



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Federal Election will take place on Saturday, 18 May. As Catholics, we need to be especially concerned about the dignity of the human person from conception until natural death, and about the common good of the community, when casting our vote.

The next term of the Federal Parliament will confront serious issues of religious freedom, education policy and funding, and how we care for our most vulnerable. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has provided an election statement that offers guidance on many of these issues. Please read it at www.catholic.org.au.

Additionally, the Archdiocese of Sydney invited parties to respond to a series of questions about their stance on the most critical issues at stake in this election. Their answers have formed the basis for this guide.

We know that minor parties and independents can play an influential role in Parliament and often exercise the balance of power in the Senate (Upper House.) Their presence can make a critical difference when legislation relating to life, marriage, family and religious freedom come before the Parliament. In this election, it is important to carefully consider who receives your vote in the Senate, and I hope the guide assists you in making that choice.

We pray for all our leaders and those seeking to serve the community in public office, that they may exercise their role with a deep respect for the dignity of the human person and for the common good of all.

Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP
Archbishop of Sydney

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Believe our anti-discrimination laws currently include an unacceptable exemption for religious organisations. The Greens will remove these exemptions, and enshrine anti-discrimination in a comprehensive charter of rights.

EDUCATION

Believe that taxpayer funding should go to public schools and will seek to use any and all options available to redirect the funds promised to Catholic and independent schools to the public school sector. Will also scrap the School Chaplains program in public schools and invest in secular student counsellors and initiatives such as Safe Schools.

CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

Slavery: Supported the introduction of the *Modern Slavery Act*, and recommend consideration of mandatory reporting of human rights due diligence more broadly, not just in relation to slavery and human trafficking.

Refugees and asylum seekers: Will push to end offshore detention, increase Australia's humanitarian intake to 50,000 per year, introduce a 7-day limit for onshore detention, abolish Temporary Protection Visas, establish private sponsorship of refugees in addition to our humanitarian intake and establish a Royal Commission into immigration detention.

Housing affordability: Establish a Federal Housing Trust to fund the building of 500,000 public and community homes, fund crisis housing services, implement a national standard for renters' rights, increase funding for tenancy advice services, reform negative gearing and the CGT discount, and replace stamp duty with land tax.

Elderly Australians: Will fund an additional 50,000 Home Care Packages over three years at a cost of \$5.491 billion and invest \$3 billion to increase hours of care provided to each resident in residential aged care, require staff-to-resident ratios that ensure an adequate level of care and increase pay for aged care workers by 15%.

Care for creation: Push for new environmental laws overseen by a federal regulatory body, reduce waste and increase recycling and reuse, introduce marine parks, end deforestation, stop the Adani coal mine and ban all new coal seam gas and fracking projects.

*The Greens had not responded at time of printing.
Answers in this guide are taken from their website and public statements.*



CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE
OF SYDNEY

FEDERAL ELECTION GUIDE 2019



THE ISSUES

Religious
Freedom

Education

Care for the
vulnerable

Read the full answers from the
parties on these and more issues at
www.catholicweekly.com.au



THE NATIONALS

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Coalition will seek to overturn student-related exemptions for religious schools and has asked for an ALRC inquiry into all religious exemptions in anti-discrimination law, but will also seek to ensure religious educational institutions can teach and maintain rules consistent with their faith. They will develop model guidelines to make clear parents' rights to remove their child from classes that contain instruction on religious or moral matters. Will legislate to protect against discrimination on religious belief or activity and establish a Religious Freedom Commissioner.

EDUCATION

The Coalition will allocate \$310 billion of recurrent funding for all schools in the next 10 years, including \$21.4 billion in the 2020 school year. It will offer a new \$1.2 billion Choice and Affordability Fund to help non-government schools in a way that supports parental choice. The majority of \$890 million in capital funding over the next 5 years will go to Catholic Schools, and more than \$890 million will go to states and territories for preschool in 2019 and 2020.

CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

Slavery: Passed the *Modern Slavery Act*, launched draft guidance for businesses and established Taskforce Cadena to disrupt criminal syndicates profiting from exploitation of foreign workers.

Refugees and asylum seekers: Support offshore processing, temporary protection visas and safe boat turnbacks. Fast Track Assessment processes provide a limited form of review and takes one-third as long as the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Housing affordability: Expanded tax incentives for investment in affordable housing, \$2 billion for affordable housing nationally and agreement with states and territories to provide over \$7 billion in housing and homelessness funding over 5 years.

Elderly Australians: Has doubled home care packages since 2012-13, extended the Commonwealth Home Care Program for two years; a \$5.9 billion investment supporting up to 800,000 people with home support services.

Care for creation: 2030 target is to reduce emissions by 26 to 28 per cent below 2005 levels, backed by a comprehensive, fully costed, \$3.5 billion plan that includes a \$2 billion climate solutions fund.

Labor

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Labor will remove exemptions in *Sex Discrimination Act* relating to students and staff of religious schools on the basis of gender, sexuality and other attributes covered by the *Sex Discrimination Act*. Labor believes this can be done in a way that protects the right of schools to continue to operate in accordance with their religion. Supports the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission in protecting the rights of all, including freedom of religion.

EDUCATION

Labor will match the Government's current funding commitment, establish a \$280 million research institute to ensure teachers and parents have access to high quality research, invest an extra \$300 million into disability support at school, establish a National Principals' Academy to give Australian principals advanced leadership training and support and work with universities, school systems and the teaching profession to improve the quality of teacher education. Labor will create a \$1.75 billion National Preschool and Kindy Program to give all three and four-year-olds access to subsidised, quality early learning.

CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

Slavery: Will introduce penalties into the *Modern Slavery Act* and an Independent Commissioner to assist slavery victims in Australia.

Refugees and asylum seekers: Committed to strong borders, including turnbacks when safe to do so, offshore processing and regional resettlement but believes secure borders should never have meant leaving men, women and children to languish in indefinite detention.

Housing affordability: Will reform negative gearing so deductions are only claimed on newly-built homes, reform CGT concessions for new investors, build 250,000 new affordable rental homes over the next decade, and provide \$88 million over two years for a new Safe Housing Fund.

Elderly Australians: Provides assurances they will "do better" for older Australians in residential aged care and those waiting for care at home. Further policies are set to be announced in the coming weeks.

Care for creation: Environment Policy commits to strong action to protect our environment on land, in the ocean and in the atmosphere, and will modernise environmental law to make sure the environment is protected and industry and communities have certainty.



Conservatives

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Support the right of faith-based schools and institutions to hire, enrol and educate in line with their values without interference by anti-discrimination legislation, and recognising religious freedom, as outlined in its own *Protected Freedoms Bill*. These freedoms would trump new competing 'rights' or erosions of those freedoms. Do not support creating a federal anti-discrimination law preventing, say, "offence" and "insult" on religious grounds as these have been abused by opponents of Christian and Catholic faith at state and overseas levels.

EDUCATION

Support parental choice in education and will defend religious schools and the home schooling communities. Support continued Commonwealth funding for non-government schools. Reduction or withdrawal of funding would lead to a severe restriction of freedom and choice for people of faith or people concerned about the direction of government schools, not to mention immeasurable additional cost to taxpayers. Oppose funding being used to compel schools to act against their values or conscience.

CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

Slavery: Oppose sexual slavery and expect state and federal law enforcement authorities to prosecute all instances of (predominantly) women tricked or forced into prostitution.

Refugees and asylum seekers: Support a compassionate approach that maintains secure national borders and that has adequate safeguards to prevent individuals coming to Australia who do not have a legitimate claim for asylum or who pose a threat to Australians.

Housing affordability: Support lower and simpler taxes. Do not accept that changes to taxation arrangements on housing - such as negative gearing - are genuinely about housing affordability. They are about raising revenue to grow the size, scope and reach of government.

Elderly Australians: Honour elderly Australians for the incredible contribution they have made to our country and support enabling elderly Australians to spend as long as reasonably possible living in their own home.

Care for creation: Will let individuals, community groups, corporations and organisations decide behavioural changes towards the environment free from threats of carbon taxation or criminal prosecution for failing to abide by government diktats on climate policy.