

**Submission
No 195**

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

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The Director
Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region
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I suggest to the Committee and to the Government that the intended truncation of the Newcastle rail line from Boxing Day 2014 is at best entirely premature. The logic of the truncation has always been that a light rail service running at high frequencies would provide a better service than the last segment of the rail line into Newcastle.

Using that logic, it might be expected that the truncation of the line would occur on the same day as the commencement of the light rail service. But there will be no light rail service on Boxing Day 2014. Not one millimetre of track has yet been laid.

The wisdom of truncating the line at all can be, and no doubt will be, questioned. I think it could be argued that direct rail access to the centre of Newcastle, at least as far as Civic, is an enormous competitive advantage. I have travelled by train to exhibitions at Newcastle Museum and Gallery (near Civic) twice in the last 18 months, stayed in Newcastle for a couple of nights and loved it.

Having recently ridden on the Gold Coast Light Rail, I can also appreciate the potential for light rail to provide a fast and high quality service for Newcastle – provided it operates at high frequencies.

Whatever the answer to that question, there is no sensible argument for truncating the line unless and until light rail services are in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Julianna Walton

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