



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Motions

15 November 2018

WALLSEND ELECTORATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:30):

I move:

That this House:

- (1) Considers that congestion on Thomas Street, Newcastle Road, and Griffiths Road, which link Wallsend to Newcastle, has reached crisis levels.
- (2) Notes that despite a reduction in the speed limit, accidents along the roads are frequent.
- (3) Urges the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to formulate plans to ease Wallsend traffic congestion.

Traffic around Wallsend has reached crisis point. The significant population growth in the Hunter is causing more and more traffic to be channelled onto the M1 and the Hunter Expressway, impacting on the arterial roads leading into Wallsend and Newcastle. Increased traffic from the Hunter Valley is travelling down to the city and, with the Fletcher and Minmi suburbs continuing to expand rapidly, the problem is getting worse. Shortland residents regularly call my office complaining that heavy vehicles are using their suburban streets as a rat run to avoid the traffic crush on the Newcastle Inner City Bypass, posing a danger to pedestrians. A man who lives on Shortland Road told me, "The noise generated by these vehicles is unbelievable. There are a lot of young families and elderly people in the area and our lives are being disrupted by these big trucks coming through all hours of the day and night."

Minmi Road, the main connection to the rapidly growing suburbs of Maryland and Fletcher, is overloaded with traffic on a daily basis and the problem is exacerbating. A Maryland resident called to complain, saying, "I drive out to the valley every day for work and the longest part of

my commute is between Maryland and Jesmond. Traffic is backed up all the way along Minmi Road and doesn't stop all the way down Newcastle Road." Newcastle Road is the worst of the lot. The run from Thomas Street onto Newcastle Road and through to Griffiths Road is the main connection between Wallsend and the Newcastle central business district. At rush hour, traffic grinds to a standstill.

Last October, a truck overturned on Newcastle Road just after the Jesmond roundabout. Of the three westbound lanes, two were closed for hours, paralysing traffic throughout the western suburbs all day. Hundreds of hours of productivity were lost as people were left stuck in traffic. As early as 2012, the NRMA called for an integrated transport plan to meet the current and future needs of the region. At the time, former NRMA director Kyle Loades said, "As we head out to Lake Macquarie, particularly from Wallsend through to Lake Macquarie and Jesmond into Newcastle ... they're major thoroughfares that have serious congestion." We need to make plans to increase the capacity of roads and look at public transport. We have made repeated efforts to get answers to questions about what is happening with traffic reductions from Wallsend to Hamilton. We are still waiting on a response to explain the reasons that Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has reduced that traffic.

It was reported that more than \$1 million in speeding fines have been recorded by RMS and the Government in the six months since the traffic reduction occurred. However, we have no evidence that there are fewer accidents on the road. We are still waiting on answers from the Minister. Work on the Newcastle Inner City Bypass needs to be sped up and the road needs to be built as soon as possible because of the gridlock that occurs. I urge the Minister to listen to the Hunter and Wallsend community, build the Glendale interchange, build the intercity bypass, and start looking at future plans for roads.