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MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor turns its back on northern Melbourne

Federal Labor has finally come clean with the people of northern Melbourne and declared it does not support the Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal (BIFT), turning its back on the 20,000 local jobs the project will create and jeopardising the nation's biggest interstate infrastructure project – the \$14.5 billion Inland Rail.

By contrast, the Morrison Government has committed and budgeted \$1.62 billion to deliver BIFT – 100 per cent of the funding required to make the project a reality.

BIFT will be the centrepiece of a state-of-the-art freight and logistics precinct, and under a Morrison Government it will be delivered in time for Inland Rail opening in 2027.

To support the operation of BIFT, we are providing \$280 million towards supporting road upgrades, including the Cameron's Lane Interchange.

As one of the fastest growing regions in Victoria, this is a once in a generation opportunity for the people of northern Melbourne who are crying out for good local jobs, better roads and better infrastructure. This week, Labor has finally broken its silence on BIFT and admitted it will not support the project, turning its back on the people of northern Melbourne.

Anthony Albanese has instead declared his support for Victorian Labor Premier, Daniel Andrews' pipe dream vanity project, the Suburban Rail Loop – a project that the Federal Infrastructure Department has advised against funding and has not been assessed by Infrastructure Australia, but that conveniently runs through some of the most marginal electorates in Victoria.

Even if SRL did stack up, Albanese's measly \$2.2 billion commitment won't even touch the sides of this mammoth undertaking, estimated to cost up to \$120 billion.

Labor's Catherine King has comically described BIFT as a project that's "off in the never never". The Morrison Government will deliver BIFT by 2027. The first section of the SRL won't be delivered until 2035 (if it gets delivered at all).

In 12 years representing the electorate of McEwen, Labor's Rob Mitchell has done nothing to help make the BIFT a reality. It is time for Mitchell to stop being so lazy – he needs to get up off the couch and fight for this project.

For 12 years, Labor's Rob Mitchell has been Canberra's voice in McEwen. Liberal candidate for McEwen, Richard Welch, will be McEwen's voice in Canberra.

The Morrison Government has also committed \$740 million in the most recent Federal Budget to deliver the Western Interstate Freight Terminal (WIFT) in Truganina as part of a joint venture, because delivering WIFT as soon as possible is a Federal Government priority too.

And yet despite claiming that WIFT is their priority, the Andrews Labor Government has not committed a cent towards it, while Anthony Albanese has been entirely silent on it.

The Morrison Government has a clear strategy to deliver two freight terminals in Melbourne – BIFT and WIFT – as quickly as possible, delivering tens of thousands of local jobs and support the freight network of the entire country.

The only obstacle to delivering both terminals is Labor – with Albanese and Andrews yet to commit a single cent to either, instead focussing on pie in the sky projects that will help them win seats and set the taxpayer back billions.

Only the Liberals have a plan to continue delivering a strong economy and a stronger future for Victoria.

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