



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Private Members' Statements

13 November 2018

**WORKERS COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(FIREFIGHTERS) BILL 2018**

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:06):

As the member for Wallsend I am often asked about improving the services and infrastructure of the western suburbs and the Hunter region. Wallsend residents express the view that the State Government acts as though the Hunter region is exclusively Newcastle. Unfortunately, they have ample evidence for holding that view. The Government has focused on infrastructure in the Newcastle central business district to the detriment of the western suburbs. My constituents are continually reminded about the revitalisation of Newcastle and wonder what it means for them. They see the vast sums of money being spent on inner city infrastructure and ask why this Government is stalled on its promise to their electorate to build the new police station in Glendale.

My constituents ask why their petitions to build a police station at Wallsend are continually ignored despite overwhelming public support. My constituents ask why a perfectly good local police station at Beresfield sits unoccupied 6½ days out of seven. My constituents ask why the Government has cut bus services and increased travel times all around the electorate. Trips that once took 50 minutes now take 90 minutes. My constituents ask whether the Government has ever considered the urgent need for more public transport services in the western suburbs of the Hunter. They are angry. They want better bus routes and timetables for the western suburbs of the Hunter. It urgently needs to be overhauled. My constituents ask when the Glendale transport interchange, which is identified by 11 Hunter mayors as the Hunter region's number one infrastructure priority, will be seriously considered, resolved and decided upon by this Government.

Constituents in the suburbs of Beresfield and Tarro ask why the most direct transport link to the inner city of Newcastle has been cancelled. All of the infrastructure and transport issues fly in the face of the fact that the major institutions that service the Hunter, of which this Government should be proud, are located in Newcastle's western suburbs in Wallsend: the University of Newcastle, the John Hunter Hospital, the Mater Hospital and the Hunter Medical Research Institute. The western suburbs of the Hunter are the engine room that drives the Hunter region and undoubtedly is the largest employer in the region. I hope that I am clarifying

for the Government the missing links. Transport and infrastructure are urgently required from this Government to support the Hunter region to work more effectively.

Health services have received inexplicable cuts. For example, the Hunter New England Local Health District has had drastic cuts to its counselling service, the Wallsend After Hours Medical Service has been closed without explanation, and the John Hunter Hospital shuttle bus has lost its funding without explanation. My constituents ask whether stage five of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass will ever be built, with the start of works on this vital infrastructure being pushed out further and further.

I do not want to paint a grim picture of living in the western suburbs of Newcastle. Thanks to the efforts of volunteer activists and Labor councillors, we enjoy some fine amenities, parklands, sportsgrounds and wonderful swimming pools—which I enjoy swimming in—and thriving commercial activity. Thanks to wise investments by Labor governments at all levels, we have a strong base from which to drive our economic development in the twenty-first century. However, my constituents cannot see a record of achievement by this Government in the western suburbs of the Hunter. This Government has made cuts that have hurt their families and has taken away many vital services. I call on the Government to consider all the matters of neglected governance that I have raised in this private member's statement and to address them urgently.