

# PROPOSALS

---

---

## For the Better Consolidation of the AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

---

The Federal Conference of the Australian Labor Party held at Melbourne, October, 1924, resolved to refer to the Federal Executive the question of drafting a uniform Constitution for all States, and to report to the next Federal Labor Conference, to be held during 1927.

This instruction was considered at a meeting of the Federal Executive held on 26th May, 1926, when it was resolved that Executive Officers Messrs. J. F. Hannan (President), J. J. Kenneally (Vice-president), and D. L. McNamara (Secretary) be appointed a committee to prepare a draft Constitution, and report to a future meeting of the Executive.

At a meeting of the Federal Executive, held on June 23rd, 1926, the Executive Officers submitted the following for the consideration of the Federal Executive, and are actuated by the desire to secure an Organisation which will embrace what has previously been known as the Industrial and Political Wings of the Australian Labor Movement.

The Federal Executive resolved that the scheme presented be placed on the agenda paper for consideration by the 1927 Federal Conference.

### FEDERAL CONFERENCE DECISION.

The Federal Conference, held at Canberra, May, 1927, discussed the draft proposals submitted by the Federal Executive, and resolved:—

“That this Conference approves of the principles of organisation as outlined in the proposals submitted by the Federal Executive of the A.L.P., and hereby directs the Federal Executive to make the necessary arrangements to have the proposals adequately placed before the various Trades and Labor Councils, and A.L.P. Branches, with a view to having the Political and Industrial wings of the workers organised in one body.”

### DRAFT PROPOSALS.

The Organisation shall consist of—

- (1) Federal Congress.
- (2) Federal Executive.
- (3) Federal Industrial Disputes Committee.
- (4) State Congress.
- (5) State Executive.
- (6) District Councils.
- (7) Branches.

## POWERS OF PROPOSED FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS. FEDERAL CONGRESS.

The Federal Congress shall consist of one representative for each 20,000 affiliated members or part thereof of each State Division, with a minimum of five representatives for any one State, and shall—

- (a) Meet triennially. (Special meetings may be called on application of a majority of the State Executives.)
- (b) Be the Highest Governing Body of the Movement.
- (c) Deal with and be the recognised Authority on all Industrial and Political questions.

## FEDERAL EXECUTIVE.

The Federal Executive shall be elected on the basis of two members for the first 50,000 members or part thereof, affiliated with a State Division, and one additional delegate for each additional 50,000 or part thereof, and shall be empowered to—

- (a) Elect annually, not necessarily from amongst its members, a President and Secretary.
- (b) Elect annually from amongst its members a Vice-President.
- (c) Arrange for attendance of President, Vice-President, and Secretary at all meetings of Federal Congress, with power to speak, but to not vote unless credentialled as delegates from a State. The Federal officers shall officiate at all meetings of the Federal Congress.
- (d) Arrange for representation of the Organisation at Oversea Conference.
- (e) Appoint annually a Federal Industrial Disputes Committee, and suspend or cancel such appointments, if in their opinion such action is considered necessary in the interests of the Movement.

## FEDERAL INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES COMMITTEE.

The Federal Industrial Disputes Committee, shall consist of the President of the Federal Executive, and five members elected by the Federal Executive, and shall—

- (a) Hold office for twelve months (subject to conditions of Clause (e) of Federal Executive powers), but shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- (b) Have power to intervene, deal with, and control all disputes which in the opinion of the officers of the Federal Executive, are likely to extend beyond the boundaries of a State, or may affect other portions of the Movement.

Subject to the foregoing—State Disputes Committees to function in purely State disputes.

## STATE CONGRESS.

The State Congress shall be the governing power of the Organisation within the State, and shall consist of representatives of—

- (a) Trade Unions.
- (b) Branches of the Australian Labor Party.
- (c) One (1) Representative of each District Council.
- (d) One (1) Representative of Federal and State Parliamentary Labor Parties.

Congress shall meet triennially. (Provided that Special Meeting shall be called by the State Executive.)

## STATE EXECUTIVE.

The State Executive shall consist of representatives of the District Councils, and shall be the governing body within the State during the intervals between State Congresses.

## DISTRICT COUNCILS.

1. District Councils shall consist of representatives of—
  - (a) Industrial Unions or Branches thereof.
  - (b) Branches of Australian Labor Party.
2. Each Organisation or member thereof to have the right to appeal from the decision of the District Council to the next highest body up to the Federal Congress.
3. District Councils shall attend to the industrial and political necessities of affiliated membership.
4. The governing body in each State shall determine—
  - (a) District Council boundaries.
  - (b) Basis of representation on State Congress State Executive and District Councils.

## BRANCHES.

Branches shall consist of—

- (a) Any Industrial Union or Branch thereof, of not less than ten members affiliated with any District Council, or where no District Council exists, with the State Executive.
- (b) Any Branch of the Australian Labor Party consisting of not less than ten members (associate members excepted) affiliated with any District Council, or where no District Council exists, with the State Executive.

(The State-Federal Members' Branch of the A.L.P. shall, upon payment of the prescribed fees to the State Executive, be also deemed a Branch of the Party.)

## FINANCE.

Affiliation Fees payable to either the State Executive or the District Councils, shall be any sum not less than 1/- per member per year, for each fully-paid male member and 6d. for each female or juvenile member as may be determined by each State Division, for its membership.

Of the above sum, an amount of not less than 1d. per member shall be paid to the Federal Executive per year, in half-yearly payments.

The distribution of the balance of the affiliation fee shall be determined by the State Congress, provided that not less than 50 per cent. shall be paid to the District Councils on their affiliated membership.

The Federal Executive from its funds shall finance—

- (a) The administrative expenses of officers and staff of the Federal Executive.
- (b) The cost of all meetings of the Federal Congress, including expenses of delegates thereto, and also cost of official record of proceedings thereof.
- (c) The cost of all meetings of the Federal Executive, including the expenses of members thereof.
- (d) Expenses of all delegates appointed by the Federal Executive, to attend Conferences beyond Australia.
- (e) Expenses of members of Federal Industrial Disputes Committee.
- (f) Establishment and maintenance of a Federal Information and Publicity Bureau.
- (g) Any other expenditure authorised by the Federal Executive in the interests of the Labor Movement.

NOTE.—The principles outlined in these proposals were adopted for the government of the Labor Movement (Political and Industrial) in the State of Western Australia in 1906, and every Trades Union in that State is now affiliated with the Australian Labor Party.

---

---

## Explanatory Memorandum

---

TO THE WORKERS OF AUSTRALIA.

Dear Comrades,—

For some years the attention of those charged with the administration of the affairs of the Australian Labor Movement has been directed towards improving the organisation of Labor, in order to make it successfully respond to the challenge of the organised anti-Labor forces.

We find that the present system, whilst fairly satisfactory for the period through which Labor has passed, is entirely unsuitable for present-day requirements. The last inter-State Conference of the Australian Labor Party directed the Federal Executive to give attention to the framing of a Constitution, calculated to give the Australian Labor Movement an opportunity of functioning better in the interests of the workers of Australia. The result of the deliberations of the Federal Executive is now placed

before the workers, with a view to its adoption, and it is confidently anticipated that, if the workers agree to adopt the proposed new Constitution, the Labor Party in Australia will again take its rightful position in the public affairs of the community. The new Constitution is based on the principle of establishing a body in Australia, with full power to speak on behalf of the Australian workers, both on industrial and political questions; aims at the prevention of any division in the ranks of the workers, and endeavors to secure the co-ordination of industrial and political activities.

In addition, it is proposed to have one body, which will be recognised both inside and outside Australia as representing the Laborites of Australia. Furthermore, the altered Constitution would provide for the workers themselves taking control in cases of disputes, which, on account of lack of co-operation, very often result in harm to the workers themselves.

A Constitution based on similar principles has been operating successfully in Western Australia for a number of years, and the following is a list of the organisations which are affiliated with the Labor Movement in the Western Australian Constitution:—

Furniture Trades.	Bassendean A.L.P.
Metropolitan Timber Workers.	Australian Timber Workers' Union.
Letter Carriers.	Kalamunda A.L.P.
Bootmakers.	Calingiri A.L.P.
Painters.	Collie Miners.
Clerks.	Bunbury Lumpers.
Theatrical Employees.	Bottle Collectors.
Clothing Trades.	Cleaners and Caretakers.
Coachmakers.	Coopers.
Plumbers.	Masons.
Australian Engineers.	Musicians.
Fremantle.	Pastrycooks.
Boilermakers.	Railway Officers.
Butchers.	Locomotive Engine Drivers',
Superphosphate Workers.	Firemen's and Cleaners'
Lime Operatives.	Union.
Dock, Rivers and Harbors.	Kellerberrin A.L.P.
Federated Enginedrivers.	Cunderdin A.L.P.
Shipwrights.	Northam A.L.P.
Gasworkers.	Tanners and Curriers,
Tally Clerks, Fremantle.	Fremantle.
Moulders.	Fremantle Lumpers.
Tramway Employees, Fremantle.	Hospital Employees.
Flourmill Employees.	Hospital for Insane Employees.
Carpenters.	Aerated Waters.
Coastal Food Manufacturers	Saddlers.
Employees.	Sheet Plasterers.
South Fremantle A.L.P.	Tramway Employees, Perth.
East Fremantle A.L.P.	Tramway Officers.
Fremantle Labor Women.	Tanners and Curriers.
Sack, Bag and Textile Union.	W.A. Amalgamated Society of
Australian Engineers, Midland.	Railway Employees.
Australian Engineers, Collie.	Albany Lumpers.
Australian Engineers, Perth.	Australian Workers' Union.
Brickyard Employees.	Fire Brigades.
Midland Labor Women.	Printing Industry Employees,
Midland Railway Employees.	Kalgoorlie.

Printing Industry Employees,  
 Perth.  
 Shop Assistants (Metropolitan).  
 Shop Assistants, Kalgoorlie.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Kalgoorlie.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Perth No. 1.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Fremantle.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Midland.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Bassendean.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Maylands.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Perth No. 2.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Collie.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Yarloop.  
 Amalgamated Engineers,  
 Subiaco.  
 Bakers.  
 Breadcarters, Kalgoorlie.  
 Butchers, Kalgoorlie.  
 Brewery Employees.  
 Boilermakers.  
 Carters and Drivers.

Hospital Employees, Kalgoorlie.  
 Hotel and Restaurant Employ-  
 ees, Kalgoorlie.  
 Municipal Employees,  
 Kalgoorlie.  
 Newsrunners, Kalgoorlie.  
 Tailors and Tailoresses,  
 Kalgoorlie.  
 Theatrical Employees,  
 Kalgoorlie.  
 Tramway Employees,  
 Kalgoorlie.  
 Women's Club, Kalgoorlie.  
 Water Supply Union.  
 Barmaids and Barmen.  
 Brewery Employees.  
 Bruce Rock A.L.P.  
 Undertakers' Assistants.  
 Wine and Spirit Employees.  
 Waterside Workers.  
 Labor Women.  
 Leederville A.L.P.  
 Subiaco A.L.P.  
 Victoria Park A.L.P.  
 Federated Enginedrivers,  
 Collie.  
 Collie A.L.P.  
 Bunbury A.L.P.  
 Kalgoorlie and Boulder Labor  
 Women.

The result is that in Western Australia the employers realise that there is one body which speaks for the workers, and when a statement is made on behalf of the Australian Labor Party it is recognised that it is the decision of the workers' representative Organisation, and there is no other voice which requires any attention whatsoever. This means that the workers in that State are in a position to show a united front, and, as experience has shown, unity has been secured amongst the workers generally. As a matter of fact, those who believe in closer unionism should realise that if the workers are enrolled in one organisation throughout the Commonwealth, functioning under a uniform Constitution, the aims and objects of the closer unionism will have been achieved, and each union or organisation would be established as a unit in an Australia-wide movement.

For years past the affiliated members in Western Australia have been paying 3/- per member per year, realising that this system of organisation amply repays them for the money expended.

A careful analysis of the proposed new Constitution will indicate to the workers that the object aimed at is that the workers themselves shall be able to effectively declare their opinions regarding questions raised for their consideration.

At the present time the lack of definite authority enables the anti-Labor forces to use one section of the workers against another section. We have recently had illustrations of the extent to which anti-Labor Governments and Ministers will go in this direction, and the

workers should endeavor to prevent the possibility of this recurring, by establishing a body which will speak on their behalf and which will be recognised as the only body with power to declare the workers' attitude in respect to important public questions.

Consistent with the provision of the Australia-wide Constitution, the management of the affairs of each State division is left within the province of that State.

It will be observed that from the 6d. per member per year which will be forwarded to the Federal Executive the States will be relieved of the expenditure in connection with financing delegates to the triennial conference of the Australian Labor Party, and also in connection with the cost of the meeting of the Federal Executive, which is also at present borne by the States. In addition, from the funds thereby created, the expenses of delegations beyond Australia, and also all the expenses of the Interstate Disputes Committee will be met.

The Federal Executive recommends the adoption of the proposed Constitution, realising that it will eliminate the necessity of having two or more bodies in a State apparently speaking on behalf of the workers, with the result that those opposed to Labor are gradually assuming the attitude that they take little or no notice of either body.

Under the proposed Constitution one body in each State will speak for the workers of that State on State matters, and one body in the Commonwealth will speak for the workers of the Commonwealth on questions which extend beyond the limits of a State.

These proposals are submitted for your consideration and endorsement, in the belief that their adoption will mean a considerable march forward for Labor in the Commonwealth.

\* \* \* \* \*

In addition to the propositions covered by the memorandum, it may be well to here indicate the prospective number of District Councils that would be set up in each State.

In West Australia, where these proposals have operated since 1906, there are, in all, ten District Councils. The Metropolitan, covering Perth and district; Fremantle, covering Fremantle and districts; Gold Fields, covering the Gold Fields area; and seven other District Councils, embracing the balance of the State. That number have been found to serve well in West Australia, with its scattered area and limited population.

If the proposals be adopted by the Federal Conference, it is suggested that, as far as Victoria is concerned, at least 12 District Councils would be created—one for Melbourne and district; one each for Geelong and district, Ballarat and district, Bendigo and district, one at Sale to serve the Central Gippsland district, one at Wonthaggi or Korumburra to serve South Gippsland district, one at Warrnambool for the Western District, Mildura for the

Northern District, Maryborough for the Central District, one at Benalla or Wangaratta to serve North-Eastern Districts, one at Shepparton for Goulburn Valley district, and one at Kerang.

New South Wales could be divided up into about fourteen districts, as follows:—

1. Federal Electorates within Metropolitan Area.
2. Newcastle and Hunter Federal Electorates.
3. Calare Federal Electorate.
4. Cowper Electorate.
5. Darling Federal Electorate.
6. Eden-Monaro Federal Electorate.
7. Gwydir Federal Electorate.
8. Hume Federal Electorate
9. Macquarie Federal Electorate.
10. New England Federal Electorate.
11. Richmond Federal Electorate.
12. Riverina Federal Electorate.
13. Robertson Federal Electorate.
14. Werriwa Federal Electorate.

Under this scheme, even the smallest of these District Councils would be able to provide one or more permanent officials, whose duty it would be to organise and develop the centres under their jurisdiction, so maintaining interest all the year round.

The fact of the Industrial and Political wings being thus combined should stimulate and solidify all our political branches who otherwise become dormant for the most part except when an election is on.

There are a great many members of our Movement who are not eligible to become connected with an Industrial Union, and who, consequently, frequently fail to appreciate the industrial side of the Movement. If they were able to join in the discussion at the various local centres, such as the general meeting of the District Council and at the various sub-branches right throughout these areas, it would give them a very much better grip of our whole Movement to the advantage of all concerned.

Some people may at first glance suggest that these proposals would be detrimental to the political side of the Movement; others again might state that it would be disadvantageous to the Industrial side. In our humble opinion it would give new life and vigor to both, which is so very necessary, having regard to the great apathy latterly existing in our Movement throughout the Commonwealth.

J. J. KENNEALLY, President.

LEWIS McDONALD, Vice-President.

D. L. McNAMARA, Secretary.

Federal Executive Australian Labor Party.

