimism.

The Risk of Labor

Labor cannot be trusted to support and invest in multicultural Australia.

They have a track record of taking multicultural communities for granted.

Labor has repeatedly overlooked community representatives and sidelined local candidates in some of our most culturally diverse electorates and suburbs.

As Labor Party Federal Member, Dr Anne Aly MP, said: *“For the Labor Party to be in a position where they are pushing aside a community representative from one of the most multicultural electorates is hypocrisy.”*

Labor’s own Multicultural Statement does not celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Australia, or provide a plan for how they will keep Australians together.

Labor and the Greens have such disregard for our faith groups that they denied them protections that would have resulted under the Religious Discrimination Act.

The Coalition believes Australia should be a place to practise your faith in your home, community and place of worship – free from intimidation, fear and harm.

Labor has no economic plan.

Labor can’t manage money, which puts at risk the **essential services like health and schools which make Australia great.**

The Coalition is keeping the economy strong and keeping Australians together and safe.

Labor leader Albanese was part of a government that cut Defence spending to the lowest level since 1938, as a proportion of GDP.

In uncertain times, Australia can’t risk Labor.

COST

The Coalition is investing an additional \$5m to support multicultural, First Nations and independent suburban newspaper publishers as part of our Plan For Multicultural Communities.

Funding for other policies detailed in the Coalition's Plan For Multicultural Communities is already provisioned for within budget estimates.

THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

 For further details of The Nationals' Plan go to: www.nationals.org.au