



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

**Private Members' Statements**

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5 April 2017

**JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL  
PARK-AND-RIDE SHUTTLE BUS**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY ( Wallsend ) ( 18:20 ):** In September 20 15 the very successful and well- used John Hunter Hospital park-and- ride shuttle bus service ceased to operate— another victim of this Government's cuts. In its place 700 new car park spaces were opened at the campus but all they did was bring an already congested road network to a standstill— 4000 more car movement s every day on a single lane , in-and-out road network. Patients and visitors, some of whom have mobility issues, are forced to walk further to see doctors, their friends or family at the hospital . The free shuttle bus used to deliver them to the front door; it was a door-to-door service. Traffic jams are now a regular occurrence and the number of staff and visitors caught up in major traffic jams when exiting the hospital has trebled. Staff are stalled for 20 minutes or up to an hour. This is unacceptable not just for visitors exiting the hospital but also for staff who work very long hours, only to face frustrating delays when simply trying to leave their workplace.

Need I remind the Government that these people have families, children to pick up from school, appointments to keep and social lives to enjoy. The only exit from the visitors car park is onto Kookaburra Drive. This single-lane road carries up to 500 cars exiting staff car park four, another 270 cars leaving car park five and then however many more that might be spilling out of the multistorey visitors car park. Add inbound visitor and staff traffic to this, and this single-lane service road is gridlocked at almost every peak hour. Earlier this month my office was flooded with calls from staff and patients of John Hunter Hospital. On two occasions in March traffic came to a standstill— no cars could get into the hospital and no cars could get out. An accident outside the hospital entrance left staff and patients stuck in their cars inside the car parks, unable to move for more than an hour.

The patients and visitors who called my office were upset. Some had waited months, if not years, for appointments at the hospital. As a result of the traffic chaos some of them will have to wait even longer for another appointment. Staff missed appointments and were late picking up children from school and child care. All this comes at a cost, including a significant impact on the budget and the hardworking staff of John Hunter Hospital. Some may say that it is just bad luck, but for staff and patients it is just another negative impact of the unworkable road infrastructure at John Hunter Hospital. My concern, and that of staff, and particularly paramedics, is that there will be a major incident when traffic gridlock prevents emergency vehicles from getting in or out of the hospital. This will put lives at risk, and is unacceptable.

There is a simple solution to the problem: The Government must reinstate the park-and-ride service and reduce the number of car movements on the road network. The Government must also build a complete interchange on the Newcastle Inner City Bypass Stage 5 as a second hospital entrance and exit. This will stop all the traffic funnelling out through the current choke point. But Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] loves to tell us that its studies and modelling show there is not an issue around the hospital and there is no need for a complete interchange at the hospital. This Government seems to listen to RMS but not the community. Dozens of staff and patients have contacted me about this problem, and I am sure that thousands more will have plenty to say about it. I ask the Government to fix the problem.