



MEDIA RELEASE

JENNY AITCHISON MP

SHADOW MINISTER FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

HOW MUCH HAVE TAX PAYERS PAID FOR FAILED INTERCITY FLEET?

The NSW Opposition has called on the Government to release details of how much NSW tax payers have paid for the government's bungled and failed New InterCity Fleet (NIF).

In Budget Estimates today, the Labor Opposition asked the Secretary of Transport for NSW, Rob Sharp to outline the cost of significant modifications to the tunnels, platforms and safety operating procedures that had been required to be implemented in order to get the new trains into service, and the cost to the taxpayer of engaging barristers in a legal action where the Government took its own workers to court over concerns (since upheld) that the trains had significant safety issues.

Mr Sharp could not provide any detail of the funding, and had to take all of the answers regarding these costs on notice.

Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison said the NIF project has been a disaster from the very start, and an indication of how poorly the Government rated safety on the rail network.

"This Government awarded a \$2.8 billion contract to a company in South Korea, and since, then they have had the cheque book out time and again, paying for station upgrades, widening tunnels, and even taking workers, expressing legitimate safety concerns to court in order to try and justify

offshoring the construction of our NSW train fleet.”

“Not only have they crushing the hopes of our local industry and workers in not providing them an opportunity to build these trains here, now ordinary workers are paying the price of the Government’s mismanagement and no one can tell us how much the Government has wasted on it.”

“Now we have a Government who has wasted millions on trying to fix the overseas junk with extensive modifications required so they can fit to tracks and in tunnels.”

Ms Aitchison said “A Government member of the Committee tried to run a protection racket to stop Mr Buttigieg while he was asking questions about the quantum of these additional costs, however taxpayers have the right to know how much money has been wasted on this project.”

Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council, the Hon Mark Buttigieg said today Labor revealed that Transport for NSW doesn’t even know the cost of their mistakes when it comes to the NIF.

“It has been a disaster from the start; the South Korean trains don’t fit the tracks, tunnels need to be widened and regulations have to be changed to allow them to run.”

“The Berejiklian Government has ignored serious safety concerns identified by workers and then taken them to Court, which is a disgraceful waste of taxpayer’s money. The Government needs to start taking the threat to public safety seriously, it is simply unacceptable.”

Ms Aitchison said regional commuters and rail workers deserved better from the Government: “Why didn’t the Government build them here, or even once they failed on that test, listen to local experts and rail employees to ensure they were safe?”

“The Government’s response to safety concerns was to commission a report from someone overseas who has never ridden the train, and then take its employees to court to argue with them, in a case the employees have won.”

“The community deserves an assurance from the Government that public safety is their number one priority, but what we saw in the Committee Hearing today gives them no confidence this is the case.”

“NSW Tax payers should not be expected to carry the financial or the safety burden of the NSW Government’s irresponsible decisions.”

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