

urbanrenewal - submission on Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

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Subject: submission on Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

To whom it may concern:

While the concept of urban renewal for Newcastle is a great idea. I have a number of problems with this plan.

Transport

The fact that you didn't even want the community to make a response to the fundamental issue of the cutting of the rail is an absolute insult & obviously something that will be ignored by most people. For this decision to be made without consulting Newcastle, the Hunter & the Central Coast shows a total breakdown in democracy.

The rail line should be kept into the city centre as a key component of getting people back into the city. Public transport needs to be improved not reduced.

Closing rail at Wickham will mean that both Railway St & Beaumont St gates will be permanently closed. How can this possibly be a good thing for the Newcastle community.

I support the City university campus, but it only makes sense if the rail line is kept so there is a direct connection to the Callaghan campus.

The loss of the train line means that Ferry users will now need to catch a ferry, then a bus & then the train, hardly seamless.

The loss of the train will mean that less people will use the Ferry putting pressure on the service. This would be a huge loss for Stockton & Port Stephens residents if the Ferry was closed or less regular services were available.

There will be slower running times on the buses, due to increased boardings from the displaced train & ferry passengers.

Buses will hit capacity & will not pick up passengers meaning passengers will be late for destinations in particular those going to suburban areas that may mean they will wait another hour for next service.

There seems to be no obvious increase in bus services to cater for the increased uses if the rail closes.

Greater emphasis needs to be on pedestrian & cycling.

Climate Change

There is not enough emphasis on planning for potential flooding particularly with predicted sea level rises & freak storms due to climate change

The strategy ignores our changing climate. All new development should conform to the Green

Building Council of Australia 5-star (Australian Excellence) and 6-star (World Leader) ratings.

Infrastructure

The provision of infrastructure should occur in front of demand, acting as a stimulus for development. This infrastructure includes improvements to public transport, cycleways, park-and-ride facilities, public domain improvements, health and education facilities as well as a targeted mine-workings grouting program.

This strategy focuses too much on providing benefits for developers rather than residents.

All Section 94 money should be collected now. The idea to not ask for this money up front is stupid. If they can't afford the section 94 then they can't afford the development.

The strategy has many glossy photos but there is no funding for infrastructure (eg upgrading of public spaces). The State Government should fund the infrastructure needed to revitalise our City by a levy on all goods passing through the port.

Developers pay higher rates for vacant property, this will encourage development.

Encourage more Renew Newcastle.

Social Infrastructure

Our city should be accessible for all and the strategy needs firm requirements for a mix of housing to accommodate students and people on low-incomes.

The future development in the city should deliver human-scale public spaces, not areas surrounded by fat, obese buildings. The State Government should not impose bulky buildings on Newcastle. I suspect that this is the main reason for this glossy plan. To make Newcastle West this oversized area full of (more than likely) empty tall fat buildings that will be completely out of character with the rest of Newcastle

What stands out is that with all the talk about building a sustainable community and increasing residential levels by 6,000 and employment by 11,000 - where are the new public schools? There is currently only one public school in the city zone (Newcastle East PS) which is currently operating at full capacity (210 students). The intake zone from this school is being reduced each year because of more people moving into the city. Local schools support local communities.

There is also no mention about increasing health services in the CBD. The Hunter Street GP Access service was closed due to funding issues. Government subsidised services such as this are vital to maintaining a healthy and vibrant community and should form part of the strategy.

Place-making needs to be community-centred and consultative and the State Government needs to support Newcastle's lively artistic and cultural life.

Heritage

Pacifying the area around heritage buildings will encourage the appreciation of heritage buildings

Appreciate all genres of architecture & their relevance in history or a particular period in culture

The heritage buildings in our city need urgent restoration, especially the State Government owned Post Office. The strategy needs clear guidelines and incentives for restoration of heritage buildings.

Now the loss of the revitalisation of the Art Gallery due mainly to the State Government not putting in their share to fund it is devastating. The irony of getting the University campus into the Civic area of Newcastle but losing the redevelopment of the Art Gallery in that same Civic precinct is absolutely illogical.

Mine Subsidence

This is a difficult problem for the CBD & the State Government needs to take control of the situation by paying for the grouting & then ask the developers to pay their share when they buy/develop the site. This is what will get the CBD moving not cutting the rail.

Funding the changes

Take the \$120M that has been set aside for the stupid idea of cutting the rail & fund the Art Gallery, Post Office, improvements to the City Hall, cycleways the list goes on.

In summary while a lot is good about this plan, the cutting of the rail, the excessively large/fat buildings in Newcastle West & not getting developers to pay their fair share through Section 94 are particularly bad decisions & must be changed, if we want Newcastle to move forward.

I certainly hope that you will truly look at these suggestions & fix the major floors in this proposal.

Thank You

Cathy Burgess

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