



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

**Private Members' Statements**

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15 September 2020

**WALLSEND ELECTORATE JOBS GROWTH**

**Ms SONI HORNER (Wallsend) (18:05:01) :**

I am concerned at recent Newcastle Herald reports that more than 4,000 local manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last five years. Our region has long held the manufacturing skills to build vital infrastructure for New South Wales. The Wallsend electorate is home to Downer Group's Cardiff rail manufacturing facility, previously Cardiff railway workshops, which was owned by the State Government. Downer Group has the capacity and know-how to build the infrastructure New South Wales needs. In nearby Broadmeadow UGL has the facilities to manufacture rail sets and rolling stock to suit our growing infrastructure.

UGL has been building trains for more than a century under its previous names, Goninan and United Goninan, including the highly popular and successful Tangara rolling stock, which is still in use; the S, K and C sets; double-decker trains; the Oscar train sets; and rolling stock including coal wagons. UGL also built train sets for other States and countries including Hong Kong. The old red rattlers were built at the Walsh Island Dockyard and Engineering Works, as was the old car ferry SS Kooroongaba, which operated for many years on Sydney Harbour. The State Dockyard built five of the Lady Class ferries and Carrington Slipways built two of them. Carrington Slipways also built two of the Manly ferries, the First Fleet catamaran ferries and the two Stockton ferries.

It worries me that the Premier said, "Australia and New South Wales are not good at building trains. That is why we have to purchase them elsewhere." It worries and offends every New South Wales manufacturing worker and it is a cruel blow to Wallsend workers and Wallsend jobs. During this time of recession and enormous job

losses in our region, what does this Government do? It continues to send manufacturing jobs offshore. We have an incredible opportunity with local manufacturing firms Downer and UGL. The Government could employ them to build quality rolling stock and other necessary infrastructure for New South Wales. New South Wales State Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Cory Wright, said:

*We could see sparks flying again in Hunter workshops like they once were. There is promise of a return to the heavy industry region that the Hunter has been known for—where young people and skilled tradespeople make quality, lasting infrastructure for New South Wales.*

I wholeheartedly agree with him. Offshoring transport infrastructure and manufacturing is not value for money. From the new intercity rail fleet trains that do not fit in tunnels to Parramatta River ferries that do not adequately fit under the bridges on the Parramatta River, we know that billions of New South Wales' dollars could have been better spent employing people in the Hunter region and indeed in New South Wales. I ask the Government to stop the offshoring of essential manufacturing jobs that Australians, especially the people in Wallsend, could and should be doing. We have the knowledge, facilities, history and motivation to build the transport infrastructure of the future right here in the Hunter. All we need is the political will to kick-start the manufacturing sector and the Government to support local industry and jobs.