



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Private Members' Statements

14 November 2017

NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL PARK AND RIDE

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:07):

To alleviate traffic and parking pressures to Newcastle city's east and offer a viable transport alternative for western suburbs residents, Newcastle City Council commenced operating a park-and-ride facility. I applaud Newcastle City Council for making this decision. It paves the way for more Newcastle-based park and ride opportunities. The Newcastle Herald stated that more than half of the available spots on the existing park-and-ride buses, which began a 12-month trial on 6 November, have been booked—proof that the demand is there. Already council is working on ways to increase the current capacity of services. It is time to look at deploying this travel solution not just in Newcastle city east, but in the city's west as well. Many hubs in the western suburbs, including the University of Newcastle Callaghan campus, the John Hunter campus and the Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital, are subject to the same traffic and parking pressures as is the inner city.

An expanded park and ride service would go a long way to alleviating these pressures. The benefits of the park and ride service are clear and the utility of expanding the service into new areas has been acknowledged. Hunter Business Chamber chief executive officer Bob Hawes said:

Being able to park at McDonald Jones Stadium and board a bus into the city will free up parking spaces for shoppers and visitors. This is great for business and we would encourage people to use this service, which has the potential to expand adopting something similar in other areas.

There are also environmental and infrastructure benefits. More people making use of park and ride facilities means fewer cars on the road, relieving congestion, emissions and wear and tear on local roads. A local resident told me:

I would love to go into the city more often, but public transport is unreliable and the parking situation is diabolical. It's just not accessible, so it's easy to go to suburban shopping centres or even just stay home.

The traffic problems at the John Hunter Hospital campus are well documented. At peak times, it takes commuters up to an hour just to get off the campus. Congestion and accessibility at and around the campus must be addressed urgently. The previous success of the shuttle bus service which took patients and visitors from McDonald Jones Stadium to the hospital before its cancellation by the Liberal Government indicates that a park and ride service would be well used.

Likewise, the accessibility issues at the University of Newcastle's Callaghan campus are well known and cause staff and students immense frustration. The success of the park and ride service currently in use at Callaghan, ferrying students between that campus and NeWSpace in inner city Newcastle, shows that students will use it and are willing to use it. Currently students, staff and visitors are often forced to park in the surrounding streets in the Jesmond and North Lambton area, and that clogs up the streets and frustrates the local residents. Students and residents alike have contacted my office regularly over the last 10 years, and as the university expands these problems will increase. Therefore, we need to find traffic solutions around these hubs.

Park and ride facilities are not a silver bullet that will fix Newcastle's transport problems, but with this twenty-first century infrastructure, support and further initiatives from Lake Macquarie Council and the building of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass—stage 5 of which we are all looking forward to—we can find solutions. Working with State and local government, park and ride is something we need to look seriously at as soon as possible. We would all love to see people getting out of their cars and using public transport—it would be wonderful.