

**Submission  
No 311**

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

**Name:** Dr Kristen Rundle

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Reverend the Hon Fred Nile MLC

Chair

Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle and the Broader Hunter Region, NSW Legislative Council

Via email: [newcastleplanning@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newcastleplanning@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir,

I write to support the people of Newcastle in their efforts to bring their concerns about the recent history of planning decisions to the attention of your Committee. I understand that your Committee is motivated to inquire into these issues in light of recent revelations emerging from the ICAC investigation into illegal developer donations to political representatives.

In specific support of the Friends of King Edward Park, an organisation of which I have been a member for the past year, I urge you to direct close attention to the spot-rezoning of the King Edward Headland Reserve, the details of which are outlined in the main submission to your Committee prepared by that organisation. As I trust has been detailed in that submission, and by others who support the efforts of the Friends of King Edward Park to expose multiple problems of politics, law, and public consultation that have plagued the recent governmental management of the Headland, the apparent process by which its rezoning to enable use by a private developer was effected fails, in numerous respects, to

meet even the basic requirements of transparency, accountability and public consultation. As residents of NSW, we expect more than this from our public officials. The continuing opacity of this process would to any objective observer appear not only to raise serious questions about the commitment of the relevant public officials to the integrity of the specified public processes, but also, still more worryingly, about developer involvement in the political decision making processes.

I write this letter above all in my capacity as a member of the Friends of King Edward Park, and do so as a reflection of my commitment to their efforts to expose and remedy the instances of apparent illegality and democratic deficiencies that have defined this particular episode. But I also write as a legal academic who teaches administrative law, and so who is especially positioned to understand the importance of compliance with the rule of law in the exercise of executive power, at all levels. Upholding the value of the rule of law, and the need to protect this essential value from violation through political arrogance, favouritism, or, as might well prove to be the case, corrupt dealings, is central to the mission that has been pursued by the Friends of King Edward Park in their effort to conserve the Headland for its intended public purposes.

I support this cause unreservedly, and urge you and your Committee to use all measures at your disposal to shed light on the processes that led to the unexplained rezoning of the

Headland for private use, following a history of public custodianship.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Kristen Rundle