

Winter 2017

NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Rail plan hit with concerns

Newcastle Herald, 13 May 2017

The safety of Newcastle commuters is in jeopardy with the Government considering a proposal to remove guards from the new Intercity Train Fleet operating on the Central Coast to Newcastle line.

Earlier this year, my office was contacted by Novocastrians who work as train guards. They were concerned after hearing reports that instead of two crew members staffing a train it was going to be cut to a driver-only service.

When I raised this in Parliament, I was given a vague response from the Transport Minister, "where safe to do so, NSW TrainLink proposes operating the New Intercity Fleet trains as driver only."

It does not, however, specify which services are deemed safe.

Key to this issue is the fact that the Central Coast and Newcastle train line passes through remote areas, with large distances between stations, with some stations not manned at all. This puts the safety of staff and passengers at risk, especially in



the case of any accident that may occur as emergency services are generally not situated close by.

Guards have advised me that they have resuscitated passengers, helped when fatalities have occurred as well as assisting when there was an assault or clearing debris from the track.

The NSW Government's proposed cut-backs are irresponsible and put commuter's lives at risk. I call on the Minister to rule out removing guards on the Central Coast and Newcastle line.

Message from Tim Crakanthorp

Welcome to my *Winter Newsletter* for 2017. I hope that you are enjoying the cooler months.

I have been working hard for the community throughout the first half of this year. I stopped the proposed cuts to the home services of the After Hours 24/7 Palliative Care program from the Calvary Mater Hospital going ahead. I also worked hard to secure Newcastle a NSW Government Palliative Care Roundtable, the only one outside a Coalition-held seat.

Through questions submitted in Parliament I have found out that the Government intends to cut our train guards from the new Intercity Train Fleet, wherever possible. I will fight these cuts, as the health and safety of Novocastrian commuters on the Central Coast and Newcastle train line is paramount. I will also continue the fight to have the Intercity Train Fleet, valued at \$2.3B, built here in the Hunter. While in Parliament, I met with the Minister for Arts regarding the Newcastle City Council's Art Gallery proposal, the Minister for Disability Services regarding the Stockton Centre group home deaths and the Minister for the Environment regarding the recently uncovered soil contamination in Newcastle.

On a more positive note, it was also my pleasure to get out and about in the community to present \$50,000 worth of local sports grants to deserving Newcastle sports clubs (see page 4). As your local Member, you can be rest assured that I will keep fighting for Newcastle, and keep fighting for our fair share.

Tim

Did you know?

You can get congratulatory letters from State Members of Parliament including the Premier sent, on request, to NSW residents turning 80 years of age and every fifth year thereafter up to 90 and then every year thereafter.

You can also get messages to couples celebrating 50 years of marriage and every year thereafter.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO
www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/programs_and_services/congratulatory_messages



Newcastle commuters **FAILED BY** this Government

I recently brought to the attention of the State Parliament a horrendous safety issue that could have had catastrophic consequences for Novocastrian commuters.



The Government left the state's commuters in peril, ignoring track maintenance and safety

issues on the Central Coast and Newcastle Line of the intercity train network.

Between the period of 2011-2015, the mandatory regular inspections of the train line did not occur and the repairs that were deemed critical, were not made. These deficiencies, featured in a report written by the Office of Transport and Safety investigations, included corroded or missing rail fastenings, as well as not securely fastened or not structurally sound segments of rail, issues which had not been addressed by Sydney Train's Maintenance Regime. The report determined that the root cause of these deficiencies was the insufficiencies in the training provided to inspectors.



The report said that these faults could, and did, cause significant damage. Derailment was also a very real possibility and an empty passenger train did derail on 26 November 2013. The works should have been subject to six monthly inspections but they were not.

The fact that the train was empty was sheer luck, the alternative is unimaginable.

This issue highlights how, under this Government's watch, hundreds of thousands of commuters on the Newcastle and Central Coast line were unknowingly risking their lives when track maintenance and safety issues were being ignored.

Newcastle gets seat on Palliative Care Roundtable



At the beginning of this year, a plan to dismantle

the After Hours 24/7 Palliative Care Service provided by the Calvary Mater in Newcastle was being considered.

As explained in my last newsletter, I successfully lobbied against the proposal, resulting in the Government abandoning their plan.

The NSW Government then decided to discuss the issue of palliative care in NSW at a series of seven roundtable events. However, despite Newcastle being the second largest city in the state and a major regional palliative care centre, no roundtable was planned for the region. Instead, all roundtable discussions were planned in Coalition-held seats.

In response to this, I fought for and was successful in securing a Palliative Care Roundtable in Newcastle in June. This was a great opportunity to discuss the needs and the future of Newcastle in terms of palliative care.

Ultimately, this is a win for the community, a win for Newcastle, and a win for palliative care.