

**Submission
No 2**

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

Name: Mr Michael Palmer

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I have serious concerns about the veracity of the previous planning reviews conducted in respect of Newcastle's CBD area. Specifically, the 'Revitalise Newcastle' group appears to be dominated by business people who stand to profit from the decisions, thus bringing into question their ability to reach unbiased conclusions.

The decision to cut the train line at Wickham is particularly at issue. This is especially surprising now that the CBD area is featuring greater density of housing and new employment and studying facilities.

The money spent on truncating the train line would be much better spent on modernising the current train line and infrastructure. Its incredible that a modern city will have its train line cut whilst the alternate options are still being discussed.

If the government was to invest in a high quality rail service there is no doubt the intensity of use-age would increase significantly. At present the service provided is below standard .

In regards to opening the city up to the harbour, this can be achieved by increasing the number of level crossings and modernising the system of managing pedestrian and car flows in the inner city area. Slow moving trains can successfully operate between Wickham and Newcastle stations, while at the same time allowing for more crossings.

Also, the state government should construct rail crossings at both Stewart Avenue and the Adamstown gates which do not interrupt train traffic. These types of crossings are common in cities all over the world so surely Newcastle, the home of the world's biggest coal export port, can have these important pieces of infrastructure.

I also see no need for the current Newcastle planning laws surrounding height restrictions to be totally ignored in the latest development proposals for the CBD. Newcastle has unique characteristics and a beautiful setting and I have not read a persuasive case that the current height limits are significantly holding the city back.