

**Submission
No 229**

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

Name: Mrs Josephine New

Date received: 24/10/2014

Dear Committee,

Re: decision to terminate the Newcastle rail line at Wickham.

I believe the rail line should be maintained into Newcastle City. I do not think the proposed plan considers the environment or the community. It was not very well publicised, and there was very little opportunity to make comment or discuss this proposal.

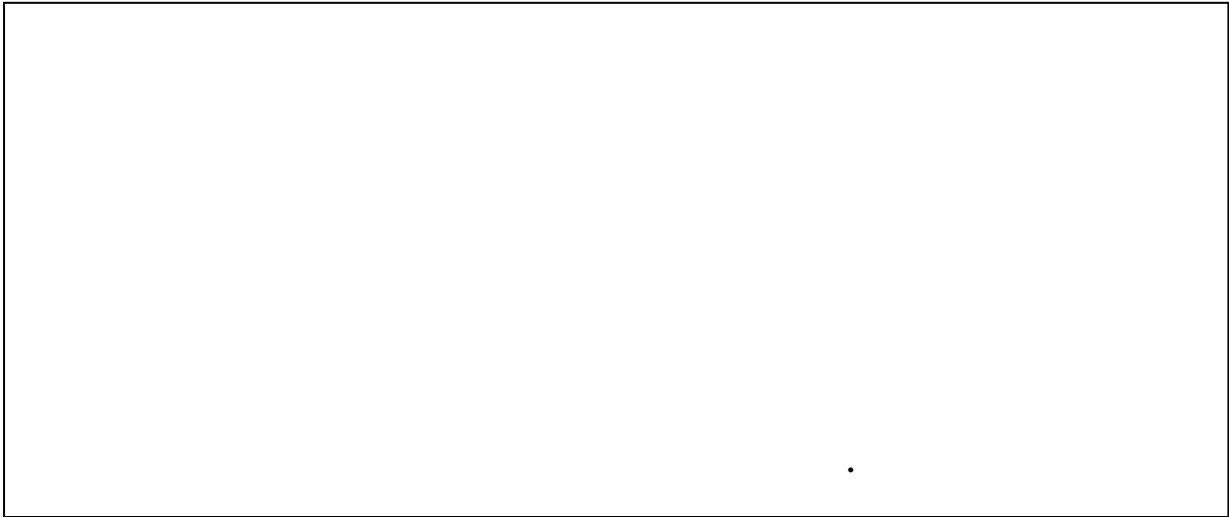
We live in Monkerai, a locality near Dungog, NSW. I am employed for two days per week at the University of Newcastle. While I go to work, my twin 3 year old children are looked after by their grandmother, who lives in Newcastle (the Hill). This arrangement is possible because of the train. We catch the 6.47am train from Dungog into Newcastle city where my mother meets us. I then jump on the next train back out to Warrabrook (University), and make it to work by 9am. I have tried doing this second bit by bus but never make it on time.

Can you imagine catching the train from Dungog, only to have to get off, with 2 toddlers and associated equipment, at Broadmeadow, then wait for a bus, catch a bus through peak hour traffic, get to Newcastle, then turn around and then probably not bother with the train on the return trip due to the inconvenience of changing modes of transport, so back onto a bus at peak hour all the way to the university. I would not be able to make it on time to work. I would probably have to drive.

This would be a shame as we catch the train because

the train is:

- **an important opportunity for me to spend an hour engaging with my children on the train rather than having to virtually ignore them while driving**
- **cheaper than driving**
- **a great societal and community outcome - my young daughters frequently get into conversations on the train with other members of the community they might never have a chance to meet**
- **a better environmental outcome than driving**
- **much more pleasant than driving**
- **faster than driving**



Despite my frequent use of the train, I never saw a poster or leaflet or was advised in any way about this rail proposal. I only found out about this inquiry through an email from a community group.

I thought such a massive infrastructure loss would require more significant community consultation.

I have taken the time to write to you, but I know many people who feel as I do who will not have the time to make a submission. On behalf of them, and all the passengers who currently use the rail from anywhere on the line from Sydney directly to Newcastle, or from the Dungog line directly to Newcastle, or from the Scone line directly to Newcastle, I hope that you consider this case with us in mind.

Thank you for your time.

Josephine New