

Tim Crakanthorp's speech in support of amendments to the new Motorsport Bill

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (11:44): I speak to the Motor Sports Bill 2022. I am experiencing déjà vu here today. Five years ago I stood in this spot and spoke of the issues around community consultation and communication regarding the Newcastle 500, and today I am back doing the same thing. It is pretty disappointing. Five years ago the Supercars arrived in Newcastle, and we had to push for a team that would talk to the community and answer its questions. That was despite Newcastle's event replacing the Sydney 500, which had the Homebush Motor Racing Authority established solely for it. Five years ago Government members stood in this place and said, "What is Labor talking about? We are doing that." Do you know what we got? We did not get a whole motor racing authority established; we got just one person. This event had never been held in Newcastle before, and we got one person to deal with community concerns.

It is also disappointing that the bill is so relevant to Newcastle, yet no-one has reached out to the local member on behalf of the Minister or the department. There is no need for these failings. In the other place, Labor will move amendments to the bill because the Minister should not be able to authorise a race without consulting with the local council that hosts it or the community that may be inconvenienced because of it. In addition, Labor will move an amendment to ensure the applicability of the Heritage Act 1977 as the race location in Newcastle is the historic East End, which rivals The Rocks in Sydney in terms of history and significance not just to our city but to the State. This is easy to fix, and it would be silly for the Government not to support these worthwhile amendment

Subsequently, this amendment was passed, as it was in 2017, but the Heritage Act was never policed. Heritage features were destroyed, historic buildings were damaged during construction and the Bicentennial Foreshore Park and Coal River Precinct were permanently modified into a racing circuit. Sandstone paving gave way to concrete racetrack kerbing. All street trees were removed along the 'circuit' and more than 250 park trees were destroyed to make way for Supercars infrastructure. Supercars even demanded that the historic Coal Monument be relocated permanently! The avenue of Norfolk Pines at the base of Fort Scratchley (removed for the construction of the circuit) has never been replanted. More recently, the Foreshore Masterplan Plan has been severely compromised, now the Supercars transporters have to be accommodated in the park.

The new legislation allows Supercars to run their event ANYWHERE in NSW! Two races can now be held per year at any place (and 5 at Bathurst). And with just a tick of the box, the Office of Sport (answerable directly to Start Ayres...minister for Sports Rorts) gives it approval.