

# WHY IS THE NEW INTERCITY FLEET UNSAFE?

**1 July 2022**

(explainer for the public)

We understand that often the things we fight for as a union aren't easily understood by people outside of our industry. We are employed to serve and protect the travelling public, and that's something we take extremely seriously.

We want to take the time to try to explain in the simplest terms why we are at loggerheads with the Government and are continuing with our planned industrial action. While there was an offer made by the NSW Government this week, what they're failing to tell the public is that they were due to sign a binding commitment by 5 p.m last night 30/6 for us to consider calling off industrial action. We still have not received that. They have committed to and reneged on this agreement multiple times over the past few years. We refuse to fall for their games again until all NIF safety modifications are set in stone and legally enforceable.

They have also included in the offer a clause that says they cannot commit to safety modifications that would void their contractual obligations and "design warranty" of the trains. This is a loophole they hoped we wouldn't spot.

The New Intercity Fleet (the ones bought from South Korea to replace trains travelling from Sydney to Newcastle, Lithgow and Wollongong) is unsafe, particularly for our most vulnerable members of the community. An independent safety report into the NIF found that:

*"there will be an unacceptable risk to the travelling public if the NSW Trains proposed operating model is implemented. Particularly to the most vulnerable of the travelling public, children and movement impaired passengers."*

We will not operate these trains until safety modifications are made. There is a lot of misinformation from the Government on this issue, whether deliberate, reckless, or showing their own lack of understanding, so we want to set the record straight.

- **We aren't asking for the screens and cameras to be completely removed.**

We are asking for the screens to be moved out of the Drivers line of sight so they can focus on driving the train safely (effectively the reason they can't do both is that it's the same principle as texting and driving, which we all know isn't safe). The CCTV screens should be in the Guards area whose job is to ensure passengers safety. That way Guards, who are employed specifically to keep people safe, can make use of this technology IN ADDITION to their eyes, ears, skills, and training so they have more ways to make sure commuters and children haven't fallen through the gap or gotten trapped and dragged by the train.

- **The cameras alone are not good for making sure people are safe.**

Think about how hard it is to see out your windscreen in a Blue Mountains winter. Now imagine that you had to drive on a winding road (many of our platforms are curved) and monitor 24 different tiny foggy windscreens that were responsible for keeping up to 2000 people safe at a time. Would you be able to do that without the risk of any injury to your friends and family? Would you drive your car without being able to see? Is that a risk you'd be willing to take?

- **The cameras also don't show people who are shorter than 1.1m (i.e. children).**

If Guards and Drivers have to rely on cameras alone, we would not be able to look out for school kids, parents with prams or excited innocent toddlers.

- **We want guards to be able to open THEIR crew cab doors (where the guards stand) so they can hear what is happening on the platform.**

Guards need to have their crew door open on arrival into the platform and, whilst passengers are boarding and alighting and as the train departs the platform safely. That way we can keep an eye on the platform and importantly hear any screams for help. That way if anything has happened or someone is hurt, fallen on the tracks or trapped we can stop the train immediately, potentially saving their life.

- **The Government is also telling you that the National Rail Regulator has deemed the NIF safe.**

This is untrue. All the Rail Regulator does is ensure that rail operators follow the correct procedures. It does not determine whether any component of the trains, including how they are operated, are safe. And what they aren't telling you is that we have a Federal Court ruling that says NSW Trains needs to work with us to make the trains safe for our members to operate that in turn makes you safe. But they haven't done this, and that is why these trains are costing taxpayers money sitting in the sheds. The cost of the modifications if done three years ago would have cost taxpayers significantly less than they might now. The Government told the public in May that the cost would be \$1 billion. By their own admission in the media now, this was a flat out lie.

- **We have no other option but to continue our industrial action.**

We did not and will not accept blood money to operate unsafe trains; we want commuters, their families, and workers to be safe. Industrial action we have been forced to take is the only method we have left to ensure the safety of the travelling public. We've bargained in good faith, we've showed up to meetings, we've made our asks clear, we've tried to work together on this safety issue since 2016. We aren't playing politics; we aren't being unreasonable; we just don't believe safety is for sale. The Government had the choice to turn off our industrial action, and they're choosing not to. They'd rather put a price tag on your lives and the safety of the more vulnerable people in our community.

**Please share this widely so we can set the record straight. We'll be in touch with ways the community can join in the fight to tell the government your safety is worth more.**