

**Supplementary
Submission
No 28a**

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

Name: Mr Ian Thomas

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Submission to the Standing Committee Inquiring into Newcastle Planning Processes.

(a) SEPP amendment (Newcastle City Centre) 2014

(d) East End Development

The NSW Government's decision to allow spot rezoning of specific areas of the Newcastle CBD, overturning the previous lower rise LEP and allowing high rise construction in these areas, is in my opinion the wrong decision for the following reasons:

- The fundamental heritage character of the city centre will be permanently diminished.
- Christ Church Cathedral's iconic pre-eminence on our city's skyline will be endangered.
- Traffic congestion and parking issues will be exacerbated.
- The city streets south of the development will be shadowed, cold and subject to wind tunnelling.
- The enormous cost of the grouting necessary for this high-rise development; will this be another financial burden for the taxpayers of NSW?
- Many European cities like Paris have managed to thrive without high-rise dominating their skylines.
- Even the children of Newcastle East Public School have provided a more balanced alternative to the government's high-rise proposal. In an article published in the Newcastle Herald on 26 June they wrote that they believe that the high-rise developments would be more suitable at Wickham where there are less heritage buildings than in the East end of town.
"If high-rise buildings are put in place, they will dwarf the heritage areas and could turn Newcastle into a big mess. Newcastle needs growth, but needs a careful balance between old and new"
- Part of the spectacular view of the northern sky would be lost from a substantial section of the city if this development proceeds.
- A pole in the Newcastle Herald showed nearly 60% of respondents believed that Newcastle has enough apartments.
- Allowing such a high building return ratio (>4) as a result of the great height of these buildings could also jeopardise developments in other areas of our city that do not enjoy the 'advantage' of government sponsored spot rezoning.

In my opinion, there appears to be a clear conflict of interest - an arm of the NSW government (Urban Growth - Landcom) in partnership with the main developer of the site (GPT). The approver and developer working together as the one entity.

In 2011, the then O'Farrell opposition won the State election pledging open and transparent government - in essence a 'new' beginning.

Have the residents of Newcastle seen evidence of this open, transparent and inclusive government, in this instance I think not.

I believe these planning decisions indicate that the processes involved in approving the changes to the development control plan height limits, have at the very best been rushed through to meet some form of political agenda (March Election?) or at worst being unduly influenced by developers with the financial return to the GPT and Urban Growth groups as the main priority.

Either of which would undoubtedly be detrimental to the residents of Newcastle and in fact the entire Hunter community.