

**Submission  
No 70**

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

**Name:** Mr Charlie Bell and Mrs Penelope Bell

**Date received:** 16/10/2014

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Re: Termination of Rail to Newcastle and proposed increased building heights

Dear Reverend Nile,

We are writing to express our extreme concern over the governments's plan to truncate our rail line into Newcastle city on Christmas Day 2014.

The people of the Hunter have never given permission or expressed support for this plan in meaningful numbers. The opposite is actually true. The Newcastle Herald poll in August 2014 found over 72% of readers supported retention of the rail line. There are many in the Maitland area like us who were never consulted and yet we depend heavily on this service.

Over the past decade Hunter communities have reinforced the view that the heavy rail line into Newcastle city from all our regions should be maintained for many reasons. These include:

Considerable numbers of weekday commuters from maitland area travel to Newcastle city to work and school such as our daughter to Newcastle Grammar School.

The rail service provides an environmentally responsible form of transport which is faster than road, particularly at peak times, and eliminates parking costs.

The extension of the U.O.N campus in the city is without parking provision. Many students do not own cars and depend on public transport especially from Maitland area communities.

Revitalisation of the city centre of Newcastle is attracting many people to the centre which puts increasing pressure on available parking.

Historic value- The Newcastle rail line is one of the oldest in the country.

Cycling enthusiasts such as ourselves appreciate being able to transport bicycles on the train for part of the journey in from Maitland.

Direct, fast Accessibility of Newcastle city for weekend recreation to beaches, cafe's, shops, museum and art galleries by rail is particularly important for young people and those who cannot afford alternative transport.

In addition to our concern regarding the rail line, we also believe that no increase in building heights should be allowed in the Newcastle CBD. Newcastle has a unique character and skyline due the the absence of tower block developments. This character makes is unique among large cities in Australia and contributes a great deal the the appeal of the city. It would be very shortsighted to compromise the unique character in the short term interests of development without due consideration of the potential for Newcastle to capitalise on it's unique character as low rise harbour city.

Regards

Penelope and Charlie Bell