

Motor Racing Legislation Amendment (Newcastle 500) Bill 2017

Second Reading

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (11:38): On behalf of the Hon. Niall Blair: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am delighted to introduce the Motor Racing Legislation Amendment (Newcastle 500) Bill 2017. The objective of the bill is to facilitate yet another major event procured for regional New South Wales by the Government—this time, as the first ever supercars race to be held in Newcastle; the Coates Hire Newcastle 500.

The Virgin Australia Supercars Championship has a proud place in Australian sporting history. It is the premier motorsport category in Australasia and is a Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile sanctioned international motor racing series for supercars.

This year marks the eighteenth running of the supercars championship and the twentieth series in which supercars have contested the premier Australian touring car title. The championship visits New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, Northern Territory and New Zealand across 14 rounds. It has a huge following right across Australia, with hundreds of thousands of spectators attending supercars events and a television audience that exceeds two million people. New South Wales has a rich supercars history and is home to the undoubted highlight of the Australian motor racing calendar—the Bathurst 1000.

The bill provides Newcastle with the opportunity to be part of this proud history by hosting the grand finale of the championship season. The Hunter has a large population of supercar fans, and the Newcastle 500 will be the first time it has had an event to call its own. The Newcastle 500 is a picturesque course that will showcase some of Newcastle's best-known landmarks, including Fort Scratchley, Central Promenade, Foreshore Park, Nobby's Beach Reserve, Pacific Park and Queens Wharf. The proposed track will take in the spectacular sites of the Newcastle coastline, sending incredible images around Australia and across the world.

The inaugural event will take place on 24 to 26 November 2017 and will be conducted every year thereafter. There is no doubt that the event will provide a significant boost to the State's economy and to the region's economy. It not just a race; it is also a major event that will include live music, car displays and family entertainment zones. The event is set to showcase Newcastle to a huge national and international television audience, attracting more than 81,000 domestic and international visitors, and injecting more than \$57 million into the Hunter region and its economy in direct visitor expenditure over the next five years. The flow-on economic benefits to the broader region will undoubtedly be even greater than that.

With Newcastle playing host to a wide array of world-class sports events this year, the 2017 events calendar for Newcastle promises to be the city's biggest and best year yet and

cements the city's status as a premier major events location in the Hunter region and in regional New South Wales. The benefits to the region, by attracting tourists, stimulating local business and job creation, are immense. Newcastle is an ideal location as it has the natural beauty, infrastructure and road network necessary to support what will be an exciting and dynamic road race.

This bill will ensure that the infrastructure for the race can be ready in time for November and provide legacy benefits to the Newcastle community through significant improvements to roads and service infrastructure. Without the measures being put in place by this bill, it would be impossible to meet that time frame. The bill facilitates the race by extending the current legislation allowing the V8 supercars race to be conducted at Sydney Olympic Park to Newcastle, and by removing the references to V8s, which will allow for a greater variety of supercars to race in Newcastle in the years to come. All the commonsense provisions currently contained within the Homebush Motor Racing (Sydney 400) Act 2008 will apply to the race event at Newcastle.

These include Destination NSW oversight and a streamlined authorisation and approval process for the conduct of the race, which will provide certainty for both the race promoter and the community. Significant safeguards relating to consultation, public safety and environmental protection will also be maintained. For example, the Act currently allows Destination NSW to impose any conditions it considers reasonable on the race promoter, including for the protection of the environment and public safety. If the promoter breaches one of those conditions it can be prosecuted and, in the case of the most serious or continuing breaches, have its authorisation revoked.

Pre-race works cannot commence until Destination NSW is satisfied that the race promoter has complied with statutory requirements to consult with stakeholders affected by its works proposal, including residents and the local council. Item [10] of the bill strengthens the current requirement by adding an obligation on the race promoter to consult with any other public or local authorities prescribed by regulation to ensure specific issues are addressed. The race promoter must also demonstrate to the satisfaction of Destination NSW that adequate steps will be taken to prevent or minimise any harm to the environment.

Prior to issuing an authorisation for works, Destination NSW is required under the current Act to consult with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Item [9] of the bill will amend this requirement to ensure consultation occurs with Newcastle City Council for motor races in Newcastle, and expands who Destination NSW needs to consult with to now include any other public or local authority prescribed by the regulations. The race promoter will be obliged to clean up and reinstate the race area after the race period. If the promoter fails to do so within a reasonable period, Destination NSW may arrange for this work to be carried out and recover any costs from the race promoter. The race promoter is also required to comply with any direction given by Destination NSW in relation to any public safety and environmental protection matter. All these provisions demonstrate how seriously this Government takes protection of the public and the environment in the context of a motor racing event.

Minister Marshall visited Newcastle to meet with Newcastle City Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes and discussed this fantastic event with her and senior council staff. As the new Minister for Tourism and Major Events, he was pleased to hear that the council is fully supportive of the event proceeding and it wants to make it as successful as possible for Newcastle and the Hunter region. It is important, as per the governance framework that was finalised late last year, that the Government, through Destination NSW, plays a key role in coordinating the implementation of the Newcastle 500, and has a clear presence in the community leading up to the inaugural event in November this year. The Minister looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Lord Mayor, Newcastle City Council and Destination NSW to ensure this close partnership with the Newcastle City Council. Of course, as with any major event of this scale, there will be some issues to work through.

The Government recognises that some residents and business owners may be affected by the preparatory work, as well as during the event period itself. While every reasonable effort will be made to minimise disruption, it is important to remember that the event is of a limited duration and will be held only once a year. Most of the disruption to the community will be to facilitate the civil works to prepare the circuit, which will happen this year only and which will ultimately provide positive outcomes for Newcastle East residents and businesses alike through upgrades to roads and other service infrastructure. Nonetheless, Minister Marshall met with Destination NSW and has been assured that consultation to inform residents and business owners will be a priority, with the Supercars Australia and Newcastle City Council committing to holding regular meetings with the community and to distribute information updates.

These measures, combined with the statutory requirements put in place by the bill, should ensure that there will be minimal disruption to normal activities. To that end, traffic and transport management plans will be developed with input from relevant government agencies such as Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services to address road closures, resident parking and other traffic-related concerns, with traffic flow to be restored as soon as practicable after each event. Pedestrian access for residents and businesses will be maintained at all times and vehicular access will be restricted only during event operation hours, which will be approximately 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. from Friday to Saturday and one day either side of the event.

Supercars Australia and its circuit designers have been working closely with the Newcastle Light Rail project team to deliver seamless integration with the design, construction and operation of another fantastic initiative for Newcastle. It is envisaged that once in operation the light rail will be a primary mode of transport delivering spectators to the event and increasing patronage of the service. Any suggestion that the public will be prevented from using Newcastle's finest beaches and public areas is not correct and could not be further from truth. In fact, the Government encourages all visitors going to Newcastle for the event to visit these brilliant beaches. Locals, of course, will not be restricted from visiting these beaches in any way at all.

In response to community concerns regarding the impact of the race on Newcastle's heritage precinct, Supercars Australia has engaged a heritage consultant and is working

closely with the heritage division of Newcastle City Council to develop a heritage impact statement that will address the management of all State heritage items within the event precinct. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in Hansard.

Leave granted.

While the circuit will include the removal of some trees and shrubs, I can advise the House that Supercars Australia is working with the Newcastle City Council arborist to deliver a tree planting program which will provide the community with a usable canopy more than three times greater than what is currently in place, returning shade to Newcastle's parklands. The circuit will also provide a valuable commodity of 215 additional car parking spaces, including 18 dedicated accessible spaces to Newcastle East to assist community access to these areas all year round.

As was the case in Sydney, all event infrastructure will be temporary and a program will be developed for the installation and removal of this infrastructure each year. All efforts will be made to minimise the disruption to residents and businesses in the area, and this will involve ongoing communication with all affected parties. All relevant government agencies and key stakeholders have been engaged in discussions regarding the event for several months through a series of established working groups. This collaborative and cooperative approach will ensure that the event will satisfy needs across government and maximise benefits to the community and the Hunter region. A comprehensive emergency management plan will be developed in consultation with key agencies to guarantee that emergency services are maintained for both the event and non-event community.

The Government considers that the special purpose arrangements being put in place by this bill to facilitate the Newcastle 500, balance the need for commercial certainty and expeditious regulation of the event with the need to protect the attributes of Newcastle and the interests of the city's residents. There is no doubt that the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship represents a significant economic benefit to the people of Newcastle, the Hunter and regional New South Wales. The Newcastle 500 will cap off a very exciting year for the city of Newcastle as a major events destination. This bill demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to attracting major events to New South Wales, and to regional New South Wales in particular, and to generating jobs, stimulating the economy and boosting tourism throughout rural and regional New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.