

**Supplementary
Submission
No 39a**

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

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Date received: 11/10/2014

Taken from the Hunter Region Transport Plan March 2014

The vast majority (91 percent) of journeys to work are made by car (your own data which indicates 11 & 13% on page 69 contradicts this figure. So is it 91, 89 or 87%?), either as a driver or passenger. This proportion is consistent with other NSW regions, but there is a significantly greater reliance on car travel than for the Sydney region (Probably because they have a better rail system than us), particularly for Newcastle as the region's major regional city. In NSW 2021, the NSW Government has set a target to increase the share of commuter trips made by public transport to and from the Newcastle CBD to 20 percent by 2016 (rather ambitious considering that you are removing a viable system & replacing it with an inferior one) Need for research and pilot projects (A good place to start would be to run a 2 or 3 week trial of terminating the trains at Wickham. Undoubtedly you will not do this as it could prove that you are going down the wrong path.) to determine the best ways to transition people from cars to public transport and to community transport to reduce car dependency • The introduction of NSW TrainLink which operates services to the Hunter and for the first time provides a dedicated organisation focused on improving services for our rail customers in regional NSW (Except for Newcastle).

- We will work with Newcastle City Council on a transport strategy for the CBD that will assist in meeting the NSW 2021 target of increasing commuter trips by public transport to 20 percent by 2016 (That figure is pie in the sky if they are forced to change transport modes).

- We will work with community groups (Does this include pro heavy rail groups?), regional transport coordinators, local councils and local bus operators to continue to enhance the public transport system (This project does nothing to enhance the system). To increase the proportion of commuter trips on public transport to Newcastle centre, we will progressively implement Strategic Bus Corridors to provide high quality bus services (What is a high quality bus service?) that reflect demand and land use change. The Strategic Bus Corridors will be modelled on the successful implementation of these services within Sydney (what happens if they are not successful in Sydney. Newcastle is not Sydney). The NSW Government is committed to putting the customer first by delivering a transport system that: • Provides integrated timetables and more frequent and reliable public transport services to match customer needs • Reduces travel times for all travellers (Please explain how travel times to the CBD will be reduced).

Action: Improve public transport interchanges

Interchanges are an important part of the public transport network. We will ensure that major transport interchange points across NSW are assessed and benchmarked against interchange standards (the artist's impression of the interchange "SHED" at Wickham was benchmarked with WHAT???). We will develop a program of interchange improvements works to ensure that our interchanges meet customer needs. We will make interchanging between public transport services easier by taking a customer-centred view (The view of the customer at present, is that we don't want to interchange).

We will work to integrate public transport services by:

- Ensuring major interchanges are clean, well lit, with comfortable seating, and shelter for passengers (Will this include air-conditioned waiting rooms)
- Ensuring that services are available at interchanges (Such as???)
- Coordinating timetables to make interchange seamless between all modes, including buses, trains and ferries (where applicable)

We will develop regional transport infrastructure programs to identify long-term corridor needs, and protect these corridors through the planning system in collaboration with local government.

Central to the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy is the decision to remove the heavy rail line between Wickham and Newcastle, reconnecting (It is not disconnected except by the likes of Crown Plaza & other grotesque buildings in that area) the city to its foreshore. Removing the train line will reconnect (It was never disconnected) the city to one of its greatest assets, improve public space and amenity, stimulate private development activity in the city centre, and make it easier to move around the CBD (How will this make it easier to move around?). Light rail in Newcastle will support the city's renewal – improving connections between the city centre and the waterfront with up to 11 new road and pedestrian crossings to the foreshore, increasing public transport choice and connecting people to Newcastle's pristine beaches (How does removing the rail line give a better connection to the beaches?). Light rail stops will provide access to key city centre destinations including the Honeysuckle and Civic precincts, Queens Wharf, Hunter Street Mall and Newcastle Beach (Oh when will this happen? At this stage the only plan is for buses). We are working with the community to discuss (is this open & honest discussion? Because that hasn't happened yet) the challenges and opportunities presented by each option (the option to keep the rail as it is apparently is no in your list of options. Why not?), to ensure that we deliver the best light

rail solution (Why the best light rail solution? Why not the best solution period. Not just light rail) for Newcastle. As we plan for the first stage of light rail for Newcastle, we are at the same time investigating how the light rail could be extended in the future (More detail please). Planning work will consider how to better connect with key destinations and activity centres, such as Hunter Stadium; the University of Newcastle at Callaghan; Charlestown Square; John Hunter Hospital; Mater Hospital and Newcastle Airport.

Action: Improve road capacity

We will continue our investment in the Newcastle road network to address capacity constraints that impact on travel time reliability (try a 3 week trial of terminating the trains at Wickham to find out) and public transport operations. We will consider how light rail will best be integrated with the road network in the Newcastle city centre and beyond. We will support Newcastle City Council to implement a suite of local initiatives supporting a functional and efficient transport including: • Promoting a shift to public transport in the city centre • Creating a connected pedestrian and cycling network • Providing dedicated bicycle lanes in Hunter Street.

The region's population is ageing. The proportion of children under 15 years has fallen from 21 percent to 19 percent between 2001 and 2011, while the proportion of people aged 65 years and over has increased from 15 percent to 17 percent in the same period. This has an impact on the types of transport services that need to be provided in the region, with an ageing population needing to access health and aged care services in regional centres. (By your own admissions, you acknowledge that the population is getting older. Do you really expect us to walk or ride bikes???)

Taking action

Consistent with the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan, Transport for NSW will focus on delivering the Hunter Regional Transport Plan. This focus on delivering the planning will include: • Providing an annual update of the Regional Transport Plan, including detailed reports on the progress of implementing the initiatives contained in this plan (Unfortunately politicians are not renowned for telling the truth! Can we believe this statement?) • Reviewing the Regional Transport Plan every five years. How can you ensure this when you may not still be in power • A commitment to ensure decisions are founded on a solid evidence base. That hasn't happened to date. This decision defies all logic & no solid evidence base has been provided..

WE LISTENED

Our commitment to customers involves listening to people in the Hunter region. The feedback we have includes the extensive consultation that informed the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and direct customer feedback through the Household Travel Survey (I did not get copy of survey. 1200 replies does not constitute the needs of the many. Remember that there were over 11000 names on the petition to save the rail) for the Lower Hunter and a pilot of the Regional Household Travel Survey in the Lower Hunter.

Road congestion on the lower New England Highway between Newcastle and Maitland and greater reliability for freight and passenger travel on the New England Highway. (This will only get worse once the line is cut as commuters will be forced into their cars rather than change to a bus or tram. They would rather spend an extra 20 minutes in the comfort of their own car than change transport modes.)