

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

**Name:** Mr Robert Monteath

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Robert Monteath

Our Ref: RJM.ha

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The Director  
Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle  
and the Broader Hunter Region  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**ATTENTION:        Committee Members**

Dear Committee Members

I am a Novocastrian, a Registered Surveyor and also a Certified Practising Planner who has followed for some years the planning process for the renewal and revitalisation of the Newcastle CBD area.

It is understood due to the revelations made at the recent I.C.A.C. inquiry that the process of recent planning decisions in the Newcastle region should be reviewed. I will be commenting on Items 2(a), 2(b), 2(d), 2(e) as set out in the inquiry's terms of reference.

With the factual information that is contained in my submission you will realise that the planning process which culminated in recent decisions regarding the removal of the rail line east of Wickham Station, the preparation of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy, the State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Newcastle City Centre) 2014 and the Newcastle Eastern Development Application commenced in 2006. During that time there have been various members of the State seat of Newcastle, several Ministers for Planning, as well as quite a few Premiers.

After the initial planning strategies were published in 2009 for the renewal of Newcastle there has been no deviation from these strategies and I contend that no politician has had an undue influence on the recent planning decisions which have all been for the future benefit of Newcastle.

In 2006 the then Labour NSW Government created the Cities Task Force Project with its objective to promote economic and lifestyle opportunities in regional centres across New South Wales. The aim was also to help regional cities such as Newcastle become drivers in the New South Wales economy.

The City Centre Vision and Plan was subsequently developed as a partnership between the Newcastle City Council and the New South Wales Government as part of this state wide agenda. In 2008 the Hunter Development Corporation on behalf of the Department of Planning carried on the work done under the City Centre Vision and Plan by forming a CBD taskforce and with the co-operation of the then Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay and the then Minister for Planning Kristina Keneally prepared the Newcastle City Centre Renewal Report which was published in March 2009.

This 112 page report is attached to my submission which I encourage the members of the committee to read. The report contains numerous recommendations and proposals, some of which are currently coming to fruition while others have been formalised in the strategic planning approval process.

Two of the four key projects identified in the strategy are currently in the development or construction phase. Such projects are the new University of Newcastle Facility in the city and the Justice Facilities in the City's Civic Project which is under construction. Other recommendations in the Newcastle City Centre Renewal Report include:-

- The removal of the rail line east of Wickham Station in order to connect the CBD to the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore.
- Creating three Precincts within the CBD area which are shown diagrammatically on Page 2 of the report. These precincts include a new business centre precinct at the western end of the CBD, a cultural and civic university precinct around the Civic area of Newcastle and a tourist / residential / retail and heritage precinct east of Darby Street.

These strategic planning decisions came about after consultation with the public at forums and noting submissions from the Community. This process was most transparent with no hint of undue intervention by politicians or developers.

Subsequent to this report, in 2012 the Newcastle Urban Regional Strategy document was produced which adopted the same strategic planning ideas which were promoted in the 2009 Newcastle City Centre Renewal Report.

In order to make the recommendations of the Newcastle Urban Regional Strategy Report apart of the planning law of NSW, the State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Newcastle City Centre) 2014 was gazetted. Further, the Development Application for the Newcastle East End Development has been submitted to Newcastle Council. The gazettal of the State Environmental Planning Policy

Amendment and the submission of this Development Application are a part of the planning process for the renewal of Newcastle which started in 2006 and the two said documents are consistent with the recommendations in the 2009 Newcastle City Centre Renewal Report.

I contend that there has been no undue influence on the recent planning decisions made for the Newcastle CBD area by the then politicians who were elected in 2011 to State Parliament. These politicians have accepted the recommendations of the 2009 report and have encouraged the implementation of the report.

Robert J Monteath  
Registered Surveyor  
Certified Practising Planner