

Internet of Things (IoT)

Updated 14.5.2019

A work-in-progress toward harnessing IoT capability

Who's responsible?

Hon [Anthony Albanese MP](#), Member for Chifley NSW, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development

[Senator the Hon Kim Carr](#), Labor Senator for Victoria, Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

What did the ALP say?

Unlike previous elections, "IoT" is not a mainstream term being used this time around, and the more general terms such as "smart technologies" are not mentioned at all in Bill Shorten's Budget-in-Reply speech, and only a few times in the "Fair Go for Australia" Labor policy platform document. However, it could be argued that smart technologies are implied in almost every context where innovation and technology are mentioned. And that's a lot of IoT.

Transport and Electric Vehicles

Labor intends to use smart infrastructure and technology to improve productivity of existing infrastructure. They assert that the use of smart infrastructure will be considered as part of the planning process for all new and existing projects.¹

Labor "supports" automotive R&D in such areas as autonomous vehicles, intelligent transport systems and telematics^{2,3}.

They have set a target of **50% new car sales being electric by 2030**; and the creation of a **\$200 million fund to rollout charging infrastructure** across Australia.⁴

Electric Vehicle and Manufacturing and Innovation Strategy

Labor plans to invest \$57 million on this strategy starting in 20/21 with an expenditure of \$17 million proposed for the first year.

Household Battery Program

ALP intends to invest \$200 million over four years on this program.

AI Centre of Excellence

Labor has announced a **\$4 million AI Centre of Excellence in Melbourne**,⁵ a partnership with the Victorian government. The Centre will combine business and academic expertise as part of a **National AI strategy with a focus on ethical AI**. The Centre will also develop an **AI-focused start-up accelerator** to nurture emerging companies.

National Blockchain Academy

Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy, Ed Husic, has announced a plan to invest **\$3 million** in an academy to train workers in the skills necessary for employment in the disruptive technology of blockchain.

¹ 2018 ALP National Platform Constitution "A Fair Go for Australia" Article 95, p 63

² 2018 ALP National Platform Constitution "A Fair Go for Australia" Article 216, p 44

³ Telematics is a general term that refers to any device which merges telecommunications and informatics. Telematics includes anything from GPS systems to navigation systems. <https://www.telematics.com/>

⁴ <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/real-action-on-climate-change/>

⁵ <https://www.afr.com/technology/technology-companies/labor-s-ai-vision-for-melbourne-20190422-p51q23>

As blockchain is becoming highly valued in the financial services sector, **"It's been estimated that for every person trained as a blockchain developer, there are over a dozen job opportunities waiting for them ... the blockchain academy will play a big part in skilling up young West Australians for jobs that are in high demand."**⁶ Mr Husic said.

Smart Cities

Labor has stated its intention to provide national leadership in converging and aligning smart cities service provision on federally funded projects; to work across governments to support the implementation and scaling of smart city or community technologies; and to develop a workforce skilled in smart city or community technologies.⁷

Plans to Improve NBN

What about the architecture that supports IoT? An **NBN Service Guarantee** to "better safeguard small businesses and consumers against unreasonable and excessive periods of NBN downtimes" is envisaged, as well as funding of **\$60 million through NBNCo for fibre upgrades**.⁸

With regard to **regional Australia**, a **\$245 million** investment is proposed to address **mobile black spots**, improve digital inclusion and fund local projects to improve connectivity in regional communities and "a better experience for regional NBN consumers".⁹

Holistic View

When Labor's policies in the IoT space are viewed holistically, the impression is one of a work-in-progress in the right direction. Certainly Labor's policy to introduce a top level **Prime Minister's Council for Science and Innovation**, supported by a National Scientific Expert Panel¹⁰ is a desirable superstructure. Targeted initiatives such as the **AI Centre of Excellence**, the **\$3 million Blockchain Academy in Perth**¹¹ and a range of other projects and policies imply an understanding of the need for Australian government and business to work

together to both harness, and paradoxically to release, IoT potential.

AIIA IoT Recommendations

Government, industry and research institutes must work together to co-design:

1. A flexible IoT strategy that addresses the implications of 'disruptive' technology and ensures discovery, secure collection and sharing of data;
2. Clear communication and better understanding of IoT, including a simple definition and a greater awareness of its evolving nature and emerging applications;
3. Standards and Regulations that ensure interoperability of systems and data formats across all levels of government;
4. Accelerated rollout of digital infrastructure to ensure Australia is a nation of digital exemplars in the area of IoT; and
5. Greater collaboration with industry and research institutes to deliver skills, innovation and growth in the IoT sector.

Links

- [Labor's Budget Plan](#)
- [Bill Shorten's Budget Reply Speech, April 2019](#)
- [Labor's Policies for A Fair Go For Australia](#)
- [A Fair Go For Australia - Labor National Platform](#)

⁶ <https://www.afr.com/technology/technology-companies/labor-announces-3-million-national-blockchain-academy-20190501-p51ivw>

⁷ 2018 ALP National Platform Constitution "A Fair Go for Australia" Article 108, p 65

⁸ <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/labors-plan-to-improve-the-nbn/>
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⁹ <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/labors-plan-to-deliver-better-regional-communications/>

¹⁰ <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/labors-plan-for-science-at-the-centre-of-government/>

¹¹ <https://www.afr.com/technology/technology-companies/labor-announces-3-million-national-blockchain-academy-20190501-p51ivw>