



# Trish Doyle MP

## Member for Blue Mountains



02 4751 3298 | [bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au) | 132 Macquarie Rd Springwood NSW 2777

### **New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly**

### **New Intercity Fleet Petition Debate**

**23 November 2017**

It gives me enormous pleasure to lead in debate for the Labor Opposition today on the petition of more than 12,000 signatures against this Government's ham-fisted New Intercity Fleet project on which billions of dollars of taxpayers' money has been spent buying new trains from South Korea which are not fit for purpose and, absurdly, do not fit the tracks.

Blue Mountains, Newcastle and Illawarra commuters desperately need new trains to replace the ageing V sets, but we should not be forced to settle for whatever cut-price carriages this cheapskate Government seeks to foist upon us.

When I tabled this petition in September, I challenged the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to debate me on this issue. So far he has ducked and weaved and chickened out at every opportunity. So I am looking forward to him finally being in the Chamber and accounting for his incompetence, his wasteful spending, his indifference to the needs of commuters and his neglect of local manufacturing workers.

In truth, I have perhaps been a little unkind over the past 12 months to the Minister for Transport. Poor old Minister Constance has been unwilling and unable to address the concerns I have been raising because they are decisions which were made over his head and without his input. We know this because 12 months ago when Ray Hadley interviewed Minister Constance on 2GB and asked whether the Government knew the trains would not fit the tracks the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure threw his predecessor under the bus. He blamed Gladys.

He blamed his boss and told the world it was all her fault.

The farce that has unfolded since that interview 12 months ago has done nothing to give the Blue Mountains community any confidence that either the Minister for Transport or the Premier herself know what they are doing.

What other explanation exists for a government that buys new trains from South Korea which do not fit the tracks? What other explanation exists for a government that orders a New Intercity Fleet that has rigid, uncomfortable seating when the customer expectation of comfortable, soft and reversible seating is well established? What other explanation exists for a government that orders trains from overseas at a 25 per cent discount when it should have known—and should have made some effort to find out—that the cost of making those fat trains fit the tracks would blow out beyond any short-term discount from buying trains on the cheap from South Korea?

This Government is so ideologically opposed to local manufacturing workers that it will waste billions of taxpayers' dollars on trains that do not fit and which passengers do not want. This Government is so hell-bent on abolishing crucial railway workers' jobs that it will try to run these new trains in driver-only mode, putting the safety of passengers and train drivers at risk.

The Minister for Transport will have a chance to respond in a moment, but for the sake of expediency I will tell the House what he is about to say.

Minister Constance will tell us that I want to keep running 40-year-old trains in the Blue Mountains. This is not true.

Minister Constance will tell us that the Hyundai Rotem trains represent value for money for the New South Wales taxpayer. This is not true.

Minister Constance will tell us that his department consulted with passengers and incorporated their feedback into the design of the new trains. This is not true.

Minister Constance will tell us that these trains are reliable and safe. This is not true.

Minister Constance will tell us that he will not sack train guards on the new intercity lines. This is not true.

Finally, Minister Constance will tell us that this is an "investment" in the Blue Mountains line that is long overdue. This is not true.

What is true is that the Department of Transport is being forced by this Government to scramble about making modifications to our tracks in order to accommodate these new trains, which the Liberals decided to buy on a whim without doing the proper research or any analysis to ensure they would fit.

The Minister forgot the tape measure.

I have asked questions on notice, lodged freedom of information requests, written to the Minister, moved motions in this House, debated the Minister day in and day out, and talked to my local paper, local radio, ABC radio and the Sydney Morning Herald about fat trains that do not fit the tracks—and the Minister still cannot answer this one simple question.

Minister, what will it cost to widen the tracks, tunnels, platforms and sandstone cuttings and move trackside signalling equipment so that these fat trains can fit all the way to Lithgow?

What will it cost when the Minister could have bought new trains that were designed and built with local expertise, that fit the tracks, that are fit for purpose as long-distance trains and that would have kept local manufacturing workers from regional New South Wales in good quality jobs for many years to come?

What will the cost to the taxpayer be?

Now is your chance, Andrew Constance, just answer the question.