

**urbanrenewal - Newcastle rail debate submission 14/3/13**

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**Date:** 3/14/2013 9:08 AM  
**Subject:** Newcastle rail debate submission 14/3/13

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**Attention Department of Planning and Infrastructure**

I find it impossible to believe that the city of Adelaide can afford a beautiful light rail people mover, running from the city centre to Glenelg - and Newcastle has rejected a similar system, running from, say, Hamilton to the City terminal - mainly on prohibitive cost grounds.

A light rail track width could match that of the heavy rail, thus allowing for carriage maintenance and storage at current workshops.

The twin tracks would be flush with the ground and, from Argyle St to the terminal, could be grassed beside and between the tracks. A neat, single row of T-bar gal. poles would unobtrusively support the power cables. The light rail station platforms would allow very easy access to the carriages (compared with buses) as they would be less than 300mm above the ground and flush with the carriages.

The light rail would obey the existing traffic lights at Maitland Rd, Hannell and Merewether Streets. thus doing away with the current traffic delays and traffic congestion at these gates.

**However, by far and away the most valuable benefit of this simple transport modification would be the world class green belt it would open up for the citizens of Newcastle, from Hunter and Scott Streets. across to Wharf St and the river esplanade.**

All the railway fencing from, say, Argyle St to the current terminal would be removed and the ground levelled, allowing easy public access between the City and the river, by clear pedestrian walkways. This priceless asset to the city should be made available for all citizens to enjoy.

**However, a once in a lifetime, opportunity to preserve both our city rail access AND beautify this precinct,** has, I fear, been long lost, as the State Government and its developer sycophants plan a secret agenda - mega-buck high rise - for this exploitable rail track corridor. Please say this is not so!

To quote NSW Planning Minister Brad Hazzard (Newcastle Herald 9/3) "the quicker we can get the railway issue put to bed, the quicker we can focus on how the urban development can move as quickly and as expansively as possible." Umm!

I sincerely hope that another O'Farrell/Packer Barangaroo style 'stitch-up' piece of skulduggery is not being currently salivated over, under the guise of 'Urban Planning' for the people!