

**Submission
No 107**

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

Name: Dr Steve Mohr

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I am writing this submission as a concerned resident of Newcastle.

Numerous local politicians in Newcastle have been found by ICAC to be acting corruptly by obtaining donations from the "walking ATM" developer Jeff McCloy. (Jeff McCloy's own words speaking at ICAC 14th August)

One of the main themes of this corruption has been a strong push to truncate the rail line at Wickham, destroying Newcastle and Civic stations and selling some or all of the land to developers (Pru Goward June 2nd speaking on ABC 1233). There is considerable concern in Newcastle that Jeff McCloy will be allowed to purchase the rail land considerable below market prices as a result of his bribery.

The current decision by the liberal government is to remove services on Boxing day, with no plans announced for when (if ever) light rail will be built.

This decision has numerous flaws including:

- 1) Timing: Why is there a rush to destroy the rail line so close to an election? Particularly given that:
 - a. Plans for the light rail do not exist
 - b. Newcastle will be hosting Asia cup games in January. Newcastle the only city ever to deliberately create public transport reductions immediately prior to a major sporting event!
 - c. With Jody McKay slaughtered politically by both Labor and Liberals acting corruptly, surely it is only fair for the people of Newcastle to be allowed to vote democratically on the issue at the next state election in March.

- 2) Demand: Demand for public transport to Newcastle and Civic is set to rapidly increase as more infrastructures are built at Newcastle/Civic. Specifically, the University of Newcastle is proposing to build a new centre for an extra 4,000 staff and students, and the new law precinct both located near Civic station. These new infrastructures come with virtually no car spaces; hence there will shortly be a strong increase in demand for public transport to Civic and Newcastle.

- 3) Financial: Why in a time of an economic downturn (or at very least softening) would anyone invest substantial amounts of money to destroy one form of public transport and supposedly eventually replace it with an inferior system that forces people to interchange? Surely it makes more sense to spend the money on giving additional public transport, such as building a long overdue train station at Glendale?
Services: The current rail line has appalling frequencies (1 train every two hours on inner city stations such as Adamstown). The politicians are killing services until they are not a viable option and then claiming the people of the Hunter do not use it. This has continued with the current government, for instance claiming that the Western Maitland area is a growth area and will get its share of the port sale (Gladys Berejiklian 29th April when visiting the Hunter), however reality is that services were reduced by almost 50% to Telarah (a station in Western Maitland) when the new train timetable came out. How can any person in NSW trust a government shown to be corrupt and actively saying one thing while doing the opposite?

How is it possible for a steam train running in the 1930's with a 15 minute delay in Gosford to refill water, is faster than current electric train services between Newcastle and Sydney?

I am demanding that this dubious decision be overturned.

Kind Regards

Dr Steve Mohr