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Media Release

Tilt wagons helping Sydney Trains lean into reliability

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The Minns Labor Government's overhaul of rail maintenance has been given a shot in the arm, with the arrival of six state-of-the-art tilt wagons which will allow the safe movement of preassembled sections of track to speed up work and reduce passenger disruption.

Tilt wagons carry over-sized sections of track known as "turnouts" which can be lowered and installed rather than having to be built on site during maintenance shutdowns.

Turnouts are sections of track where trains cross from one track to another. Due to their size, turnouts can't be moved by flat wagons around the 1,700-kilometre network.

Prebuilt turnouts reduce inconvenience for train passengers, with less time needed to close rail lines as old timber sleepers are swapped out for concrete-based turnouts.

Where a tilt wagon is used, Sydney Trains estimates a time saving of between five and seven hours for each job.

The new tilt wagons are currently being tested ahead of joining the Sydney Trains engineering fleet for track maintenance.

Sydney Trains currently has two tilt wagons which have been in service for more than two decades.

The \$15 million investment in six new, self-clamping tilt wagons will increase efficiency and allow Sydney Trains to continue to reduce the maintenance backlog.

The recent Independent Rail Review provided a blueprint for a focused maintenance effort in response to the overhead wiring failure that brought the network to its knees for two days in May.

The Minns Labor Government has invested more than \$450 million to upgrade track, signals, overhead wiring and drainage, as well as implementing "maintenance critical zones" starting with the City Circle and Homebush–Strathfield corridor where multiple lines converge.

We are boosting reliability through the rollout of new Mariyung trains and refurbished Tangaras.

Another focus for improving the travelling experience of train passengers is the \$800 million Safe Accessible Transport program, with a much-needed upgrade ready to progress at Lewisham Station.

A competitive Expression of Interest process has just been completed and nominated companies will shortly be invited to tender for the design and construction project, which will add four new lifts at Lewisham and will help mitigate some of the flooding problems at the station, with work due to start next year.

The upgrade will deliver accessible parking, as well as kiss and ride zones on Thomas Street, a kiss and ride on Victoria Street and an accessible parking space on Hunter Street.

A new family accessible toilet, hearing loops to assist people with hearing loss, as well as safety and security upgrades, including lighting, CCTV and signage will be delivered when work begins in 2026.

Minister for Transport John Graham said:

“Since we received the Independent Rail Review, our focus has been squarely on the maintenance improvements that can provide the reliability that train passengers rightly expect from their rail network.

“The arrival of tilt wagons gives our Sydney Trains track engineers so much more scope to get through the maintenance backlog with speed and efficiency. Each tilt wagon can save up to seven hours on a job.

“Each turnout carried by tilt wagon is one less track work job at which the build must take place on site. Over time this will reduce disruption to passengers during weekend trackwork.

Member for Summer Hill Jo Haylen said:

“The wait for an upgrade has been a long one for our community, and today we’re one step closer to delivering the safe, accessible, and inclusive transport infrastructure we need.

“I’ve stood with locals, carers and disability advocates who’ve told us clearly: accessibility is not optional, it’s essential. This upgrade reflects their voices and the values of our Inner West community.

“I’m proud to see the NSW Government delivering on its commitment to equity in public transport. We’re listening, we’re acting, and we’re making sure Lewisham Station works for everyone.”

Chief Executive of Sydney Trains Matt Longland said:

“Sydney Trains engineers are really excited about acquiring these modern tilt wagons to allow them to carry new concrete turnouts to site and remove old timber ones off site. The new tilt wagons are both safer and quicker than their predecessors.

“The procurement of six tilt wagons provides the right number to transport all the track segments of a turnout at once, and efficiency is so important when there’s more than 1,700 km of track and associated infrastructure to maintain on the network.

“This modernising and expansion of our track maintenance equipment will allow us to get more bang for our buck during each weekend track possession, while also ensuring our staff are safer on the work site.”