

**Submission
No 185**

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

Name: Mrs Susan Hellyer

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We only have one chance at getting our Newcastle CBD Renewal correct. We owe it to our future residents to do our utmost to integrate our city from the bottom up, not impose second-rate developments for political expediency. Newcastle & our Hunter region have contributed enormously to generating income for NSW/Sydney, & deserve a transparent, community based, accountable planning system with integrated public transport networks, not piecemeal decisions to cut our existing heavy rail infrastructure.

The NeW Space inner city University campus (& new law court precinct) is being constructed adjacent to Civic Railway Station: how practical to utilise the existing rail corridor to link the 2 campuses & add light rail to this corridor, rather than cutting the rail at Wickham, initially transferring passengers by bus to & from Hamilton Station, which is in a very crowded location, & adding to the already chaotic traffic congestion in the city area. The Newcastle public has good reason to be sceptical about the benefits of removing the rail line, given the recent ICAC revelations & obvious interests by developers in this land, which is apparently not undermined.

We respect our unique city-scape, with it's heritage buildings, cathedral-peaked hill, harbour & seaside settings, & definitely don't want high-rise towers to dominate this landscape any more than the heavily developed Newcastle beach precinct already does.

Why not enhance the positive aspects of the existing CBD, by providing adequate open space for people to wander along the Hunter street mall, free from concerns about being run down by trams, cars, buses etc, cross over to the harbour foreshore & enjoy the honeysuckle precinct, without adding more wind tunnels created by harsh high-rise buildings which would destroy the low-key nature of the eastern end of the city. The west end is possibly more appropriate for higher density buildings, but I disagree that we need to exceed the previous 8 storey limit.

Newcastle has been rated 10th as a tourist destination to visit. Why not complement our unique geographic assets with sympathetic, low key developments which blend into our environment & are integrated with transport infrastructure providing cycleways, pedestrian access, park & ride facilities utilising our existing rail network, complemented by light rail linking major centres. Transport experts have argued the economic merits of keeping the existing rail line & adding light rail to it, so it hardly seems feasible to close it, add buses & dislocate people's travel even more.

Lake Macquarie LGA is also causing many residents concerns about the impacts of increasingly dense developments radiating out from major centres, to the extent that our relatively quiet little leafy neighbourhood centre at Whitebridge is threatened with a 4 storey development adjacent to the local shops & very popular "Fernleigh" cycleway/walking track, adding a further 95 dwellings to an already congested road network, with no plans to improve the traffic problems this will undoubtedly create.

It is time the NSW Government listened to its constituents & we greatly appreciate this opportunity to voice our concerns & hopefully be heard.