LUKE FOLEY, NSW OPPOSITION LEADER: Well thank you very much for coming here to St George Hospital. Can I welcome back to the New South Wales campaign my friend Bill Shorten, Labor's federal leader. Delighted to be joined by the Member for Kogarah and all of Labor's St George team of candidates, O'Bray Smith, Steve Kamper, Chris Minns and my Shadow Health Minister Walt Secord. I also welcome the Secretary of the New South Wales Nurses Association Brett Holmes who'll be having something to say a bit later.

Today, Labor commits to an Australian first. Nurse-to-patient ratios entrenched in New South Wales Emergency Departments, paediatric wards and resuscitation beds within emergency departments. This is what the hard-working nurses of New South Wales have been calling for. Labor has listened. This will help our nurses do their jobs and will help patients. That's the important thing here. We will apply nurse-to-patient ratios 1 to 3 in Emergency Departments, 1 to 1, that is one nurse to one patient in the resuscitation beds within emergency departments and one to three within paediatric wards.

They'll apply in category A, B and C public hospitals in this State. Category A the major tertiary hospitals, category B the major metropolitan and non-metropolitan hospitals, category C the district hospitals such as the Ballina District Hospital that I stood at a few days ago with many of you. Labor has listened to the voice
of hard-working nurses across the State. What they've been calling for, what they've been campaigning for is exactly this. Nurse-to-patient ratios. Labor will deliver them in the interests of patient care and we'll go further. We'll legislate those ratios in government to ensure that future governments are bound by these ratios. I'll hand over to our federal leader Bill Shorten and then I'd be happy to take your questions a bit later. Thank you.

BILL SHORTEN, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thanks, Luke. It's great to be here with Luke Foley and his team on the state election campaign trail. Now more than ever, it's important to have a state leader who will stand up against the cruel Canberra cuts of Tony Abbott and his federal Liberal National team. In the last Budget back in 2014, the Abbott Government flagged $16.5 billion worth of cuts to hospitals over coming years and we haven't heard any real resistance out of the State Premier, Mr Baird. Indeed, since the unfair Budget we've seen the Government come up with five different ideas to make sick and vulnerable people pay more to go to the doctor. We've heard about the GP tax, we've heard about value signals and price signals, we've heard about an attack on bulk-billing and we've also seen this concept called Direct Billing which even the federal Minister for Health couldn't fully explain. The simple message is that the Abbott Government wants to make it more expensive for sick and vulnerable people to go to the doctor. That is why today's state announcement by a champion of the New South Wales Health system, Luke Foley, is so important. When people are looking at this state election they need to ask themselves about the competing claims of the Liberals and the Labor team, who will do the best job at standing up for the health system in New South Wales, and today's announcement shows you the choice is clearly Luke Foley and Labor.

FOLEY: Thank you. Happy to answer any of your questions.

JOURNALIST: Mr Foley, given that you're not going to sell the electricity network, how are you going to fund this?

FOLEY: This policy's been costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. It will cost $96 million over the forward estimates and deliver an addition 840 nurses through our nurse-to-patient ratio policy. That's our commitment. All of our policies are being costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office. They will be reporting in full, well before election day, on all of Labor's expenditure and revenue commitments. This is fully funded, it's fully costed, it's affordable because Labor, as I said in the debate on Sunday, prioritises above all else investing in the hospitals and schools of tomorrow.

JOURNALIST: But given that they're not reporting until closer to the election, how do you know that [inaudible]
FOLEY: Because they've costed the policy Alesha.

JOURNALIST: But you've just said that they'll come back to you with costings before election day.

FOLEY: No, I didn't. They've costed the policy and they will release publicly all of their costings as they're obliged to do prior to election day. I can't reveal publicly PBO documentation, that's a job for them. But I can assure you that this policy has been costed. It'll cost $96 million over the forward estimates. It will deliver 840 additional nurses through Labor's nurse-to-patient ratio policy.

JOURNALIST: What evidence is there that the nurse/patient ratios are actually required?

FOLEY: Lots of evidence from nurses across the state. This has been their number one request over the last few years, their number one request of all political parties in this campaign. Labor's listened to the voices of hard-working nurses throughout the state. Yesterday I was at the Wyong Hospital. Last Friday I was at the Tweed Hospital. Last Thursday I was at the Ballina District Hospital. Wherever I go around the state and talk to nurses, their number one request of our State Government is to introduce nurse-to-patient ratios in the interests of patient care.

JOURNALIST: What sort of time frames do you need though to recruit 840 nurses? You obviously you can't suddenly [inaudible] extra money into nurses [inaudible] so would we be looking at having them in place before the end of the term?

FOLEY: Yeah, 840 nurses over the next four years. 200 to 210 a year to deliver 840 additional nurses through the term of the next Parliament.

JOURNALIST: The Premier is in Queanbeyan today in Monaro. Given the amount of money that they're able to give to the regions, do you think Steve Whan's actually got a chance down there?

FOLEY: Steve Whan is fighting for the people of Monaro. Steve Whan was out a long time ago giving a commitment to the people of his electorate about an upgrade to the Kings Highway. Labor in our fully funded infrastructure policy, delivering an additional $10.05 billion to essential infrastructure in this State, is prioritising what is necessary. I don't need a Plan B to pay for my commitments. Mr Baird has no Plan B. He couldn't sell a power station in December, if he can't sell the electricity network or he can't get the price he wants for it, he can't deliver his extravagant promises. All of our promises are affordable, they don't rely on a risky sale in an uncertain market of the State's electricity network. So
Steve Whan can deliver an upgrade to the Kings Highway because we're not relying on a risky sale of the electricity network and of course, Labor's statewide commitment to building and upgrading schools and hospitals is a far greater commitment than our conservative opponents are making.

**JOURNALIST:** Given that all the - the majority of the minor parties have decided not to preference the Coalition in this election for the Upper House, is that something that's going to benefit you?

**FOLEY:** Look I haven't really thought about preferences, it's not my department. I'm out asking people to vote for Labor. Vote for Labor to invest in the schools and hospitals of tomorrow and keep our electricity network in public hands. That's my message. Don't worry about these small parties. Vote Labor, the only way to save the state's essential electricity network from privatisation is to do what the people of Queensland did and elect a Labor Government.

**JOURNALIST:** Michael Daley's been saying that the Premier's measures putting Allan Fels in charge of looking at distribution prices won't have any effect, because consumers pay the retail price but don't you think - consumers pay distribution costs as well, don't they, through their retail prices?

**FOLEY:** The stunt that Mr Baird announced Sunday to try to get him through the debate and get him through the next three weeks is the shortest of short-term fixes. What he says is a part of your electricity bill won't go up over the next four years. Understand he doesn't say your electricity bill won't go up, he says a part of it won't go up over the next four years. He promises to sell the network for 99 years, in reality forever. I mean, you could drive a truck through the commitment he made on Sunday. Retail prices fully deregulated by Mr Baird, no cap. I simply point to the South Australian experience. Under private ownership, an average electricity bill of $2,388 a year. In New South Wales, it's $2,101. People know their power prices will go up under privatisation. And you note that Mike Baird could not and would not give a guarantee in the debate that he'd resign if people's power prices went up.

**JOURNALIST:** But the distribution costs are the very things that you're saying are going to push power prices up. Now you're saying it's just a part of it. So is your complaint with the retailers?

**FOLEY:** No, no my complaint is with Mr Baird's appeal against the Australian energy regulator's draft determination on network prices. I mean, it's terrific that we have a regulator now who seeks to drive down the network component of people's electricity bill. And what's Mr Baird's government doing? Appealing her decision, appealing her decision. I'm the only leader here on the side of lower power prices for families in New South Wales. I support her draft determination.
and nothing tells you more about what will happen under the Liberals and Nationals to people's power prices than his current action in appealing a decision of the regulator that lowers people's power prices. He's just fattening the pig for market day as Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett did in Victoria when he increased power prices by 10 per cent just before he sold the network off. They fattened the pig for market day.

JOURNALIST: Mr Foley, this is supposed to be an announcement on health and we've talked mainly about electricity. Is this part of the scare campaign that the government's talking about or can we expect every announcement to be one largely about the electricity sale?

FOLEY: Thanks for the opportunity to talk about health. I'll answer anything that's thrown at me. Every day I'm out here answering anything and everything that's asked of me. I'd love to talk about health. Labor delivering 840 additional nurses through an Australian first, a policy of nurse-to-patient ratios in our Emergency Departments, the resuscitation rooms in our emergency departments and paediatric wards. Good news for nurses and patients in New South Wales. Ask me more questions about our nurse-to-patient ratio policy.

JOURNALIST: Well couldn't you have even more nurses if you sold off half of the electricity network? I mean, it does come from somewhere, doesn't it?

FOLEY: Not at all, not at all, you see, there's $1.7 billion in dividends from our profitable electricity network returned to the State Budget that funds nurses. That funds teachers. That funds police. That funds ambulance officers. That's why I can stand here and commit to 840 additional nurses, to 45 nurses in new nurse-lead walk-in centres, to 500 additional paramedics. I can make those commitments because I won't see the state robbed of hundreds of millions of dollars every year from our profitable electricity network that funds the people who deliver our essential public services. See, that's the difference between Labor's approach and Mr Baird's approach. We will keep the profits the electricity network makes in the hands of the public to fund the people who deliver our essential services. Mr Baird will send the profits to a private owner. In South Australia the billionaire owner of the electricity network makes $420 per year from every household in that State. I want the profits in the State Budget to deliver more nurses.

JOURNALIST: Mr Shorten just on some federal matters if that's OK? Are you pleased that the Government appears to be changing its tack on car industry assistance?

SHORTEN: We know that the Government has wasted 18 months of the nation's life by putting up an unfair Budget. Very belatedly as your question
recognises, we're seeing the Liberal National government in Canberra junk some of their unfair, crazy policies but I do not believe for one minute that the Liberal National government in Canberra has changed its mind. They're just changing their tactics because they're worried about their own jobs. When the Abbott Government got elected 18 months ago, there were thousands of people with jobs in the car industry. Now we face the very real prospect that tens of thousands of people are losing their jobs in the car industry. So when Tony Abbott or Joe Hockey or the rest of them start saying that they want to do something about the car industry, it is very late in the piece, and I think this is a government who can't be trusted to look after manufacturing in Australia.

JOURNALIST: What are your views on the Prime Minister's comments yesterday about Australians being sick of being lectured to by the UN?

SHORTEN: I think this is a case of Tony Abbott wanting everyone to look everywhere except domestic issues in Australia. I think what I'd like to see Tony Abbott or the rest of the would-be Prime Ministers; Julie Bishop or Malcolm Turnbull talk about is jobs, healthcare, schools, pensioners. Today in New South Wales we've got Luke Foley talking about more nurses to make sure that people get the medical care they need when they need it yet we have a federal Liberal National government who's cutting billions of dollars from the hospitals budget going to States. There's a clear difference between Liberal and Labor in this election in New South Wales. On the one hand you have Luke Foley who's happy to put health square and centre in this election. On the other hand you have a Liberal Premier who's basically had the chance since last May to stand up to Tony Abbott and has done anything.

JOURNALIST: Joe Ludwig has announced his intention to bow-out. Who do you think should replace him in the Senate?

SHORTEN: First of all, let me just say about Joe Ludwig – for 18 years he has been a distinguished representative for Queensland in the Senate and a distinguished Minister. I wish him very well in the future. It will be a matter for the Labor Party in Queensland to pick his replacement.

JOURNALIST: Have you been briefed at all about the Australian man arrested in Lebanon for possible terror links?

SHORTEN: Not yet we haven't been briefed on that. Again, I just say though on national security, when it comes to national security, as Labor has demonstrated while I've been the leader of the Labor Party, we will work with the Liberal government in Canberra on matters to fight terrorism, on this latest matter, no, we haven't been directly briefed yet.
**JOURNALIST:** Could I ask you for your response to Mark Butler's bid for the national presidency of the Labor Party. Is this a sort of a role for a senior frontbencher to have inside the party?

**SHORTEN:** Well, the Labor Party has, unlike the Liberal Party, democratic rules. Tens of thousands of people will get a say in who our Labor Party President will be as opposed to the sort of deals we saw done between the Liberal National council which is clearly and their Federal Executive which is clearly in disarray. In terms of who emerges as the President, that will be a matter for the Labor Party to decide in their administrative processes.

**JOURNALIST:** The polls are looking good for you today?

**SHORTEN:** Thanks for your question. What matters to me is what matters to every state candidate led by Luke Foley in this State election, What matters to me is that people using paediatric wards are able to get the nurse ratios that they need. What matters is that when people come to an emergency department, they can get the nursing attention they need, without our nurses being even more overworked and working more intensely than they are currently. So the numbers which matter to me are the straight numbers in terms of this state election. Who's got the best deal for hospitals and health care.

We see in Canberra Joe Hockey had a dinner party thought bubble which he has now chosen to share with the nation which is that everyone should be able to use their superannuation for their home loans. This is a real problem. What we have is a Liberal government who are not even interested in saving any more. As Paul Keating said the Liberal Party at least used to once stand for thrift. Now they want to spend the national savings before people have reached a retirement age where they can be able to rely upon it.

We've just had an Intergenerational Report last week, a sorry political document from the Federal Government. What's the first thing we do when we hear the life expectancy in the next 40 years is going to increase? Joe Hockey says spend your money now. I don't know what Joe Hockey was thinking when he said this latest thought bubble. But it does mean that what we see is the political debate in this country is being traduced. You have a Liberal Party more interested in reducing people's superannuation bank accounts and what they have been saving them for and furthermore what we'll see is what the real estate industry and property industry have said, that we'll see that some of this money if it goes to first home owners loan we'll see an overheated market increase in price and the savings will simply evaporate.

**JOURNALIST:** Why do you think Tony Abbott's personal approval rating has gone up?
SHORTEN: I've got no comment about whether or not people like or dislike Tony Abbott. Clearly he's got some problems with his own team in Canberra. I don't think that's a secret. For me, what matters, ultimately, is not the popularity contest halfway through a government's cycle. It's whether or not this Government has a plan for the future. They've got no plans for hospital funding, unlike Luke Foley. They've got no plans for school funding, unlike Luke Foley. They have plans to cut the pension when we are all living longer and now they want to raid your superannuation which means that people retire with less and there will be greater pressure on the aged pension, not less. That's what really matters.

JOURNALIST: Wouldn't this State be better by a Coalition Premier, someone who has a relationship with Canberra at least, rather than someone who's been bagging them for the last few months, if you want to have that funding restored to the State?

SHORTEN: The basic test of a good Premier is their vision for the future and their willingness to even disagree with their own political party in Canberra if it serves the interests of the State who elect you. Luke Foley today has articulated extra nurses in Emergency Departments when people need them. All that Mike Baird did is say on the couple of days after the budget, he didn't like it, but he couldn't fight his way out of a wet paper bag when it comes to dealing with Tony Abbott. What we need is a champion of New South Wales, not a rubber stamp to Tony Abbott or any of the other Liberal Party leaders in Canberra. That's what we've got with Luke Foley and his team and today's health announcement which sees greater support for your nurses, our frontline of medical care. what we see is a clear choice for the voters of New South Wales.

JOURNALIST: Has Labor decided what it's going to do with metadata laws yet?

SHORTEN: We are working through the processes. It's an important matter. We have to get the balance right between maintaining our national security but also making sure we don't abandon the principles which make this country a great country. That's why for instance, important matters which I am sure you share, about press freedom need to be thought through. We need to be careful not to cause more problems than we are solving. But just has Labor has done on previous proposals around national security, methodically, carefully and calmly we'll work through the issues. I'm pleased that so far the government has accepted all of Labor's proposed amendments. That's the Parliament as it should be. Labor making conscientious and sensible long-term improvements to the Government's initial legislation.
JOURNALIST: Can you make a vow that will you protect journalists and their sources?

SHORTEN: Our record shows we've been willing to stand up on this issue. I think as you watch the legislation which was initially introduced by Malcolm Turnbull last October, Labor will make improvements on that legislation. There has been a parliamentary joint committee on intelligence matters and security matters working carefully through it - over 200 submissions. Labor will get go the balance right because what we understand is it's important to think for the long term as well as the immediate problems. But we will work with the government in national security, but yes, I can say to you, Ian that we'll also make sure that we keep press freedoms uppermost in our mind. We will get this balance right, this country is smart enough to do both.

JOURNALIST: Will they be uppermost in the legislation, press freedom?

SHORTEN: Let's wait and see how we resolve the final amendments but I've got no doubt that we'll get the balance right.

JOURNALIST: What about the RET? Is Labor close to a deal on that? The industry is crying out for some certainty?

SHORTEN: I think like everyone in the multi-billion dollar, multi-thousand employing renewable energy industry, we're all very unhappy that the Liberal government broke its promise before the last election. Let's just understand why we are even debating the RET. Before the last election, no daylight between Labor and its mini-me alternative on renewable energy, the Liberal Party. When they get into government, they junk their promises. When they look at renewable energy, we think there is a deal to be done. I mean, to be fair, it isn't the only promise they have broken - it's a shorter list to see the promises they have kept.

But when we do look at Renewable Energy, we do think there is a deal there to be done. We've been more than prepared to work through with the emissions intensive trade exposed sector. We do believe though, we want to make sure that the suburban solar rooftop power generation is still available to families. We will get this right. But what we do need is for the Government not to maintain its vandalism of renewable energy. We get some mixed signals don't we out of the government that they're retreating from their hard line. But sometimes it's hard to work out, are the government just going to break their promise, are they going to reconsider breaking their promise or are they just saying something to keep Tony Abbott his current job? It's very hard to decipher. The good news for renewable energy is that Labor's on the side of renewable energy and we will do our best to work something through.
JOURNALIST: We've had a number of policy announcements with the Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Premier Mike Baird. There is no federal component to Luke Foley's announcements today. Are we going to see some joint announcements in the final few weeks of this campaign?

SHORTEN: I think Troy to be fair to the question you're asking when you go to the issue of Tony Abbott lining up alongside his State colleagues, there has been no shortage of Labor standing together united, both state and federal. But when it comes to these policies, you know that our federal election is not for another 18 months. But the very fact that Luke and I are here today talking shows on one hand it's reminding people that the unfair Budget - I mean what they're going on the GP tax, the value signal, the price signal, we all remember that train wreck of a Question Time where the Minister for Health gave that embarrassing non-explanation of her latest policy. We're also saying here you need a Labor champion in New South Wales to stand up against the Abbott Government cuts to the budget. That's all we're doing today.

FOLEY: Thanks very much for your attendance. I will give you the big tip. You will see a lot more of Bill and I together over the next 18 days than you will Mr Baird and Mr Abbott. You can take that as gospel.

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MEDIA CONTACT: LEADER'S OFFICE MEDIA UNIT - 02 6277 4053