

**Submission
No 296**

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

Name: Ms Marilyn Eade

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The Director
Select Committee on the Planning Processes in Newcastle and
Broader Hunter Region
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney
NSW 2000
24th October 2014

Submission to Inquiry into Planning Processes in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region and Lake Macquarie (attached)

This is the information that I have written as a narrative on a petition to Mike Baird: Tell your government they need to respect Newcastle's Development Control Plans (laws) just like everyone else! Mike Baird Halt all major State development approvals and sale of State land in Newcastle until the March 2015 state election is held!

The petition is on line at https://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/mike-baird-halt-all-major-state-development-approvals-and-sale-of-state-land-in-newcastle-until-the-march-2015-state-election-is-held-2?recruiter=134192130&utm_campaign=mailto_link&utm_medium=email&utm_source=share_petition

I write to request that the matters in the petition are addressed by the Select Committee. The petition has not been presented yet but the comments by those who have signed and elected to leave a comment can be seen on the site. I have never seen Newcastle people so angry.

Questions to the Inquiry

Enter the State Government

The State Government's response to Newcastle's recovery has been alarming. Just at a time when our city is getting back on its feet they want to sell our port, cut our inner city train service and give themselves permission (through the equivalent of spot rezoning) to plonk 3 multi story towers in Newcastle's historic precinct; right in the heart of where our CBD has only just recently healed and begun to thrive again.

Worse, with ICAC still in progress and developers already under suspicion of trying to buy special favours from government through campaign donations, this sudden betrayal by State Government has Newcastle residents feeling all the more insecure.

So many questions need to be answered and for that the residents of Newcastle need time;For example:

“How can a State government possibly justify spending so much money to massively downgrade Australia's 6th largest city's inner city rail service?”

“How will the workers (cleaners, kitchen and wait staff) needed to work in the proposed high rise towers get into town and where will they park if they can't get the train?”

“How will Newcastle's CBD, with only two roads into town, deal with the increase in traffic that will result from cutting the rail service at the same time as constructing 3 high rise towers and putting a tram along one of those two roads?”

“How will commuters from Maitland and the suburbs, who now catch the train to the beach, get their surfboards on a tram? And what about WHEELCHAIRS and bikes?”

“Will light rail run the same hours as the trains do now? How will late night visitors leave the city?”

“Just how many more retail shops does the State government think Newcastle CBD's small economy (built on a tiny peninsula) maintain without the rail to deliver customers from wider afield?”

“Why will Newcastle City Council’s current General Manager not allow this matter to be discussed in council proceedings; insisting it is a State government matter, but, is that really the truth?”

“Why has Landcom (renowned for budget-driven suburban developments) changed its name to Urban Growth just prior to proposing this apparently up-market urban development right in the heart of town?”

“Why are we being told that ‘light rail’ is going to replace the train line when what is being proposed is quite obviously a tram?”

“Isn’t it a clear conflict of interest that the state government office that is putting forward this development is in the same department as the panel who will vote to approve it?”

“Why are so many people mentioned in ICAC proceedings in relation to Newcastle, the few vocal proponents of cutting the rail service?” Why would we think that there motives are anything but self interest?

“How are residents concerns to be addressed if Pru Goward, Minister for Planning, continues to refuse to respond to correspondence from concerned residents?”

“If approved, where will this ‘insider development deal’ leave long time local developers such as Keith Stronach (a family company involved for many decades of development). Local firms have already invested so much into Newcastle over the years (while abiding by existing Development Control Plans)? Surely this will mean that more high rise will later be approved.”

“Why do Newcastle’s councillors, meant to be representing us, no longer answer their phones?”

“Why has Mike Baird’s pushed his two most senior women cabinet ministers forward to implement these odious plans which will obviously have legal implications and most likely cost them their political careers?”

Newcastle deserves answers to these questions before any major development moves ahead in our city.

We are calling on the Inquiry to . . . **Stop insider development in Newcastle. And halt all major State development approvals and sale of State land until ICAC is concluded and the next state election is held!**

Regards

Marilyn Eade