

**Supplementary
Submission
No 130a**

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING PROCESS IN NEWCASTLE
AND THE BROADER HUNTER REGION**

Name: Ms Elizabeth Sprott

Date received: 23/10/2014

Reverend the Hon Fred Nile MLC
Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region,
NSW Legislative Council

Dear Sir,

Firstly, may I thank you for heading this enquiry into Newcastle-centric decisions made by this term of the State Government. The very existence of this investigation does fill me with some hope for democratic government. I know I have already written about King Edwards park, but given the announcement recently about a \$450 million expansion to the NSW Art Gallery , I feel our Art Gallery is another issue that needs to be brought to your attention

Should you look at the Newcastle City Art Gallery decisions of the last few years, you will see that there was a proposed \$21 million extension planned, with approved funding in place. the Federal government had promised \$7 million, the State \$7 million, and the NCC \$6 million, with the remaining \$1 million from private donations from the Friends of Newcastle Gallery. A change of Local council brought about a change of heart from the NCC side - driven, in my opinion, by the then Lord Mayor McCloy. It would eventuate that there were reasons behind his animosity towards the then director of the gallery, Ron Ramsey, that coloured his directions to the council - these facts emerged after the Brett Whitely sculpture debacle- facts which are now on public record.

It is my understanding that the \$6million was raised, and put aside as part of a special rates levy over preceding years. The special levy was allowed by the State Government for specific projects. The Art Gallery project was dropped, and the money seemingly was spent to pay off debt, without councillors full knowledge. The GM and LM possibly decided this without full disclosure to all councillors, as there seems to be some confusion as to where the money is now.

At only 4.6% the cost of the State Gallery expansion, and after the seeming disparity of the profit distribution of the Newcastle Port sale, may I ask that the Newcastle Gallery expansion be considered in your committee?

Thank you

Elizabeth Sprott