

**Submission  
No 109**

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

**Name:** Mr Bruce Wilson

**Date received:** 21/10/2014

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Reverend the Hon Fred Nile MLC

Chair

Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region, NSW Legislative Council

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Dear Sir

Thank you for pushing ahead with this essential inquiry into planning decisions in Newcastle. Such an inquiry is necessary in the light of two of our elected representatives having to resign in disgrace because of admissions made before ICAC.

I am particularly interested in the concealed dealings that went on around the zoning and rezoning of the Headland Reserve section of King Edward Park. The Newcastle City Council had decreed that this section of parkland was not to be zoned for commercial use as the land was dedicated for public recreation. In particular an application for a function centre was disallowed in June 2011.

However, one year later, in 2012, the land was secretly rezoned to allow for a function centre on this iconic headland park. There was no discussion of this rezoning and no reasons were ever given to the community which had campaigned long and hard to avoid the building of a private commercial structure on heritage land originally dedicated to recreation and parkland.

Further to my concern is that the disgraced former Member for Newcastle, Mr Tim Owen, was shown in ICAC to have illegally received the sum of \$5,000 from Mr Keith Stronach, the developer who had submitted the DA for the function centre.

The planning process for this rezoning fails the basic tests of probity, transparency, accountability and public consultation and raises strong questions of developer involvement in the political, decision making process.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Wilson