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Media Release

Vital XPT rail fleet refurbishment program ramps up

Wednesday, 19 February 2025

The Minns Labor Government is continuing work to build better regional communities by undertaking vital upgrades to the XPT rail fleet which services Grafton and other regional centres across the state.

The XPT fleet has reached an impressive 40-plus years in service and work is underway to ensure the fleet continues to provide passengers with a safe and comfortable service until the next generation Regional Rail Fleet is ready to be introduced into passenger service.

The NSW Government has committed \$40.3 million over five years for the XPT Life Extension Project.

The upgrades of the XPT fleet, to be carried out locally in NSW by Sydney Trains, include:

- extensive mechanical work to improve service reliability;
- new carpeting and refurbished seats;
- maintenance to improve operation of the air-conditioning and toilets; and
- repaint and refurbishment of the power cars.

These upgrades follow the former Liberal Nationals Government's failure to deliver a single new regional train after their announcement of the new fleet more than a decade ago. Like the New Intercity Fleet, which the Minns Government is now successfully rolling out on the Central Coast line, the former Liberal National Government oversaw the new Regional Rail Fleet ballooning in cost and missing deadline after deadline. As a direct consequence of this mismanagement, regional passengers have been forced to travel on the old XPTs for years longer than necessary.

To allow for these essential upgrades of the XPT fleet, NSW TrainLink will operate two out of the six daily rail services between Grafton and Sydney with premium coaches for approximately 12 months from mid-March 2025. The remaining four daily rail services will continue to operate with XPT trains.

NSW TrainLink is going through a public tender process to secure a coach provider to provide premium wheelchair accessible vehicles for this service.

This will provide travellers from Grafton the opportunity to choose between premium quality coach services or rail options, depending on their time of travel.

The community will be updated before the two new coach services start with details about the timetable.

Ticket prices will be the same as the rail service and bookings will continue as usual through transportnsw.info/regional-bookings or by calling 13 22 32.

This investment in upgrading the rail fleet is part of the Minns Labor Government's plan to rebuild and renew our regional transport and roads, ensuring communities across our regions have access to safe and connected infrastructure and services. This ongoing work includes:

- Delivering more than \$300 million to regional councils across the state to accelerate the repair of roads and transport infrastructure damaged by natural disasters;
- Investing a record close to \$250 million in upgrades to make our regional roads safer; and
- Releasing Draft Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans for the Hunter and South East and Tablelands, and commencing development on plans for other regions of NSW, to provide a vision for regional initiatives in the short to long term.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison:

"The Minns Labor Government is committed to building a better transport system for regional NSW including the network of NSW TrainLink trains and coaches.

"To ensure passengers can continue to travel safely, comfortably and reliably in the longer term, over \$40 million in essential upgrades are getting underway on the ageing XPT fleet now.

"The Liberals and Nationals sat back for 12 years and ran the XPT fleet into the ground while leaving communities at risk of losing services. We're fixing the mess and investing to improve services."

Quotes attributable to Labor spokesperson for Clarence Emily Suvaal:

"Passengers who use two of the six daily NSW TrainLink Grafton services – which will be replaced by coaches while work on the XPTs is carried out – can look forward to a timetabled service on a premium, airconditioned, wheelchair-accessible vehicle during the upgrade. The trains will return to service at the completion of the upgrade process.

"The other four daily North Coast train services which service Grafton will continue as rail services, so travellers can choose the time of day and mode of transport that best suits their needs."