A Shorten Labor Government will work with the NSW Government to deliver the urban rail infrastructure that will attract new high value industries and tens of thousands of new jobs to Western Sydney, one of Australia’s fastest growing regions, as well as boost the nation’s economic growth by up to $3.6 billion annually.

Labor will invest in completing the missing link in Sydney’s urban rail network, connecting the surging growth in the North West with the emerging growth in the South West, via the region’s designated employment zones, future residential development areas and the proposed Western Sydney Airport (WSA).

This project has two phases.

In the first phase Federal Labor would invest in:

- extending the South West Rail Link from Leppington via Bringelly to the airport; and
- building a new outer orbital line from Macarthur in the south to St Marys in the north, which will also service the airport.

The second phase would complete the outer orbital link via construction of a new line connecting St Marys to the Sydney Metro Northwest at Rouse Hill, which is scheduled to open in 2019.

Labor will provide a Federal contribution of $400 million to get this package of works underway as soon as possible, contingent on a positive assessment from Infrastructure Australia. The identified rail lines are attached.

**Why are we doing this?**

Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia.

Already home to two million people — more residents than Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart and Darwin combined — it is the country’s third largest economy. In the next two decades the region’s population is expected to grow by a further one million, with more than 300,000 new homes expected to be constructed.

By mid-century more people will be living west of Parramatta than east of it. The NSW Government, in anticipation of this growth has identified two growth centres in the North West and South West.

However, managing this growth will present real challenges for all levels of government. A failure to get the planning right and build the infrastructure that is needed will leave many communities in the region socially isolated and economically disadvantaged.

This would inevitably harm Sydney’s overall productivity and performance.

Labor’s ambition is to make the ‘30 minute city’ a reality for Western Sydney.
A ‘30 minute city’ is one in which its residents can comfortably access their daily needs – jobs, education and health services, and recreation activities – within a one hour travel budget, ideally by walking, riding a bicycle or catching public transport.

To achieve this in Western Sydney will require actions that first and foremost attract new industries and more jobs to the region.

At present, there are only 0.75 jobs for every local worker.

As a result, a third of Western Sydney workers – or more than 300,000 people – have to travel to other parts of the city daily for work, with most having to commute by car on increasingly congested roads.

Travel times can be up to two hours each way.

Compounding employment pressures in Western Sydney, it’s also difficult and time consuming for local residents to access the jobs that are there with anything but a private vehicle.

Indeed, because of its current focus on east-west rail corridors, the public transport network is not, in many cases, a viable alternative to the car when it comes to travelling within Western Sydney.

And despite the potential sources of local job growth, including the proposed Western Sydney Airport and the NSW Government’s employment zones, it is the region’s lack of public transport services that is often cited by businesses as a major reason for not relocating there.

The region needs new, modern and well-planned public transport infrastructure.

A north-south rail link, in particular, would not only be a catalyst for greater investment and job creation within the region, it would also provide a fast, reliable and affordable way for local residents to access those new employment opportunities, as well as the education and health services and recreation activities that are vital to their quality of life.

Put simply, Western Sydney would take a big step towards becoming a ‘30 minute city’.

Who will benefit?

By helping to attract new businesses to the region, particularly in the industries of aviation, agribusiness, manufacturing, emerging technologies, healthcare, education, tourism, and transport and logistics, a north-south rail link via the proposed Western Sydney Airport would mean fewer Western Sydney residents having to make the expensive, time consuming car trip east for work every day.

This would not only have a positive impact on family budgets, but also improve the quality of life of those who currently have to make the commute for up to two hours each way to make a living.
Better public transport infrastructure within Western Sydney – and bringing jobs closer to where two million people live – would also benefit all Sydney motorists by taking pressure off the city’s road network, with the average passenger train removing some 1,000 cars off the road.

Without game changing projects such as a north south rail link, Infrastructure Australia says that the cost of congestion on the urban roads in and around Sydney will grow from $5.6 billion in 2011 to almost $15 billion by 2031, with travel times along the city’s most congested road corridors expected to increase by at least 20 per cent.

Analysis undertaken by Deloitte and Arup on behalf of the Western Sydney Rail Alliance, and the Committee for Sydney, is even more compelling:

“The economic benefits of the corridor are clear. From 2024 to 2040, north south rail will **add $44.7 billion in benefits to the economy**, reaching $3.6 billion per year in 2040.

“There can be no doubt that a north south rail solution is crucial to the sustainable development of the Western Sydney Growth Corridor and its future as a smart city.”

Importantly by starting construction on this project immediately it would ensure that government is delivering vital infrastructure ahead of the residential and industrial developments that are planned instead of struggling to retrofit it after that growth has occurred, usually at greater cost to the taxpayer.

**How will it work?**

The preliminary costs of the new rail lines identified by Federal Labor are being finalised as part the Western Sydney Rail Needs Study currently being undertaken by the NSW and Federal Governments. All up, this Study is considering the merits of six different route options.

This work will form the basis of future funding negotiations between the Commonwealth and the NSW Government.

Federal Labor has indicated that in government it would be prepared to make an initial $400 million contribution to accelerate this process.

As with all road and urban rail projects, the procurement and construction of the new rail links will be managed by state agencies, with the Federal funding released when specific, pre-determined milestones are achieved.

**Labor’s record**

Federal Labor’s plan for keeping our cities moving involves investing in both their road and rail infrastructure. When last in government Labor doubled the roads budget and committed more to urban public transport infrastructure than all our predecessors since Federation combined.

All up, the previous Federal Labor Government invested $13.6 billion in public transport projects, including:
• the Moreton Bay Rail Link (completed) and Cross River Rail in Brisbane;
• the Gold Coast Light Rail (completed);
• the Regional Rail Link (completed) and the Melbourne Metro in Victoria;
• Adelaide’s Noarlunga to Seaford Rail Extension (completed); and
• The Perth City Link (completed).

Coalition’s record in government:
One of their first actions upon coming to office, the Liberal Government withdrew $4.5 billion in funding – cutting all public transport project funding not already underway, including the Melbourne Metro and Brisbane’s Cross River Rail project.
In office the Coalition hasn’t funded a single new public transport project.

Coalition’s current position:
While acknowledging that rail will be integral to the future transport needs of Western Sydney neither the NSW Government nor the Australian Government is willing to provide a delivery timeframe.
They won’t even guarantee a rail connection will be in place by the time passenger services commence at the WSA in the mid-2020s.
On current planning, a rail line and station will be retrofitted to the proposed WSA at some unspecified time in the future, possibly not until a decade after it opens.
The Federal Government’s focus at this time is on delivering a $3.6 billion Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, which is only building new and upgrading existing roads around the proposed WSA site.

Financial Implications
Labor is committing $400 million to the Western Sydney Rail project, with $375 million beyond the current forward estimates.

Labor’s policy has been costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office.

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Attachment: Western Sydney growth precinct areas and proposed rail routes