



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**Private Members' Statements**

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22 March 2022

**DINOSAUR FESTIVAL AUSTRALIA**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (18:17):**

A mesmerising, world-class dinosaur exhibition featuring life-sized robotic dinosaurs, various amusement rides and dinosaur-themed activities for the whole family is what the operators of Dinosaur Festival Australia promised but failed to deliver to residents across the Hunter, particularly Wallsend. First advertised to be held in February 2021, the operators postponed the festival on five occasions, with the latest occasion being just today.

I was first contacted last year about the proposed show, when people questioned the legitimacy of the operator following the less than world-class Monster Creature World show that was held in Western Australia in 2021 by the same operator, Mr David Huni. The event was widely criticised for failing to live up to the promises made on its website and Facebook pages. There have also been cancellations and postponements of events in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba. To this day, many of the events have not gone ahead and, according to comments on their Facebook page and from people who have contacted my office, Dinosaur Festival Australia has still not refunded many of the customers who asked for a refund. That is the crux of the problem.

In January the operators contacted my office to assure me that they were 100 per cent legitimate. They assured me they were going ahead with the event and sent me numerous links to media stories about their events to try to prove their legitimacy. Sadly, not one of the links was about an event that had gone ahead. They all related to upcoming events that were subject to last minute postponements. The website of the operator advises customers that refunds will not be offered, except as required by

law. In this case, the law needs a second look. There has been a repeated failure to put on the show, and thousands of legitimate customers are out of pocket and unable to attend the rescheduled events. The company, despite the legal statements on its website, offers customers unable to attend the rescheduled event a refund. I quote:

*If you are a ticket holder and you are no longer able to attend on the new dates please email us a request for a refund through the email below but please note that refunds are done manually and can take up to 30 days to process.*

It comes as no surprise that everybody who contacted my office is yet to receive a refund, well after the 30 day time frame promised by the company. Despite repeated attempts to contact the company, they have so far refused to speak with me about refunding customers. Sadly, when people seeking a refund contacted NSW Fair Trading, they were pointed to the refund policy on the company's website, which says that no refund will be issued and they are advised to seek legal advice. In Wallsend they are not men and women with deep pockets. They cannot pursue legal cases when they are out of pocket, in some cases, up to \$150 for a group family ticket.

Fair Trading needs some teeth to be able to go after operators like Dinosaur Festival Australia. It might seem small, but it is not small to a family that is already struggling to pay their bills, with the increased cost of living pressures that we all have. I say to our constituents that I will support them as they pursue this issue. I ask the operator to do the right thing and refund the money to those who want it immediately, otherwise I will continue to pursue the issue. I expect the Government to pursue the operator so that no other community is out of pocket for an event that seems will never happen. We do not want that to happen again, so we ask for the Government's support on this matter.