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**To:** "urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au" <urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 4/18/2013 5:33 pm  
**Subject:** Revitalising Newcastle

Revitalising Newcastle needs to be done in the context of retaining the existing rail line to the central Newcastle station thereby providing convenient off street transport to the central hubs of Civic and Hunter Street.

Removing the rail line and replacing it with last century's solution -- ie buses, clogging a narrow peninsula will not provide ease or convenience of people movement. Nor will it encourage growth and renewal. There has never been the case made for demolishing vital infrastructure in order to revitalise Newcastle. It is simply a ridiculous proposition. Other cities in the world including Sydney are increasing central rail access in the inner city as a means of revitalisation. Yet the government wants to remove central rail access from Newcastle!

The mythical "opening up" of the City to the harbour is a furphy. In no way did the train line ever hinder Newcastle's development in the past. Past government decisions to allow the movement of key services to, and development of, Honeysuckle and the creation of large suburban shopping malls has changed the nature of Hunter Street. The Hunter Street precinct is however revitalising itself with the increased activity of specialised merchants, coffee shops, restaurants and bars and apartment residences. Moreover, the harbour has been cut off from the city by buildings not the rail line.

Civic is being revitalised by the new Court (which has no parking) and the new Newcastle University central campus which is predicted to bring thousands of students into the city (again with no parking). The existing train line provides a service virtually to the door of these establishments.

The construction of a new station at Wickam is nothing short of a colossal waste of public funds, when all interchange services currently exist. There is simply no need for expenditures of plus \$100 million on replicating existing services especially given the need for the completion of other projects in Newcastle like the Glendale interchange, not to mention funds for the Art Gallery or the old Post Office.

More links could be created over the existing train corridor (similar to those at Stewart St and Merewether St). This is feasible toward the Newcastle station end where level walkways could be created with safety gates/stop signs like at Stewart and Merewether Sts. There are not very many places anyway for linking the city to the harbour because of the silo nature of the building on the foreshore. There have been many other ideas put forward for tunnels, overpasses, replacing the first few carriages with light rail to continue from Wickam to Newcastle etc.

The NSW government needs to employ creative solutions to retaining the rail line as part of the revitalisation and growth of Newcastle without unnecessarily spending scarce public funds. We simply do not need new stations and roads and more buses on Hunter Street and cannot afford it.

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