

Findings

Finding 1

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That Mr Robert Hawes had a significant and ongoing conflict of interest in being a landowner at Wickham and having a managerial role in the NSW Government's decision to truncate the Newcastle rail line at Wickham, a decision from which Mr Hawes stands to financially benefit.

Finding 2

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That the Board of the Hunter Development Corporation failed to adequately address the conflict of interest of Mr Robert Hawes, and this failure has damaged public confidence in the integrity of the Hunter Development Corporation and public decision making in Newcastle and the broader Hunter region.

Summary of recommendations

- Recommendation 1** **28**
That the Minister for Planning and Environment amend height controls specified in the State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Newcastle City Centre) 2014 by lowering the maximum permitted height of buildings within the East End precinct to 27 metres.
- Recommendation 2** **36**
That the Minister for Planning and Environment refer any development application for the Newcastle East End site to the NSW Planning and Assessment Commission for determination.
- Recommendation 3** **37**
That the NSW Government clearly separate the Department of Planning and Environment and UrbanGrowth NSW.
- Recommendation 4** **41**
That the Board of the Hunter Development Corporation immediately take steps to ensure that none of its employees are materially involved in decision making, including the delivery of reports and information to board meetings and ministerial briefings, where they have a conflict of interest.
- Recommendation 5** **41**
That the Board of the Hunter Development Corporation immediately apply the NSW Planning and Infrastructure Conflicts of Interest Policy and Guidelines 2011 in all their dealings with conflicts of interest.
- Recommendation 6** **41**
That the Minister for Planning and Environment advise what steps will be taken to ensure that the Hunter Development Corporation has addressed conflicts of interest in its operations.
- Recommendation 7** **45**
That the NSW Government acknowledge Newcastle City Council as the principal planning authority for planning in Newcastle.
- Recommendation 8** **45**
That the NSW Government give Newcastle City Council planning authority over all land in Newcastle city, including land that is currently owned and/or managed by the Hunter Development Corporation.
- Recommendation 9** **70**
That the NSW Government immediately reinstate rail services that have ceased and infrastructure that has been removed from the Newcastle heavy rail line.