

**Submission
No 172**

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

Name: Mr Gregory Hall

Date received: 23/10/2014

Submission to Planning process in Newcastle and the broader Hunter region by Gregory Hall.
Specifically to Term or Reference 2.e)

'the decision to terminate the Newcastle rail line at Wickham and any proposal to construct light rail including along Hunter and Scott Streets.'

I submit that the proposed truncation of the Newcastle Heavy Rail line at Wickham is a retrograde step for the following reasons:-

The truncation and advertised arrangements for transfer to other modes of transport will cause congestion and result in limited passenger capacity.

The City of Newcastle is experiencing substantial growth in both urban residential, study and employment, so needs increased passenger streamlining and capacity, not reduced.

Wickham does not have the required infrastructure to act as a terminal for Sydney trains, so multiple transfers will still be required.

Criticisms:

The planning process to date has not been sufficiently open and inviting of public participation, on the contrary, it has been dominated by commercial sectoral interests.

The decision appears to have been made outside of the normal, legal planning framework and may thus become the subject of ICAC investigations.

The proposed changes would appear to contravene the intent of several state policies, viz; 'A Plan to make NSW No 1' (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2011) 'the interests of the travelling public are put first.'

'grow patronage on public transport by making it a more attractive choice',

'NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan' 13 December 2012.

'planning for and managing strong demand for car travel and solutions for the low levels of public transport use', 'providing better public transport connectivity across the city', 'increase the proportion of commuter trips on public transport to the Newcastle city centre'.

The State Environmental Planning Policy (Urban Renewal) 2010 'Integrate land use planning with existing or planned infrastructure'

'Provide greater access to public transport',

The 'City Centre Vision' includes 'strengthening public transport'.

This proposal fails all of the above.

The replacement of the railway by buses and light rail will not provide adequate passenger capacity for normal end-of-workday traffic without added delays, and will be quite incapable of servicing high-demand foreshore events.

The foreseeable demand will only be met at the expense of increased road congestion, whether light rail or buses are used. This will result from both the use of lanes for light rail or bus, and from the increased use of private motor cars as the public transport travel times become less favorable.

Recommendations:

The very large sum of money proposed to facilitate the truncation of the rail line seems to represent more a transfer of public wealth to corporate and private interests, whereas that sum, if applied to renovation of the rail corridor would allow enhanced passage of pedestrians and traffic across the rail corridor.

One of these investments could be that automated, gated level crossings be installed at Stewart Avenue & Adamstown.

Yours

Gregory Hall