

Department of Planning
& Infrastructure,

G.P.O. Box 39

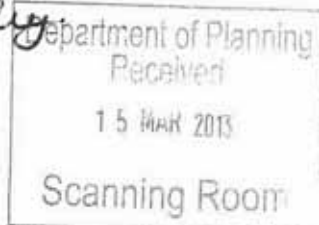
Sydney NSW 2001



PCU042552

I wish to respond to your demand for a submission to the Urban Renewal proposals put to the Hunter Community in a cowardly way just prior to the Christmas Holiday showdown and the way it stated that it must be responded to before 23rd March, surely to short a space of time to consider such an important subject, the future of New South Wales' 2nd largest City.

Despite the Ministers Statement, that all documents were to be available immediately I was told by a Staff member they were not available even in Sydney because "They were still at the Printers" so I think it was about 12th January before I was able to receive one. We were forbidden to make mention of an important piece of infrastructure in any submission on this reply. The last time I looked we still live in a Democracy and I find the way this process has been handled has been quite sneaky, disgusting and therefore an insult to the voters of the Hunter Valley.



(2)

Despite the fact the City Heart and elsewhere needs Development and Re-Development, let me say I along with the community in general, would welcome this happening in a proper and correctly planned way.

The artists impressions of more tree planting, wider footpaths, waterfalls etc. are all very impressive - the fact is these welcome ideas should have been done as a matter of course over the past 20 years; not over the next 30 years.

However, given the way the process has been handled right from the start, leaves me with no other option than to reject these proposals outright, despite much of the contents having much merit.

I attended a recent Community interest forum with an open mind, to have all explained face to face, but believe me that was enough to take this position. The panel (their names escape me) consisted of a group of 6 (3 Females and 3 males) One of the males was from the Planning Dept. and he was the so-called moderator. By the end of the meeting, I reflected on this group, and thought it was surprising any of them had turned up at all, because it was so clear none of them really had no idea what day of the week it was. If this meeting was designed to "sell" the argument to the people, it was a disaster and a farce.

(3)

The moderator was a real "PRIMA-DONNA" who tried (without success) to jump in and try to answer questions from the floor whenever possible especially when the other members of the panel did not even understand. The more he did this, the more foolish he proved himself to be - because he only proved how little he understood the very intelligent questions. He failed miserably as did the others.

Truly it was embarrassing, a disaster!

To think these people were in a position to make recommendations about anything, let alone the future of the Hunter Region especially Newcastle City.

My reasons apart from the above to reject outright the so-called strategy are as follows:

- (A) Taking away planning regulations from the "Local" Councils.
- (B) Giving a blank cheque to the Hunter/Honeysuckle (ie MONEY SUCKLE) Development Corp. to tastelessly construct and re-situate exciting buildings in the City Centre. A brief look at the Honeysuckle precinct will allow all to see what disasters they are capable of.

(4)

(C)

at the start of the forum the attendees were forbidden to discuss a certain corridor of land. Two microphones were positioned to allow 2 lines of people to speak and ask questions in turn. However, I think it was the said "PRIMA-DONNA" or someone else had a remote control to switch that microphone off, if they did like the question they were asked. Being far from a democratic process, I was angry and embarrassed for the people who were being treated like this. The people of the Hunter do not like being treated in this manner. So much for democracy in action. If this panel was capable of this, what else are they capable of? and what else are they hiding from the public? We will not be silenced by such people.

(D)

The closure of both Hamilton (Beaumont St) and Railway St. level crossings to all vehicles and pedestrians which will cause traffic chaos and decrease property values on either side.

(E)

Much is made of the views to the Harbour and Foreshore in general. Take a look at the "Berlin Wall" created by H.D.C. at Honeysuckle with the rear of these buildings facing Hunter Street. Allowed to continue unabated no-one will realize our beautiful Harbour exists beyond all the concrete and glass.

(5)

(F)

On the other side of the City, we can all see what remains of one of the worlds most beautiful streets, all in the name of Development at any cost, with no respect to the amenity of our city. It now looks like the Sahara Desert. * I took no part in that argument, but was shocked to see the end result.

(6)

Despite what some would have us believe, the whole proposed plan we were given is being driven by a small group of self-interested Developers and a handful of motorists who want the roads to themselves.

The vast majority of citizens are very wary of what lies beneath all the froth and bubble. This is far removed from and honest and transparent process, and we sure don't like such things as "at the ministers discretion" or "in the fullness of time" or the "Details are yet to be determined" etc. etc.

We should all welcome and encourage the Developers to Develop but they are never to be put in the position to write the rules. We only have to watch the Television News Programmes to see what happens when Politicians and Developers get into bed together.

(6)

(H)

I note among the illustrations, many many people without lines of buses bringing people to and from the City and the pollution these buses would emit. I see plenty of bicycles, so despite "Pie in the Sky" proposals for Light Rail, monorail, Trolley-Buses and God knows what else etc. etc. I feel certain the only plans the Government has for those without a bicycle, or standing on a Bus, overcrowded and stuck in Grid-locked traffic, would be via "Shanks Pony"!

(1)

The proposals for the Hunter Mall and Wheeler Place are merely a bit of window dressing - no complete re-camp to be proud of. Also the opening of Cottage Creek has now been found to increase the risk of flooding around that area.

(7)

In conclusion let me explain that I have given this response much thought, and I welcome proper, considered Development and Beautification of our wonderful City and Suburbs, but this proposed Strategy has been handed so poorly. It leaves more questions than answers and was presented in a most dubious manner on the eve of Christmas.

We have not sighted the Premier, Minister for the Hunter or the Transport Minister or anyone else who could smell the "Political Breeze" here, and understand we do not like being told what is good for us from those in Sydney. Also we reject the notion that we are not allowed free speech on this or any other subject.

This has been quite undemocratic in its presentation, and I have taken the view "When in doubt, throw it out!" That might be a Political Reality as well.

You will note I have written this in my own hand (rather than type) to illustrate that I have included a personal touch in my response as I am a citizen from a community of real people.

Trevor Evans

