

Submission
No 32

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

Organisation: Campbelltown & Districts Commuter Association
Date received: 8/10/2014

Submission - Inquiry on the planning process in Newcastle and the broader Hunter region

William Craig

For the Campbelltown and Districts Commuter Association

Dear Committee Members,

It pains me to see further deterioration in the quality of our rail system in this State. Newcastle is the only city in the world removing a rail system into the CBD when many cities around the world would dearly love to have what Newcastle already has. They are spending enormous amounts of money to re-install in many cases what was once removed.

Here in Sydney, various rail lines have been closed down in yesteryear and are greatly needed because cars and the road system promised to solve all our transport problems. Instead it has bought death, trauma, pollution, isolation, land consumption, congestion and on occasions, gridlock. This road system has expensive maintenance costs, soon all vehicles will be imported, shortly all road fuel will be value added and imported, both greatly affecting our trade balance.

A good example is the line to Camden which was removed in 1963. Roads are being amplified at great cost in the area and will only be capable of carrying present traffic levels let alone the needs for future growth of the many new suburbs. A road lane has a maximum throughput of 3,600 cars at the speed of 60kph and reducing each side of this speed. A 15 minute 8-car train service on a single line to Camden has the capacity of 3 road lanes. Two rail lines have a maximum capacity of 80,000 passengers per hour.

Another solution would be to underground around 1.5 kilometres of the Newcastle Line.

- This would be around the same cost as the proposed terminal and light rail on congested Hunter Street and completing the unfinished road CBD bypass.
- A cut-and-fill trench for 1.5 kilometres or a construction similar to The Sydney Airport Line would be practical.
- A future high speed line could have access along this path and continue east and then north under the Hunter River giving Newcastle direct access to Brisbane and Sydney as well as other major centres as does the French TGV in regional areas.
- Road traffic would not need bridges or level crossings in the precinct.
- Pedestrian access to the foreshore would be unimpeded.
- High rise construction could be made over the rail corridor.
- Space above the rail corridor could be leased as a means of recovering a major portion of total costs – if not all.

If light rail was installed,

- At festival time, how long would it take to move 1,000 people on a train from Sydney at Wickham? Probably around 5 round trips or if buses are used, 16 of these would be required for each train load. If another train arrives 30 minutes later – I'm sure you could imagine all that.
- This is a great unthought out inconvenience to the travelling public to even think of installing light rail in this situation. It is another spanner in the works of public transport to make it inconvenient and time consuming!

- Probably, in the future, the CBD would move to Wickham.
- Road congestion would be unbelievable in Hunter Street at peak time.
- Extensive delays for services relocation and finally construction would aggravate drivers for this period and beyond.
- Commuters transferring at Wickham as well as the waiting time for the tram and the slow trip up Hunter Street with traffic could be a travel extension of 30 minutes – each way.
- Parking spaces in the CBD would need to be greatly expanded.

It is obvious that lessons from the past have not even been considered. What will happen in 50 years time when fuel is only able to be afforded by the rich? The rail line will be needed again. There will obviously be no hope of getting it back. Camden hasn't got a hope of getting its rail line back either – even though it is greatly needed and would solve most traffic problems!

I hope this enquiry will see reason and practicality into the future for the people of Greater Newcastle.

Yours sincerely upset
Bill Craig