

**Submission
No 360**

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

Name: Mr Neil Jensen

Date received: 5/11/2014

Dear Rev Fred Nile,

I wish to make some comments in relation to Newcastle and in particular about the proposed truncation of the rail line.

Comments appearing below have already been addressed to both the Premier and the Minister for Transport and the Hunter.

The song sheet response is bloody-minded and typical,- they are going, arrogantly, to press on with the government's plans.

They won't listen, - most people do NOT want the rail cut and certainly not on Boxing day before any replacement services are organised for the holiday period.

One only has to read letters in the Newcastle Herald to gauge public opinion.

Over recent weeks there have been dozens of letters about the rail being cut, mostly negative.

There are a number of reasons the rail should not be cut and I have no intention to list them in total.

The more salient ones are these:

1: It is an unashamed waste of public money to rip up existing infrastructure only to replace it a few metres further in.

The obvious reason for that decision is a dirty land grab for the existing rail corridor to make money from development.

2: The new University campus will draw some 5000 people into the city and parking will be provided for 5 vehicles. 5!

How will these individuals travel? The present station at Civic would be ideally placed.

Civic station is also right next to the museum and cutting the rail is simply ludicrous.

3: In addition to the University, the new law courts, with only 25 proposed parking spots, will further exacerbate the current difficulties finding parking places.

4: The Minister has not announced any firm plans for replacement transport once the line is cut and having to change modes will inconvenience those with disabilities, especially those in wheelchairs and regular train users from Maitland and the upper Hunter Valley.

5: Tourism will be affected. No other city on the planet is ripping up their rail lines and the very idea makes no sense whatever.

6: The former member for Newcastle pushed the cause for rail removal and he has now been seen as a fool and someone who clearly did not have the best interests of this city at heart. What was his agenda?

What is the rush now to begin work at a busy time with coming festivities on the foreshore?

How long will we wait for light rail?

That should be done first!!!!

This Minister for Transport cannot properly oversee the Opal card introduction, let alone light rail and is perceived as ineffective.

We cannot trust her to get this right and once the cut is made, it won't be coming back.

The port of Newcastle was leased for 1.7 billion dollars and we in Newcastle get a paltry amount in the sum of 360 million, with probably 1.4 billion going into state coffers for Sydney.

The money we do get should not be used to rip up perfectly good infrastructure simply because they can. It's high time planning for Newcastle was done by those with an affinity for the city knowing what locals would like and need, not by people in Sydney who seem out of touch and who wouldn't have a clue.

Best wishes to you,
Neil Jensen.