



# Andrew Cornwell MP

## Member for Charlestown



17 March 2013

Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

To whom it may concern

I am writing to support the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy currently on exhibition on the NSW Department of Planning website.

I particularly note the expectation that this Strategy will deliver the capacity to house an additional 10,000 workers by 2036. This will clearly create additional employment opportunities for my constituents.

Some Lake Macquarie councillors have attempted to raise concerns in the media that investment in revitalising Newcastle will somehow negatively impact on Lake Macquarie.

Revitalising Newcastle is good for Lake Macquarie and the Hunter, just as the Hunter Expressway will benefit Lake Macquarie and our region, or improvements to roads in "Wine Country" will benefit our region, and therefore Lake Macquarie.

The ties that bind us as citizens of the Hunter are far stronger than any self awareness as a resident of a particular Local Government Area.

One of the reasons that that our region has failed to attract investment in the past is that former members have not presented a unified message to Sydney or Canberra, and instead have played the "politics of envy" between themselves.

This should not be seen as an "either/or" situation.

The region should be supportive of initiatives that benefit any area within the Hunter.

The development of the road and transport networks in Glendale is a classic example of this. This is supported by all councils throughout the Hunter as a regionally important project. The project was an unfunded dream until the incoming O'Farrell Government committed \$15 million to it in March 2011. As a result of this announcement Lake Macquarie City Council committed \$10 million and then the Federal Government offered a further \$7 million. I am yet to hear other councils in the rest of the Hunter complaining about Lake Macquarie receiving money at their expense, and for Lake Macquarie councillors to do so in relation to Newcastle does them no credit.

One of the strategy's great strengths is the delineation of three distinct hubs along Hunter Street. The east end will become a mixed precinct of retail, entertainment and leisure. The Civic precinct will become one for educational, legal and cultural uses. This is assisted by the state government's \$25 million dollar commitment for the University of Newcastle for the development of a city campus. The west end is identified as the city's new commercial hub. The city has been organically moving west for decades, and the new transport interchange being located at Wickham provides an anchor point around which this will continue to develop.

It is again unfortunate that Labor politicians have sought to claim that revitalising the Newcastle CBD will negatively affect other regional centres. Charlestown is clearly identified as a regional centre and the Glendale/Cardiff area as an emerging centre in the Lower Hunter Discussion Paper released this month. A successful renewal of Newcastle's CBD is beneficial to the entire region and should not be seen as a threat to other regional centres in the Hunter.

Connectivity between Lake Macquarie and Newcastle will be improved with the \$14 million upgrade of Cardiff Station close to completion. This upgrade will substantially improve access to the platform at Cardiff, not just for people with restricted mobility, but also those with prams or luggage. It will be imperative that the new interchange at Wickham offers a similar level of accessibility. This will help ensure that the constituents of Charlestown have the opportunity to catch world class public transport to a vibrant city rather than through a neglected one.

Cities such as Hamburg, Rotterdam, Genoa, Vancouver and Barcelona have been reconnected with their harbours through the removal of barriers such as rail lines and Newcastle should be afforded the same opportunity.

Our region has so much for us to be proud of. From Barrington Tops in the north to Lake Macquarie in the south we are blessed with a beautiful environment. From Newcastle in the east to Murrurundi in the west we have a backbone of industry, education and innovation. The Hunter is at its best when it acts and advocates regionally. We should celebrate the success of neighbouring parts of the Hunter and not fall into the trap of parochial politics; a trap where envy overrides magnanimity and neighbours look enviously into each other's yards.

I therefore strongly support the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy because it will not only enable the City of Newcastle to realise the potential we all know it has, but it will also offer opportunities for communities throughout the Hunter.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AC', is written over the printed name.

Andrew Cornwell