

**Submission
No 39**

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

Name: Mr Bruce Matthews

Date received: 11/10/2014

To Whom it May Concern,

I wish to raise my objections to the decision to truncate the heavy rail line at Wickham, forcing passenger going into Newcastle to catch a bus from there and return to Wickham. At the moment it only takes 4 minutes for a train to travel from Wickham to Newcastle and vice versa whereas going by bus could take an additional 15 minutes or more for the same journey. Indeed, it may mean that passengers may be required to catch an earlier train to work, requiring a much earlier departure from home. In many cases, when a train meets a bus, passengers may be in excess of the legal capacity of the bus and would have to wait a further time for the next bus. Prior to the decision, Premier O'Farrell clearly stated the decision would be made by the people of Newcastle. We now find the decision was made with no input from the people, however there has been much input from developers and our Lord Mayor (a developer).

The Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 clearly outlines the entire strategy can be implemented with the rail in place, however the anti-rail advocates are trying to claim that it cannot with the line in place. They are also trying to convince us that the line will remain in place (for future use) and would not be built on. That however is akin to believing that politicians do not lie. The projected cost so far for this strategy, with no detailed costing done as yet, is in excess of \$650 million. Indeed the government are unable to provide any detail at all,. All this to replace trains with buses yet leave the corridor in place.

It has been widely broadcast that there will be an additional 22,000 extra people moving into the Newcastle CBD. This will supposedly consist of 12,000 tenants & 10,000 extra workers. It has not been adequately explained where all of these extra people will be able to park their cars. You can be sure that there will be extra cars as most of these new arrivals will not change transport mode at Wickham for the short journey into the CBD. No satisfactory response has been forthcoming to explain how passengers with luggage, surfboards, prams or the disabled will be able to cope with the mode change, or indeed if the 200 proposed busses will be able to cope with the demand. Add to that all of the extra traffic chaos that the 200 busses & extra cars will create. I feel certain that a large percentage of the 22,000 will require personal transport, if this crazy plan goes ahead. To be realistic the whole project just defies logic. Parking is already a problem in the CBD & East End.

In addition to all of the above, there has been no mention of what facilities will be put in place in the East End of town. By this such things as schools, pre-schools, parks, playgrounds surely must be considered and provided.

The rail line is not the barrier that we should be concerned about. The developments at Honeysuckle are what are providing the realistic barriers. Local surrounding councils (Cessnock, Maitland, Singleton & Lake Macquarie) have also raised their opposition to this reduction in service. No details have been provided for passengers from the Upper Hunter travelling to Sydney regarding their change of train at Wickham (or anywhere else) will it be an island platform? Or will they have to haul their luggage over the line to the opposite platform. None of the above objections have been suitably addressed at this stage.

Regards
Bruce Matthews