

**urbanrenewal - On Exhibition**

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**From:** "Gibbons" <gibbojazz@exemail.com.au>  
**To:** <urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 4/15/2013 11:54 AM  
**Subject:** On Exhibition

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Dear sir/madam,

The urban renewal strategy for inner Newcastle proposes that resident population and, more particularly, workers from elsewhere in the wider lower Hunter region be substantially increased in number over the next 20 or so years. Yet the same strategy fails to optimise the very transport system that these extra persons will require.

An extra 10,000 workers, 12,600 residents and 8000 students are to be catered for, of which around 5% might be expected to use the rail service. The other 95% will attempt to use the roads, mostly in private single-occupant vehicles.

If you make a reasonable assumption that to achieve "revitalisation" there must be at least three times as many workers and residents as currently use various modes of transport, and that the proportions of car/bus/train/cycle/pedestrian trips remain much the same you will find, using computer-modelling, that at least 10 buses will be required to operate a circular service from the East End to Wickham during the evening peak (4pm to 6pm). This is to shift some 1500 rail commuters onto trains running on the current timetable.

Travel time for the unlucky commuter will increase by up to 23 minutes compared to the existing direct service. This will encourage more commuters to abandon public transport and further clog up the roads and parking spaces.

An extra 10 buses and at least an extra 15 drivers will be hugely cost-inefficient over the next decades, until someone in government realises the breath-taking stupidity of removing the efficient rail-based mass transit infrastructure - maybe under-used now, but essential for future growth.

Road congestion at the Stewart Avenue/Hunter Street intersection will be exacerbated greatly due to the increased road traffic generated by the Wickham interchange and its associated developments. Those calling for the removal of the rail for the sole reason that they don't like being held up at level crossing gates will soon be regretting their selfish attitude.

The Department of Planning has clearly not done its job in calculating the impact of rail removal. Where is the modelling to plan for future traffic management? The CBD renewal plan should include improvement of the rail line as a key part of the process.

Disconnect of the harbour foreshore from the inner CBD is nothing more than a perception promoted by those who don't like the look of the rail line. No-one has ever provided a shred of evidence that removing heavy rail transport is essential for urban renewal. Countries all around the world are spending billions of dollars to install and upgrade inner city rail transport. We already have it and it's been paid for many years ago. Why would we be such fools to rip it out?

In conclusion I would like to point out the obvious - that Newcastle CBD urban renewal is a benefit to the whole of the Hunter and Lake Macquarie region, not just Newcastle's inner suburbs. Removal of the rail line will choke the renewal process even before it starts. All we are seeing from Government are glossy brochures and political spin.

Yours,  
 Eric Gibbons