

**Submission  
No 63**

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

**Name:** Mr Keith Wilson

**Date received:** 16/10/2014

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The Chairman,  
N S W Upper House Inquiry into Developments in Newcastle.

Dear Rev Nile,

I grew up in Tighe's Hill, an old suburb of Newcastle, so I am a true Novacastrian.

With respect to the heavy rail line into Newcastle I am concerned that the save the heavy rail lobby seems to be making a lot of noise while claiming to represent the majority of Novacastrians. I doubt very much whether this is the case. My guess is that the silent majority see the need for the heavy rail to go.

When it was first built in the nineteenth century, it was not supported by the residents of Newcastle. It was purely the coal interests which successfully lobbied for it to be built.

Other cities around the world may have successfully retained heavy rail without a detrimental effect on the city. However Newcastle has some unique geographical features which have made the heavy rail line an unfortunate barrier. Between the harbor and a very steep hill is a narrow strip of flat land, some of it reclaimed from the harbor. The heavy rail line runs along this narrow strip, dividing the CBD from the foreshore. In recent years and decades there has been phenomenal development along the foreshore – it is alive and vibrant. The people love it.

On the other side of the heavy rail line, the CBD is just the opposite. One does not need a degree in urban design to know why!

Just when we thought something was about to happen, another inquiry is instituted – yours. The previous Labor Government had inquiry after inquiry to avoid doing something for Newcastle – after all it was a blue ribbon Labor seat!

Certainly, if the Parliament is concerned that greedy developers want to get their hands on parts of the rail corridor for personal gain, legislate to stop them. But please don't stop the removal of the heavy rail line. It is an ugly, dirty barrier which just does not suit the unique geography of Newcastle. Better still, terminate the heavy rail west of the Beaumont Street level crossing at Hamilton. Let's remove what we residents never wanted in the first place. And lobby the Liberal State Government to match the Labor Party's promise of at least 50% of the sale of the port to go to Newcastle.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Wilson

Cc The Hon Gladys Berejiklian, MP