

**Submission
No 20**

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

Name: Mr Earl Morris OAM

Date received: 5/10/2014

5th October, 2014

Dear Sir/ Madam

The present service of heavy rail to Newcastle Station should be retained. **It makes no sense to remove it.** Retention of the service is most vital if the CBD is to be revitalised.

From a transport perspective there has been no logical argument put forward for the removal of this asset.

Sadly, developers, including a recent mayor of the city, have placed undue pressure and attempted to influence others to release the rail corridor for “some development”, naming Hunter Street as the desired location for light rail.

One could make a case for the slowing of the trains for the last few minutes of travel, from Civic Station to Newcastle Station, and providing more crossings at street level. (As a railway engineer suggested have the train act as a tram for this section of the line).

Melbourne has trams travelling from the suburbs to the CBD and this is very satisfactory for people in outlying suburbs. A proposal to terminate a heavy rail service (at Wickham) and provide an “add-on” for the last few minutes of the journey is pointless. **The “light rail” proposed, in contrast to the Melbourne trams, would provide no worthwhile transport for residents of the city.** For residents of outlying areas, presently served by heavy rail, it would merely be a costly, very poor substitute.

Withdrawal of a direct, no change, rail service to Newcastle Station would result in residents from the west and south, who previously could have used the train, travelling by car. Surely Newcastle presently has enough traffic and parking problems. Removing an effective means of public transport would be counter-productive.

When special events are held at the east end of the city – e.g. Surfest - a light rail service would be incapable of meeting transport needs. Similarly, as the population of the inner city increases by the creation of high rise apartment blocks (such as the planned university building) it will be essential to provide the capacity to transport, efficiently, large numbers of people.

Heavy rail has this capacity **and it is already there** .

The availability of millions of dollars for the city is wonderful. These millions should be spent on worthwhile projects.

A major project that would be of great value to Newcastle and surrounding areas in the long term would be a rail line from Newcastle Airport to the city.

Earl Morris OAM -