

**Submission
No 339**

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

Name: Kim Farnham

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To the Rev Fred Nile and the Newcastle Planning Committee

I apologise that I have just missed the closing date for submissions regarding the planning inquiry into Newcastle and in particular the Rail line to Newcastle.

I just went on the website and realised that it closed on Friday afternoon.

I have messaged Fred Nile on his Facebook page regarding issues of concern in Newcastle

I have lived in Newcastle my whole life....52 years but travelled widely. Newcastle is one of the best cities in the world in which to live. We are blessed to live here but we need to look after the treasure we have here in NSW.

I am disappointed at the neglect of Newcastle and our infrastructure over the past decades. There are so many derelict buildings in Newcastle city now...it is tragic!!!!

We have an amazing heritage....we are a convict town and as an Historian (with a degree in History from the University of Newcastle)who teaches History at a private school in the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie area, I am deeply saddened to see how Newcastle historic buildings have been neglected. Take our beautiful Post Office Building as an example. A beautiful, historic building in the main street of Newcastle and it is now deserted and being allowed to fall into disrepair. WE SHOULD BE ASHAMED!!! It is a disgrace!!!! That building should be lovingly restored by the NSW Government and maybe Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Chamber of Commerce should be involved also. This building needs to be saved and put into good use. If I could afford to purchase it I would do so and restore it to its full glory and turn it into a significant landmark in Newcastle.

Fortunately, the historic bank building nearby has been renovated and turned into an elegant French wine bar/restaurant. It is sad that it cannot be used as a bank anymore by one of the large banking companies but at last it has been saved and restored with its history and character mostly intact. Recently, I was visiting Hobart with my 21 year old daughter and she was impressed by her first visit to Hobart to see the beautiful buildings and how the heritage of the city has been retained and restored. We need to look at Hobart as an excellent example of what can be done in Newcastle. We have allowed too many of our heritage buildings to be destroyed.

I taught for 17 years at Belmont Christian College which is built on the old John Darling Colliery Site and we had to work closely with the Heritage Committee to restore the buildings from the original mine and ensure that all new buildings were in character with the original buildings. The old Bathhouse was restored and turned into an excellent Primary School block with wonderful large classrooms.

My final point is about the railway line to Newcastle. This is very important and the Liberal Government MUST NOT be allowed to destroy this!!!!

This would be a major mistake that some other cities have made and regretted.

We need to keep the infrastructure that we have and not tear up the train line because big developers are greedy and want to make more money by building more huge ugly buildings in Newcastle like the awful glass/mirror buildings at Honeysuckle.

It is easy and convenient to catch the train straight into town to access the beach, parks, shops, Queens Wharf, Fort Scratchley, The Cathedral, etc.

Students and elderly people would find it much more difficult and more expensive to have to change to light rail or buses or some other form of transport. Cutting the railway line at Wickham or elsewhere will not be good for the city which is already "dying". We need to make it easy for people to travel to Newcastle not harder to get into town. We need to restore buildings and add character and draw people into Newcastle City.

Paid parking is a major obstacle (It's almost as bad as Sydney now) that detracts families and young people from coming into town. Having to pay on 7 days including Public Holidays is a bit harsh.

Newcastle people have not been used to this and we don't have to pay for parking in Lake Macquarie so it is cheaper and easier to park at the Lake or Charlestown or Warners Bay instead of going into town.

I often use the trains to take my students on excursions to Newcastle.

Just last week I took 60 students and 3 staff on the train (the Fassifern Railway Station is right next door to our school) and we were able to go right into Newcastle Railway Station and walk a short distance to Fort Scratchley and Nobbys Beach for a Yr 9 History Excursion/Site Study. It was cost effective (cheaper than us hiring a coach or driving our school buses in to town and having to pay to park) and convenient.

Getting 60 students on and off transport is much easier when you don't have to change to an alternative form of transport like light rail. We may not all be able to fit and would have to split up. That is the advantage of trains with large railway carriages. It is a convenient way to carry large numbers of people.

Please consider all these points.

Many people in Newcastle are opposed to cutting the train line!!!!!! My own mother is 78 and has always voted Liberal in Newcastle but on Saturday she voted Labour first and Christian Democratic Party second as she was so upset with the Liberal Government about cutting the train line. Liberal lost her faithful vote of 60 years because of their plans to destroy the train line to Newcastle City!!!! Please bring this to the attention of Mike Baird and Fred Nile as well as the Newcastle planning committee.

Thank you for hearing my submission/comments.

Regards

Kim Farnham