

**Submission
No 82**

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

Name: Ms Wendy Wales

Date received: 20/10/2014

SUBMISSION TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PLANNING PROCESS IN NEWCASTLE AND THE BROADER HUNTER REGION

Thank you for the opportunity to express concern about the processes involved in deciding on the Newcastle Urban Renewal Proposal. I believe the illegal donations to political campaigns by developers are behind the Newcastle Urban Renewal Proposal not the public interest. While I am distressed about the dismantling of so many public institutions (eg TAFE) this submission is my request to know how a government could decide to make these changes and why they haven't consulted with communities impacted.

As a Hunter resident since the late 1980's I have heard the call to "open up the city to the harbour" as more or less background for decades. Since moving to Muswellbrook and using the train to take students on excursions, attend Tafe in Newcastle and university in Sydney I am more acutely aware of how it will affect the people where I live and myself.

I was shocked to read the Social and Environmental Impact Assessment for the Wickham Interchange (now known colloquially as "the shed") did not include any reference to rail users from regional areas such as the Upper Hunter, Dungog, Central Coast or even Sydney. I know I speak for a significant group of people, now and into the future, for whom rail is a significant part of their independence. Imposing a disembarkation short of our city destination and transferring to buses (or light rail?) will adversely affect people headed for city medical or legal appointments, infirm and disabled people, people travelling with young children and luggage, everyone with luggage, young people venturing to the beach with surfboards etc.

It is a sad but economic reality that when one of an elderly couple die, affording to maintain a car and the petrol to run it on a single income or pension can become too much. Our population is aging and petrol

prices are increasing as the cost of producing petrol inevitably increases. However widows and widowers are still able to travel because the train is affordable and while we need more frequent services, particularly on the weekend, the Upper Hunter service to Newcastle is fast (except when replaced by buses). Buses require greater physical agility, do not always have toilets and are cramped.

As a teacher I could mark students work on the train, as a student I could study -increasing my productivity. Taking my bike on a train was not always easy but it is better than trying to load it in the baggage compartment of a bus. Driving means this time is unproductive, polluting and takes up road and parking space. Driving to Sydney, which is clearly a better option than catching a train to Hamilton, bus to Broadmeadow and train to Sydney, means I arrive tired, again add to traffic congestion and parking problems and drive home tired.

Most of the rest of the world knows the importance of planning for sustainability, meeting social-economic-environmental bottom lines. The Newcastle Urban Renewal planning does not meet any of these criteria and I would like to know how the government thought it could?

Wendy Wales,
19th October 2014