

**Submission  
No 146**

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

**Name:** Mr Keith Craig and Mrs Louise Craig

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The Director

Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region

Parliament House

Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW, 2000

Re: Inquiry Submission

We are concerned with the Planning Process in Newcastle in a number of matters and feel the planning process has involved fraud, inadequate reviews, poor technical oversight and frequently driven by economic benefits especially for the Government over detrimental environmental effects and drastic effects on communities in the Hunter.

### ***Rail Line***

The cutting off the rail line on the 26 December should not happen and appears to be a cynical political move. While many cities are increasing public transport in the heart of cities cutting the rail line needs to be done very carefully and with minimum disruption and replaced with an effective system.

The proposed light rail should be fully designed costed and procurement of the light rail engines and carriages and equipment should start before the existing rail line is cut. As well the connection between the rail line and the light rail needs to be extremely effective and efficient and should not be located in a big shed as concept drawings have shown.

The light rail should also be located on the existing rail corridor which should be kept green and clear of any buildings. Bringing the light rail onto Newcastle streets will create traffic problems when there is already an existing corridor to use. There is a major concern in cutting of the rail on the 26 December which will lead to buses causing traffic issues and increasing travel times for many years with a good chance the Government will not even proceed with the light rail.

Another option is to retain the heavy rail and transport to the Newcastle CBD.

### ***Proposed High Rise Buildings in Newcastle CBD***

The proposed construction of high rise buildings in Newcastle is a disgrace and is driven by greed and maximum profit. The Newcastle CBD is an iconic area with historic buildings, a cathedral on the hill overlooking the city any high rise would destroy the whole iconic nature of the city as many respected architects have outlined.

After having visited many historic cities in Europe over several weeks recently it is evident how important it is to keep the central historic area. Most of these European historic cities have high rise or modern buildings built on the outskirts of the city that leave the historic city centres intact and beautiful. It is critical for Newcastle that these high rise buildings are prevented for being built in the Newcastle CBD and should be located in Newcastle West away from the iconic centre of Newcastle.

### ***Major Hazard Facilities***

Following the Kooragang Island's Orica ammonium nitrate plant on pollution events, particularly the carcinogenic hexavalent chromium leak on Stockton the local politicians and the planning and other Government Department told the local community putting a Major Hazard Facility (MHF) close to communities such as the Orica plant would never happen again.

Two months later a proposal to build another ammonium nitrate plant adjacent to the existing Orica plant and less than 800 m from the Stockton community was issue by the Department of Planning to a gob smacked local community.

This would result in the storage of up to 20,000 tonnes of potentially explosive ammonium nitrate used for explosives in the mining industry. It has proceeded to a PAC meeting on 29 October. How the Government can allow such a dangerous facility to be considered only 800 m from residential area is unbelievable and is an unacceptable risk to the community. A similar plant in France had an explosion of just 300 tonnes of ammonium nitrate killing 31 people and injuring over 2,000 people.

This proposal has to be stopped and the risk of death and injury to the local community put well ahead of profits and finances for Government.

Keith and Louise Craig