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## New Intercity Fleet: Transport blame Covid lockdown, global experts for train delay

Transport bosses have blamed Covid lockdowns and international engineers for 18-month delays in the rollout of the controversial New Intercity Fleet.



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Transport for NSW has blamed Covid-19 lockdowns for continued delays in the rollout of the New Intercity Fleet of trains — currently sitting unused in a Central Coast stabling yard.

Internal government documents, released following an order for papers by Labor MLC Mark Buttigieg, argued the New Intercity Fleet was “late” as the trains utilise “technology and components from all over the world and this requires specialist engineers to be present for parts of the testing”.



Testing phase continues up for the new Intercity Fleet.

The blame game for the 18-month delay in the New Intercity Fleet comes as *NewsLocal* revealed a 2018 confidential report told Transport for NSW the [doors on the new trains “would fail” and “deflect outwards” if opened or closed at speed](#) while guards were checking for hazards.

A Transport for NSW representative said testing by internationally-based specialist engineers “wasn’t possible while overseas and interstate travel restrictions are in place”.

However, the first two trains in the new intercity fleet arrived in Australia from South Korea for testing in December 2019.

Meanwhile, Transport for NSW documents confirmed the third train arrived in Australia in July last year “to complete its final stages of testing”.





Interior of the new Mariyung train that is part of the new intercity fleet train, Central station. Picture: NCA NewsWire / Damian Shaw

“Transport for NSW is working closely with the manufacturer on the delivery of the new trains,” the representative said. “There are a number of moving parts involved in any project of this scale and sometimes this can mean changes to timelines to ensure that Transport for NSW gets the design and construction right.”

The Transport representative said increasing the number of carriages ordered sparked a delay, while “ongoing consultation with stakeholders” was blamed for the finalisation of the train’s design.

The government documents said all trains were subject to extensive testing in Korea and Australia, with a purpose-built test track developed in South Korea.



Exterior of the new Mariyung train that is part of the new intercity fleet train, Central station. Picture: NCA NewsWire / Damian Shaw

“Testing before each train arrives in Australia is safer, as it reduces the need to test in a live rail environment,” the report reads. “Issues found during testing can also be addressed quickly and in a cost-effective way at the manufacturing facility, before the train is shipped to Australia.”

“All New Intercity Fleet trains start static testing as soon as they arrive, for around three weeks, followed by dynamic testing.”

Shadow Transport spokeswoman Jo Haylen said the it “beggars belief” the government ordered more carriages when they “knew the NIF trains were riddled with defects”.

“Taxpayers have spent billions of dollars on trains that are defective,” she said. “The Government’s transport procurement policies are a completely failure.



“The Government didn’t just export jobs when they built these trains overseas, they’ve also exported the current and future jobs of the engineering experts we need to help fix the Government’s transport failures.

“Under this Government NSW imports transport duds, exports transport jobs and passengers always lose out.”

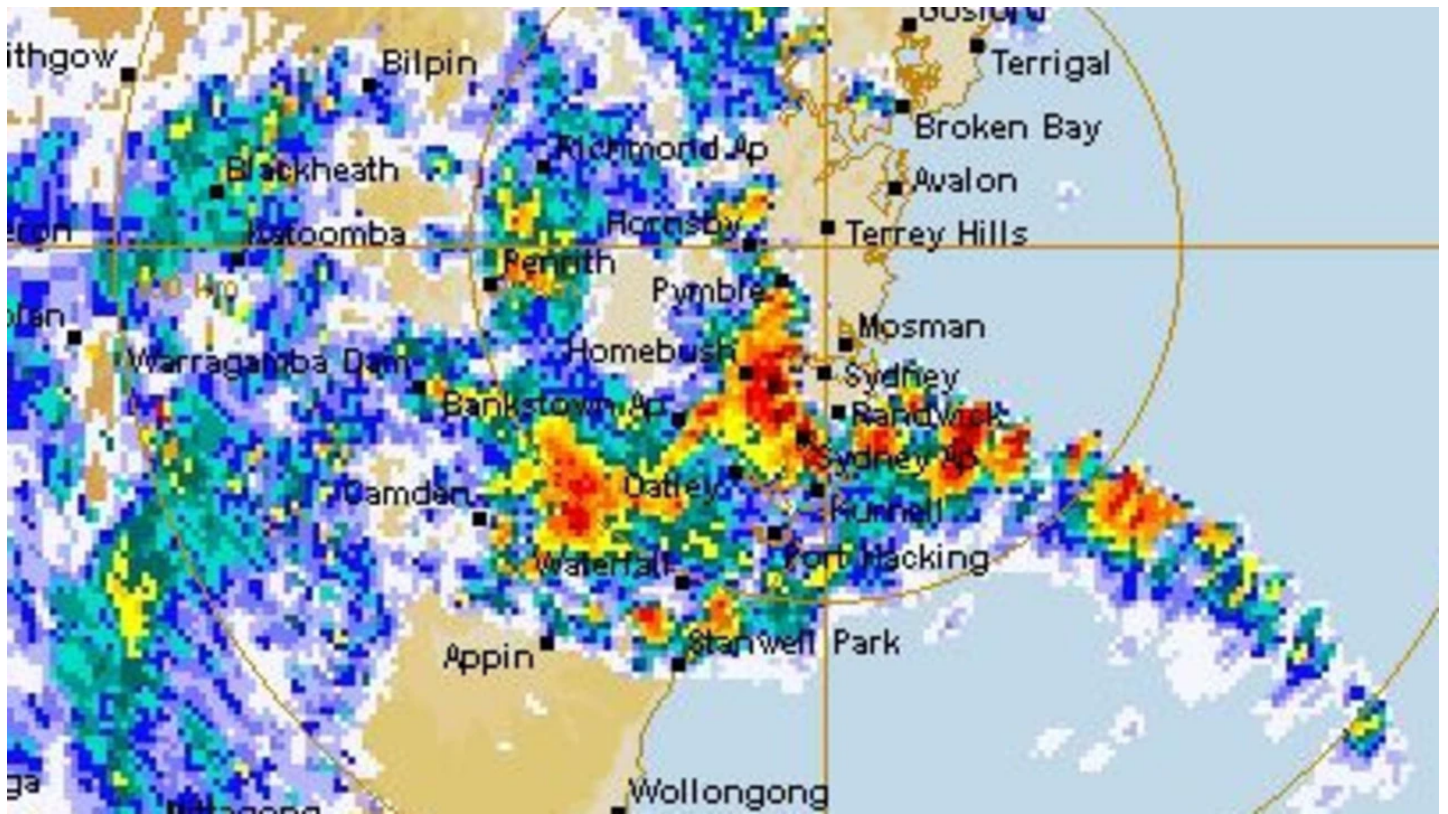
Transport for NSW confirmed the total cost of the construction of the 610 carriages, tunnel widening, maintenance facility, signalling and maintenance of the fleet for 15 years was \$2.8 billion.

“During the procurement phase of the NIF (Mariyung), a decision was made to improve the infrastructure to support “Sub-medium gauge” trains, such as those which currently operate on the Central Coast-Newcastle Line, South Coast Line and on the Blue Mountains Line as far as Springwood,” the spokeswoman said. “These trains include the new Mariyung trains.

“Improving the infrastructure will allow customers on this section of the network to benefit from improved amenity, especially in terms of accessibility for those mobility impaired customers.”

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