

**Submission  
No 85**

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

**Name:** Ms Ruth Colman

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To the Rev the Hon Fred Nile, MLC Committee Chair  
Planning Processes in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region  
Parliament House,  
Macquarie Street,  
Sydney 2000

Concerning Newcastle's Rail Terminus

Dear Mr Nile,

My concern is growing about the Government's plan to cut the rail line to Newcastle and place the terminus at Wickham.

1. What public consultation has taken place about this plan? A Newcastle Herald survey can hardly count as consultation, but in August such a survey did show that 72% of those surveyed wanted the rail line kept as it is. We who live in the wider Hunter Valley area were not given a say.
2. Many people commute from the Maitland area and beyond to school and work in the city, and depend on the rail line. Do we want more traffic on the road routes? If the train terminates at Wickham there will be a scramble for buses, while some will take their cars and search in vain for parking spaces. In summer, especially at weekends, people want to come to the city: to its beaches, its theatres and galleries and restaurants. How many will want to walk from Wickham to the beach?
3. Rail service is far more friendly to the planet than road traffic. At peak traffic times it is also faster.
4. The plans of the University of Newcastle to extend its city campus will mean even more people needing transport, both staff and students.
5. We hear much about the need to revitalise the old city centre, not to help to end its life completely. That part of the city is historically significant, having one of the oldest still-used rail links in Australia. Removing the old rail terminus will not help in any revitalising.

Please, could this plan be reconsidered? There are alternatives! Let's spruce up our existing railway stations. Stations don't have to be ugly, or even simply utilitarian. Nor do their surrounds. Trees and shrubs, grass and gardens can be transforming and attractive, as we can see in other cities. Even overhead structures can be made to look pleasant.

Let's keep our old stations and the terminus. Let's make this part of the city an attraction and not a weary old place ready to die.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Colman