

**Submission  
No 13**

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

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The heavy rail line into Newcastle needs to be retained for the following reasons:

1. Direct access without the need to change mode of transport to the East end where a large number of retirees have bought into units and are still buying.
2. Existing and functioning infrastructure should not be removed for vague and hazy development reasons, only favouring the development lobby not the actual users of public transport.
3. Newcastle station is a historical building, which enhances the cityscape and appeals to visitors, is easily accessible by wheelchair users and people with mobility impediments.
4. Opening more roads to the foreshore will increase the already existing traffic congestion along foreshore roads. N.B.: Governments in European and Asian cities with vision and foresight reduce car traffic in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.
5. University and legal precinct needs speedy and direct access which can be provided by trains. Instead of ripping up the existing rail a light rail could complement heavy rail on the existing tracks to improve frequency on the line between Newcastle and various suburbs.
6. Light rail should be build in addition to heavy rail connecting fast growing suburbs, the university campus and Maitland with Newcastle CBD.
7. Congestion along Stewart Avenue could be addressed by constructing an over- or underpass. This solution would surely work out less expensive than the truncation plans.
8. We need to learn from mistakes in the past: Rail and tram lines were cut only to be reinstated. Sydney's desperate struggle to rebuild a tram system is a costly example of wrong and selfish decisions made by the motor lobby. Obviously, it takes a bit longer to filter through in Australia that the present motor traffic is not sustainable, that we have to look at alternative modes of transport.
9. A city with a large number of people on public transport, walking or cycling is more liveable and safer than a motor car dominated city. A huge reduction in street crime would be achieved by getting people out of their cars. In order to achieve this, and I repeat myself here, we need a well-functioning, frequent, clean and safe public transport connecting suburbs and park-and-ride stations. We don't need more road connections in Newcastle, more parking and excessive high rises. We need a city with socially connected people, living in buildings on a human scale with attractive transport options. Profit-driven developers and organisations are not interested in improving the social cohesion of a city, and, unfortunately, a number of our local politicians have neglected their duties of care and sided with the development lobby to the detriment of the rest of the population.