

## urbanrenewal - On Exhibition

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I am opposed to the removal of the rail line into Newcastle CBD. I submit that the revitalisation of the CBD can be effected without the cutting of the rail line at new Wickham Station and/or Broadmeadow Station. It is noted that the Civic precinct will be characterised by the creation of a legal/ education hub with the building of the state courthouse and the new University campus. The court house has been designed on the basis that the Civic Station is proximate and the campus will attract 3,000 students into the city. This is in circumstances that the BISTIOS report commissioned by Newcastle City Council has predicted that gridlock will be experienced in the CBD even with the rail line into Newcastle Station in tact. The Currie Report that was also commissioned by the Council to consider the impact of removing the rail line from the CBD found that there would be a 60% drop in patronage, resulting in a significant increase in vehicular traffic at the very time that the population of the surrounding urban areas is increasing and new jobs are being created. This is inconsistent with the NSW Transport Plan.

The plans in the east end to discourage vehicular traffic by converting Hunter St into a dual carriageway and closing off Wharf Rd may have had merit if the rail line remained intact- thereby continuing the current parallel mass transit system. However if the rail is removed and there is an increase in bus services, Hunter St will become seriously congested, discouraging people from travelling into the east precinct to shop and recreate. Connectivity can be achieved by reinstalling the 5 pedestrian crossings that have been removed both at grade and overhead levels. Minister Hazzard and Mr Greiner have described the rail line as the Berlin Wall, however Mr Hawes conceded at the consultation meetings that it was intended not only to develop the area around the CBD stations but also parts of the corridor. Undoubtedly the bus interchange and the Rail Corp car park will be sold to private interests and a number of 5-6 storey buildings erected on the site. This will be the real Berlin Wall. What is left of the former rail corridor that remains will become a site for vagrants and anti social behaviour.

My daughter and I travel from Maitland into Newcastle daily and note that the service is increasing in patronage. Rail Corp figures support the contention that Newcastle Station is the most patronised station in the Hunter. network. My daughter's boyfriend travels into Civic to attend the Conservatorium of Music. Maitland residents use and value not only the service into Newcastle but its connection to Sydney that is accessed by changing at Newcastle or Hamilton. If the electric service is cut at Broadmeadow we will lose our direct connection to Sydney. Our passenger rail services have been compromised for many years, particularly to the Upper Hunter, due to the increasing coal freight. Cutting the rail, even at Wickham, will be a sickening blow to Hunter commuters and it is understood that once removed the service will never be replaced.

The Lower Hunter will receive the overflow of residents from western Sydney

but as that area receives new rail networks, the people of the Hunter will lose what little they have. The benefits of course will flow to the handful of developers who will develop prime sites on Newcastle Harbour and increase their political influence accordingly.

I travelled with Mr O'Farrell and Ms Parker from Newcastle to Maitland before the election and was told that Ms Parker supported the retention of the rail into Newcastle. She now suggests that Maitland residents will be better off getting trapped in the gridlock of the New England Highway when travelling into Newcastle.

Mr O'Farrell said that the people of the Hunter would decide what is to happen to the rail line. Instead those who own properties in the Newcastle CBD with the capital to develop the same, have held sway. Community consultation has been a farce and Mr Hazzard refused to meet with Save Our Rail prior to the announcement of the decision to cut the line. At the community meetings the audience was told that the decision to cut the line was not up for discussion. Generations to come will shake their heads at the decision to spend tax payers money to destroy a valued rail system and residents in Newcastle CBD will rue the day that the 100 year service was destroyed.

Kim Cross,  
Maitland.