

Where parties stand on liberties

CLA asked 10 questions of parties standing for election in 2010. Here are the questions and, in order received, the answers from The Sex Party, the Greens, the Coalition and the Australian Democrats and the Australian Labor Party.

CLA's questions:

1. If elected, will you support the introduction of a statutory Charter of Rights?
2. If elected, will you actively move to repeal section 35 of *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988*, and other similar acts, which allows the Federal Government to trample on the rights of Territorians to self-determination that Australians living in States enjoy?
3. If elected, how will you hold Australia's swelling ranks of security/spy personnel to account?
4. If elected, will you support legislation setting limits on the ability of the Executive to go to, and continue at, war without parliamentary scrutiny and approval.
5. If elected, how would you ensure Australians' right to privacy from intrusive state and federal governments and bureaucrats is better protected?
6. If elected, will you ensure that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) are transparent and accountable to the Australian public (by publishing an agenda and minutes of meetings, as a minimum example)?
7. If elected, will you conduct a review into Australia's censorship regime to ensure that only criminal material is prohibited and that, to the greatest extent possible, adult Australians are able to read and view whatever they want – including on the internet?
8. If elected, will you conduct a full, frank and comprehensive review of Australia's terrorism laws, repealing those provisions which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms, and/or those provisions which have not been needed, and those already covered in the existing criminal law?
9. If elected, will you support the creation of a National Independent Commission Against Corruption to investigate allegations of corrupt conduct by police, politicians, judges, members of the public service or others when in a position of authority?
10. If elected, what will you do to extend civil liberties and human rights protection in Australia?

Do you have anything else that you would like to add (400 words max)? CLA will place your comments on our website.

The Sex Party

- 1) Yes
- 2) Yes
- 3) Have no policy on this yet. We're only 10 months old!
- 4) Yes
- 5) No policy yet.
- 6) Yes. More than that we would abolish the power of one member of SCAG to veto majority support.
- 7) Yes. And to push for uniform national laws on all classifications.

8) Yes

9) Yes

10) Make abortion a national health issue with one national approach. Ensure that people can die with dignity. Knock off internet filtering and data retention, amend the Tax Act to take away tax exemptions for businesses that simply 'promote religion', remove the GST on tampons and pads, conduct a Royal Commission into child sex abuse in the church, allow gay marriage and adoption, decriminalise all drugs for personal possession (not sale) and move to abolish state governments.

Australian Greens

Question 1

The Greens would consider introducing a Human Rights Act in the next term of parliament. We would support the adoption of the National Human Rights Consultation Report, including the compilation of a list of rights for protection, requirement of Federal agencies to develop human rights action plans and report on their compliance and other necessary amendments to Acts or Regulations to ensure the effective operation of the Framework.

The Greens believe the Government's Human Rights Framework is a welcome step in the right direction but the government has ignored the key recommendation of the Human Rights Consultation Report by refusing to consider a Human Rights Act. Human rights in Australia will continue to be dealt with in an ad hoc manner. For example, the statements of compatibility will not apply retrospectively so legislation such as the Northern Territory Intervention will not be addressed and the statements don't offer any protection from government decisions such as the suspension of asylum claims from Sri Lankans and Afghans.

Question 2

Yes. In a recent press release, 4 August 2010, Senator Bob Brown outlined our position:

Greens Leader Bob Brown, in Darwin today, has called on Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott to end Canberra's ministerial override of laws passed by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

"The Greens have legislation in the Senate to remove the federal executive's power to veto territory laws, including those in the Northern Territory and the ACT.

"The Federal Constitution gives Federal Parliament power to make laws for the territories. But in recent times the big parties have removed this power and given it to whichever party is in office.

"It should require the Senate as well as the House of Representatives to override laws made by the democratically elected NT Assembly, and just not the Minister of the day," Senator Brown said.

Question 3

The Australian Greens recognise the importance of ensuring the accountability of Australia's security and intelligence personnel. We support the establishment of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement which is tasked with the

functions of reviewing the performance of both the Australian Federal Police and Australian Crime Commission. The new Committee was proposed by the Labor Government prior to the announcement of the Federal election in the *Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Bill 2010*. It was proposed that the new committee would extend the functions of the existing Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission. The Australian Greens support this move however would seek to strengthen the powers given to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement under the proposed legislation.

The functions of the proposed committee failed to include a reference to Australia's human rights and in particular those rights most relevant to law enforcement authorities such as the right to liberty (art 9 ICCPR), right to privacy (art 17 ICCPR), freedom of expression (art 19) and the presumption of innocence (art 14). Further improvements to strengthen the oversight powers of the Committee include the Minister being required to provide reasons why the Commissioner of Federal Police or the CEO of the Australian Crime Commission is not providing certain information to the Committee. Such a decision should also be reviewed by the Minister who will be in a more impartial position to determine whether the decision to keep the information confidential has been appropriately weighed against the public interest.

Another step that has been taken by the Greens to ensure the privacy of Australians from government agencies was to initiate a Senate inquiry into online privacy following concerns over privacy breaches and plans by the Commonwealth to force internet service providers to store web browsing histories of all internet users. The inquiry will examine online privacy protection and data protection on social networking sites, as well as the data collection activities of private companies and Government agencies. More information about the inquiry including its terms of reference can be found here:

<http://greensmps.org.au/content/media-release/greens-bring-online-privacy-inquiry> and

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/eca_cte/online_privacy/info.htm

Question 4

The Australian Greens believe that for Australian armed forces to be sent to war there should be approval from Australian parliament and not just the executive as is currently the situation under the *Defence Act 1903*. Greens Senator Scott Ludlam in 2009 introduced the *Defence Amendment (Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service) Bill* that would have required parliamentary approval before Australian armed forces would be sent overseas to war.

The Australian Greens believe in open, transparent and accountable governance and believe that as there is no greater decision a country may make than to go to war that such a power should not be exercised solely by the executive in the secrecy of the cabinet room. This is a completely inadequate arrangement as a decision to go to war is a decision to put the lives of Australian service men and women at risk, there is a risk of injury and death to civilians, war presents an environmental cost and finally such a decision comes at a massive expense to the Australian tax payer.

The decision for Australia to go to fight an illegal war in Iraq is a prime

example as to why greater accountability and scrutiny is required as, in the instance of Iraq, Australia went into war being led blindly by the Howard government on intelligence that was not available to the Australian public and which has subsequently been shown to be highly dubious.

Question 5

The Australian Greens are committed to the protection of the rights to privacy and the need to protect against infringements on the rights from government authorities. We are already very active in ensuring the protection of the right to privacy and will continue to be in the new parliament. Recently for example the *National Security Legislation Monitor Bill 2010* passed, an office that the Greens have been calling for since the introduction of anti-terrorism legislation following September 11. Senator Ludlam played an integral role in strengthening the initially inadequate powers proposed by the Labor government for the office. The office is tasked with reviewing Australian anti-terrorism legislation which includes extensive law enforcement powers which threaten the right to privacy.

As mentioned above the Australian Greens also support the expansion of the current Parliamentary Committee on the Australian Crime Commission with the establishment of the proposed Parliamentary Committee on Law Enforcement. The new committee will have the role of overseeing the operations of the AFP and ACC, agencies with extensive powers that may infringe on the right to privacy. Although the Australian Greens are concerned at the failure of the proposed new committee to make reference in its functions to Australia's human rights obligations particularly the right to privacy under article 17 of the ICCPR which should be central to the Committee's oversight.

Finally, the Australian Greens will continue to support a Charter of Rights in Australia which would include a right to privacy similar to that provided under article 17 of the ICCPR to ensure that civil liberties of Australians are protected from government infringement. This will ensure that attention is given to those aspects of a legislation or bill that infringe the right to privacy and is ideally consequently amended to ensure compliance.

Question 6

The Australian Greens believe in open and transparent government and therefore would ensure that the Council of Australian Governments and Standing Committee of Attorney General have a greater level of accountability.

Question 7

The Australian Greens believe in the right of adult Australians to be allowed to read or view whatever material they choose provided that it is not criminally prohibited. Senator Ludlam has taken a very active approach to censorship particularly with regards to the Labor governments proposed mandatory net censorship which he has vehemently opposed.

Senator Ludlam opposes the internet filter on a number of grounds, namely, that it will not adequately prevent Australians from accessing criminal material such as child pornography online, the introduction of the filter will provide for potential censorship of the internet in the future and finally the filter is unworkable as simply blacklisting a set of URLs when the internet contains over a trillion pages is completely worthless.

Question 8

The Australian Greens are committed to ensuring that Australia's anti-terrorism laws do not compromise fundamental freedoms and civil liberties in the interest of national security. We believe that many of the current anti-terrorism provisions extend too far and are in breach of the civil liberties that accompany a strong democratic system and Australia's international human rights obligations. Senator Scott Ludlam, Attorney General spokesperson for the Greens, has been very active on reform of the anti-terrorism laws and in 2009 introduced the *Anti Terrorism Laws Reform Bill* which aimed at repealing some of the most egregious aspects of Australia's anti-terrorism legislation that did not deserve to remain on the statute books and be subject to the review of the Independent National Security Monitor that was established following the passing of the *National Security Legislation Monitor Bill 2009*.

Senator Ludlam and the Australian Greens have been long time supporters of the establishment of an independent monitor to review Australia's anti-terrorism legislation. We played an integral role in ensuring that the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor would have stringent and transparent reporting requirement under which they are required to report directly to parliament annually, as well as being required to report on specific investigations. This was a major improvement on the initial government proposal under which the office of the monitor was only required to produce sanitised annual reports that were to be edited by the Prime Minister's department.

The Australian Greens do however have concerns at the current resources available to the office of the monitor. Unfortunately the current government believe that it is sufficient for the position to be a part-time role and to be supported by just two staff members.

It was also suggested by the Attorney General's Department in Senate Estimates on May 27 that the two support staff roles will be seconded from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and that these two individuals will have other duties outside their roles of assisting the independent monitor. We are eagerly anticipating a response to the questions on notice by the Attorney General's Department concerning the staffing arrangements of the office. If such a staffing arrangement is planned, the Australian Greens believe it to be inadequate especially given that the initial workload of the office will be very heavy given as the office will have the painstaking task of reviewing almost nine years worth of anti-terrorism legislation due to the considerable delay in establishing this much needed office.

Question 9

Yes. The Greens introduced legislation a national independent integrity and anti-corruption commission into the Senate to establish the Commission in June 2010.

The National Integrity Commissioner Bill establishes a National Office of Integrity Commissioner, which will comprise of a new National Integrity Commission, the existing the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) and a new Office of the Parliamentary Advisor. It will have independent oversight functions for: the investigation and prevention of misconduct and corruption in all Commonwealth departments, agencies, federal parliamentarians and their staff; the Australian Federal Police and The Australian Crimes Commission and will provide written advice to parliamentarians on matters relating to ethical conduct of parliamentarians, interpretation of the departmental guidelines. Senator Brown

introduced this bill in June 2010

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22legislation%2Fbillhome%2Fs752%22>

Question 10

The Greens are committed to protecting the human rights and civil liberties of all people. We are strong advocates for a Human Rights Act and are disappointed the Government has not reacted to the strong community support for this. In particular, we remain concerned about the continued discrimination against LGBTI Australians and have moved to extend equal marriage rights to same-sex couples (rejected by both old parties) and have been advocating for sexuality and gender identity to be incorporated into any national anti-discrimination framework.

The Greens are also concerned by the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees – the world's most vulnerable people. We have been steadfast in calling for a long-term, compassionate and humane approach – ending mandatory detention, off-shore processing and children in detention.

Coalition (Liberal-National) response to Civil Liberties Australia

Answer 1

Unlike the Labor party, which has dithered and dissembled on the issue of the need for a human rights act, the Coalition has a clear view. We believe Australians have always had their human rights respected; they are protected by parliament, the common law and an independent judiciary.

We do not believe a bill of rights, whether constitutional or statutory, will ensure Australians' rights are respected any more than they are now. Rather, a human rights act will unnecessarily burden our legal system, increase the power of unelected judges and magistrates, and commensurately reduce the power of our elected representatives.

Answer 2

The Coalition has no plans to repeal section 35 of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988. We believe Territorians have effective self-government in the ACT legislature.

Answer 3

The Coalition supports robust and effective intelligence services which help the government protect the Australian people at home and abroad.

Answer 4

The Coalition will not make any changes that weaken the prerogatives of the Australian executive or the parliament.

Answer 5

We have no plans to mandate that government or private sector organisations collect new types of data, or monitor individuals. The Coalition values privacy and is naturally reluctant to mandate that government or private organisations have more data than they really need to perform their functions.

Answer 6

The Coalition is sympathetic to the need for greater transparency in COAG meetings. In government, we will work with the states and territories to make COAG meetings less opaque and more formative (*sic - we think that is meant to read 'informative': ed*)

We believe the Labor government has held too many COAG meetings, at significant cost to taxpayers. And the profusion of COAG meetings has undermined their individual importance. We will have only two COAG meetings in the first year and these will be held in Canberra.

Having fewer COAG meetings will mean those that are held will be subject to greater public scrutiny.

Answer 7

The Coalition has no plan to conduct a review into Australia's censorship regime.

The Coalition supports sensible and workable measures to protect children from illegal or inappropriate online content. We will continue to assess, monitor and test improvements in technology which may enhance online safety. But ultimately it will be a range of measures – such as strong and well funded online policing, support for teachers and parents, international cooperation and technology options that will keep our children safe in the online world.

We are sceptical that a national internet filter along the lines flagged by the Labor government can be effective, or even implemented.

Answer 8

The Coalition has no plan for material alterations to the anti-terrorism legislation that the Coalition introduced in government after September 11, 2001.

The Coalition is determined to protect Australians from terrorism, and will do everything it can reasonably do to ensure their safety.

The Coalition supported the introduction of the *Independent National Security Legislation Monitor Act 2010* and, in fact, introduced private members' bills for such a measure in both Houses well in advance of the Government's introduction of the legislation. The Coalition is committed to ensuring the National Security Legislation Monitor is adequately resourced and will engage fully with his or her recommendations.

Answer 9

We have no plans to establish a Commonwealth independent commission against corruption.

Answer 10

The Coalition condemns all forms of discrimination. We have no plans to conduct formal inquiries into Commonwealth or State anti-discrimination legislation, but recognise that amendments to Commonwealth legislation may be necessary in respect of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

We believe Australians are a welcoming and tolerant group of people.

Australian Democrats

1. If elected, will you support the introduction of a statutory Charter of Rights? YES
2. If elected, will you actively move to repeal section 35 of Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988, and other similar acts, which allows the Federal Government to trample on the rights of Territorians to self-determination that Australians living in States enjoy? YES
3. If elected, how will you hold Australia's swelling ranks of security/spy personnel to account? YES

4. If elected, will you support legislation setting limits on the ability of the Executive to go to, and continue at, war without parliamentary scrutiny and approval. YES. Long-standing Australian Democrats position.
5. If elected, how would you ensure Australians' right to privacy from intrusive state and federal governments and bureaucrats is better protected? Absolutely, YES
6. If elected, will you ensure that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) are transparent and accountable to the Australian public (by publishing an agenda and minutes of meetings, as a minimum example)? YES
7. If elected, will you conduct a review into Australia's censorship regime to ensure that only criminal material is prohibited and that, to the greatest extent possible, adult Australians are able to read and view whatever they want - including on the internet? Absolutely, YES.
8. If elected, will you conduct a full, frank and comprehensive review of Australia's terrorism laws, repealing those provisions which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms, and/or those provisions which have not been needed, and those already covered in the existing criminal law? Absolutely, YES.
9. If elected, will you support the creation of a National Independent Commission Against Corruption to investigate allegations of corrupt conduct by police, politicians, judges, members of the public service or others when in a position of authority? Most definitely, YES. Bring it on!
10. If elected, what will you do to extend civil liberties and human rights protection in Australia?

I will do all of the above, for starters. I will also listen to civil rights groups, such as CLA and NSWCCCL. I will uphold the social liberal principles of the Australian Democrats and vote with my conscience to represent the best interests of my constituents, to enable us to live in a fair and liberal democracy and enjoy our civil rights and freedoms. – *Darren Churchill, No 1 on the Australian Democrats ACT ticket, and CLA member.*

Labor Party

1. If re-elected, will the Labor Government support the introduction of a statutory charter of Rights?

Federal Labor took the decision not to implement a Human Rights Act. This decision was not taken lightly.

The central issue is not whether human rights should be protected, but how best to do so. The Gillard Labor Government is committed to positive and practical measures to improve human rights protection in Australia, with education as the centrepiece.

Federal Labor introduced the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Bill into Parliament on 2 June 2010. The Bill strengthens parliamentary scrutiny of new laws for consistency with Australia's human rights obligations and encourages early and ongoing consideration of human rights issues in policy and legislative development.

It would establish a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights and introduce requirements for new legislation to be accompanied by Statements of Compatibility which will set out how the new laws meet Australia's obligations under the seven core United Nations human rights treaties. This will enhance the role that the Executive and the Parliament play in considering the potential impact that laws and policies may have on the citizens they represent.

2. If re-elected, will the Labor Government actively repeal section 35 of the Australian Capital Territory (self Government) Act 1988, and other similar Acts, which allows the federal Government to trample on rights of Territorians to self-determination that Australians living in States enjoy?

The Gillard Labor Government does not intend to undertake a review of the current arrangements under the Australian Capital Territory (Self Government) Act. Federal Labor believes that any review of this legislation is a matter for the ACT Government and its residents.

3. If re-elected, how will the Labor Government hold Australia's swelling ranks of security/spy personnel to account?

The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security provides independent assurance for the Prime Minister, senior Ministers and Parliament as to whether Australia's intelligence and security agencies act legally and with propriety by inspecting, inquiring into and reporting on their activities. The IGIS is an independent statutory office holder appointed by the Governor-General. The IGIS is completely separate from all the agencies.

IGIS reviews the activities of the following agencies:

- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)
- Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS)
- Defence Signals Directorate (DSD)
- Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO)
- Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), and
- Office of National Assessments (ONA).

In addition, Federal Labor recently established the position of the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor to review and report on the operation, effectiveness and implications of Australia's counter terrorism and national security legislation on an ongoing basis. The Monitor will also be responsible for considering if counter-terrorism and national security laws remain necessary and proportionate to the threat of terrorism.

Federal Labor is committed to getting right the difficult balance between ensuring Australia has strong counter-terrorism laws that protect the security of Australians and preserving Australia's values and freedoms.

4. If re-elected, will the Labor Government support legislation setting limits on the ability of the executive to go to, and continue at, war without parliamentary scrutiny and approval?

The decision to deploy military forces to combat is among the most serious to be made by national leaders.

Under the Constitution, the decision to deploy members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) beyond Australia's territorial limits is the sole responsibility of the executive arm of the Federal Government.

Both the Gillard Labor Government and Coalition support this position.

This power includes the decision to deploy the Australian Defence Force to undertake combat operations, as well as a range of activities other than war fighting, such as peacekeeping operations and disaster relief.

5. If re-elected, how would the Labor Government ensure Australian's right to privacy from intrusive state and federal governments and bureaucrats is better protected?

There are a number of protections in place to ensure Australians privacy is protected.

For example, use of telecommunications interception powers by law enforcement and national security agencies is strictly regulated by the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act. Warrants to intercept communications may only be issued in relation to serious criminal activity or where a person may present a threat to security.

Telecommunications interception powers are subject to rigorous oversight and accountability, including judicial review, oversight and inspection by Ombudsmen, parliamentary reporting and ministerial responsibility.

The Gillard Labor Government continues to monitor the use of telecommunications interception powers to ensure they are used responsibly, effectively and judiciously. We are committed to maintaining the balance between effective law enforcement and national security investigative capabilities, and the privacy of the community.

The Privacy Act and Privacy Commissioner also provide important protections for the Australian people and Federal Labor holds the issue of privacy in the highest esteem.

We will continue to monitor these protections and make necessary changes as required.

6. If re-elected, will the Labor Government ensure that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) are transparent and accountable to the Australian public (by publishing an agenda and minutes of meetings, as a minimum example)?

The primary purpose of the Council of Australian Governments and the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General is to provide an opportunity for ministers from all jurisdictions to consider and discuss and progress a range of matters of mutual interest. Minutes of these meetings are released after each meeting in the form of a communiqué, which was an initiative of Federal Labor. Federal Labor believes that this provides the appropriate mechanism for providing information on the discussion and outcomes of these meetings.

7. If re-elected, will the Labor Government conduct a review into Australia's censorship regime to ensure that only criminal material is prohibited and that, to the greatest extent possible, adult Australians are able to read and view whatever they want – including on internet?

The Gillard Labor Government understands that the public needs to have confidence that the material blocked under Internet Service Provider (ISP) level filtering, and the process by which it is chosen, is independent, rigorous, free from interference or influence and has appropriate review mechanisms.

That is why the Federal Labor has committed to a comprehensive suite of transparency and accountability measures to accompany the introduction of ISP filtering of Refused Classification (RC) content.

We understand that there is community debate about what material should be included in the Refused Classification (RC) category. That is why the Gillard Labor Government is also seeking a review of the Refused Classification (RC) category before any obligation on ISPs is implemented for mandatory blocking of Refused Classification (RC) content, to ensure that this classification continues to reflect current community standards.

Until then, Federal Labor welcomes the announcement that three of Australia's largest ISPs – Telstra, Optus and Primus, representing around 70 per cent of end users – have agreed to voluntarily block at the ISP level, a list of child abuse URLs compiled and maintained by the independent regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

8. If re-elected, will the Labor Government conduct a full, frank and comprehensive review of Australia's terrorism laws, repealing those provisions which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms, and/or those provisions which have not been needed, and those already covered in the existing criminal law?

Australia's national security is a top priority for Federal Labor, which is why we consider that strong national security and counter-terrorism laws are a vital part of ensuring the security of Australians.

Federal Labor initiated and launched the 2010 Counter Terrorism White Paper “Securing Australia, Protecting Our Community”, which highlighted that terrorism, and in particular home grown terrorism, poses a threat to Australia’s national security. The White Paper noted that 38 people in Australia have been or are being prosecuted as a result of counter terrorism operations. As the White Paper makes clear, our policy delivers an effective and balanced approach that further strengthens our domestic counter terrorism efforts and makes a strong contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts.

To address concerns and recommendations contained in a number of independent reviews of national security and counter terrorism legislation, Federal Labor has recently introduced legislation implementing a number of key changes to Australia’s national security and counter terrorism laws.

The national Security Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced following a public consultation on the proposed changes.

Key amendments enacted by the Bill included:

A specific right of appeal against a decision to grant or refuse bail relating to terrorism and serious national security offences.

Ensuring accountability through additional parliamentary oversight of the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Crime Commission.

Extending the role of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security to inquire into intelligence or security matters relating to Federal Departments and agencies.

Federal Labor’s changes to Australia’s national security and counter-terrorism legislation provide important safeguards and accountability mechanisms.

In addition, we recently established the position of the National Security Legislation Monitor to review and report on the operation, effectiveness and implications of Australia’s counter terrorism and national security legislation on an ongoing basis. The Monitor will also be responsible for considering if counter-terrorism and national security laws remain necessary and proportionate to the threat of terrorism.

Federal Labor is committed to getting right the difficult balance between ensuring Australia has strong counter-terrorism laws that protect the security of Australians and preserving Australia’s values and freedoms.

9. If re-elected, will the Labor Government support the creation of a national Independent Commission Against Corruption to investigate allegations of corrupt conduct by police, politicians, judges, members of the public service or others when in a position of authority?

Several existing agencies with strong investigative powers currently promote accountability and integrity at the federal level.

Federal Labor strongly advocates for transparency and accountability in government in Anti-corruption bodies are one way to ensure these high standards are reached and maintained.

The Auditor-General, as an independent officer of the Parliament, may review or examine any aspect of the operations of the federal public sector.

The Ombudsman has the power to investigate administrative actions of federal agencies, either from a complaint or by own motion.

Apparent breaches of the APS code of Conduct by a public servant can be investigated by the relevant agency head and the Public Service commissioner has a similar role in respect to agency heads.

Where biased or dishonest conduct may amount to an offence under federal law, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) has all necessary powers to investigate and, in doing so, acts independently.

The Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner can investigate possible corrupt conduct in the Australian Crime Commission, AFP or other federal Government agencies with law enforcement functions.

The Gillard Labor Government considers that these existing independent agencies fulfil this role. Another organisation is not required, beyond the various existing agencies, to investigate alleged corrupt conduct.

10. If re-elected, what will the Labor Government do to extend civil liberties and human rights protection in Australia?

If re-elected, the Gillard Labor Government will continue to progress measures it announced under Australia's Human Rights Framework to protect and promote human rights, including:

Investing over \$12 million in a comprehensive suite of education initiatives to promote a greater understanding of human rights across the community.

Establishing a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to provide greater scrutiny of legislation for compliance with out international human rights obligations.

Requiring that each new Bill introduced into Parliament is accompanied by a statement of compatibility with our international human rights obligations.

Combining federal anti-discrimination laws into a single Act to remove unnecessary regulatory overlap and make the system more user-friendly.

Holding an annual NGO Human Rights Forum to enable comprehensive engagement with non-government organisations on human rights matters.

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