HawkerBritton
Government Relations Strategy

Labor's Urban Policy Priorities

September 2014

On 24 September 2014 Opposition Leader the Hon Bill Shorten MP appointed the Hon Anthony Albanese MP Shadow Minister for Cities, adding to his current portfolios Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Shadow Minister for Tourism. This decision emphasises Labor's focus on the importance of cities to the national economy.

On the same day, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP outlined Labor's urban strategy at an address to the National Press Club. Mr Albanese criticised the current government's approach to cities, in particular its dismantling of the Major Cities Unit and the Urban Policy Forum and reduction of public transport funding.

In his address, Mr Albanese reasserted the role of the Federal Government in urban policy, and outlined ten key urban policy priorities for the ALP. Mr Albanese also announced the establishment of Labor's National Urban Policy Dialogue and provided an update on Labor's policy for High Speed Rail.

The transcript of Mr Albanese's address is available here.

Urban policy priorities

Mr Albanese discussed the challenges for urban policy in the future, including dealing with strong population growth in the middle and outer rings of cities, the decline in manufacturing and the rise of knowledge-intensive industries driving jobs growth in and around central business districts. As a result of these trends, population growth and jobs growth are occurring in separate geographical areas.

Mr Albanese outlined Labor's ten key urban policy priorities to respond to these challenges in our cities.

1. Integrated transport system

Mr Albanese announced that a Labor would prioritise investment in integrated transport systems, involving both public transport and roads. Mr Albanese argued that the Federal government should play

a role in funding public transport and criticised the current government's decision to priorities road funding at the expense of urban rail funding

2. *Walking and cycling paths*

Labor will invest in active transport solutions that connect up with public transport, education and employment hubs. Mr Albanese advocated the '30 minute City' concept that most of peoples' day-to-day work, educational, shopping or recreational activities should be located within 30 minutes walking, cycling or public commuting from their homes.

3. *Housing affordability*

Another key policy idea discussed by Mr Albanese was addressing housing affordability through the use of urban planning, land supply and use of incentives. Housing affordability is a key economic policy priority for Labor, and was discussed by Shadow Treasurer the Hon Chris Bowen MP recently at an address to the National Press Club.

Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on Labor's Economic Policy Priorities, which includes discussion of the ALP's policy on housing affordability, is available [here](#).

4. *Housing density*

Mr Albanese also announced that Labor will seek to align greater housing density with public transport corridors. Mr Albanese quoted [Infrastructure Australia's 2013 National Infrastructure Plan](#) discussion of the benefits of higher density housing:

> *"… higher density residential areas can offer more affordable housing options with better access to services and employment and support more liveable, vibrant communities."*

5. *Jobs growth in outer suburbs*

Labor will focus on promoting jobs growth in outer suburbs. Mr Albanese provided examples of how this could be achieved, including direct investment in projects such as the Badgerys Creek Airport and Moorebank Intermodal project, or by giving consideration to incentives for location of business.

Mr Albanese's media release on jobs growth in suburbs is available [here](#).

6. *Research precincts around universities and hospitals*

Another key urban policy priority for Labor will be promoting jobs growth in middle rings around cities by investing in research precincts around universities and hospitals.

7. *National Broadband Network*

Labor maintains its support for fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP) National Broadband Network. Mr Albanese argued that the FTTP model initiated by the former Labor government would provide a more consistent outcome with greater capacity to meet future needs.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the National Broadband Network, which outlines the differences between the Government and Opposition's preferred models, is available here.

8. Renewable energy

Labor will focus on supporting renewable energy including buildings and precincts that produce their own power in new developments.

9. Sustainability and resilience

Labor will also work to enhance the sustainability and resilience of household and industrial water supply and rehabilitate urban waterways. Mr Albanese referenced the Australian Urban Design Protocol, Creating Places for People, and the Rating Tool for Infrastructure Sustainability as examples of the former Labor government's efforts to work with the planning sector to deliver practical outcomes.

10. Second or third CBDs

Labor will also encourage cooperation between Federal, State and Territory governments to promote the development of second or third CBDs to decentralise jobs growth. Mr Albanese cited Woden and Belconnen in Canberra as examples of where second and third CBDs provided jobs growth closer to areas of population growth.

National Urban Policy Dialogue
In his address, Mr Albanese also announced that Labor will create a National Urban Policy Dialogue, designed to assist with the development of new polices for 'productive, sustainable and liveable cities.' The National Urban Policy Dialogue will include Mr Albanese, Opposition Leader the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Shadow Treasurer the Hon Chris Bowen MP and environment spokesman the Hon Mark Butler MP, as well as key stakeholders from other levels of government, business, industry, and academia.

Motorcycles and Scooters
Mr Albanese called for a discussion about reducing or even abolishing motorcycle parking fees if the resulting productivity gains can be shown to pay for the lost revenue. Mr Albanese used Melbourne as an example of where urban policy allows for motorcycles and scooters to be parked free on footpaths.

Mr Albanese's media release on motorcycles and scooters is available here.

High Speed Rail
Mr Albanese also reaffirmed Labor's commitment to planning for High Speed rail from to Brisbane from Melbourne via Canberra and Sydney.

In his address, Mr Albanese argued that High Speed Rail would provide opportunities for cities along the route—such as Grafton, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga, Albury-Wodonga and Shepparton—because it would connect regional cities with the capitals and lower costs for companies in these areas.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on High Speed Rail is available here.

Further information

Mr Albanese's address to the National Press Club on urban policy and cities is available here.

Mr Albanese's media release on jobs growth in suburbs is available here.

Mr Albanese's media release on motorcycles and scooters is available here.

Mr Albanese's media release on regional city productivity is available here.

Labor policies

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on Labor's economic policy priorities is available here.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on Labor's agricultural policy priorities is available here.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on Labor's social policy process is available here.