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**Subject:** Ending the Rail line at Wickham will be a big mistake for Newcastle

To Whom It May Concern

My husband and I catch the train into Newcastle everyday from the Maitland area. We are happy to catch the train as it is a viable affordable alternative to driving. We also feel it is a good environmental choice, saving our share of emissions and oil consumption. The benefits of catching the train also encompass a less stressful start to the work day not having to have battled the traffic through Hexham and Sandgate every morning and not ourselves contributing to the traffic problems in these areas every morning.

My husband alights the train at Wickham so will not be affected in his travel arrangements should the cutting of the rail line go ahead, however I alight at Newcastle and my travel arrangements would be severely affected. I suffer from extreme motion sickness and claustrophobia so the idea of having to catch a bus after I alight at Wickham is frightening enough for me to dismiss the idea immediately. I would therefore have to drive to work everyday. it would be ludicrous for my husband to be catching a train to work if I am driving so he would then travel with me in the car. CityRail would then lose 2 adult fares per week. The environment would lose it's share of clean air and we would cause more oil consumption, we will also contribute to the congestion of traffic at Hexham and Sandgate every morning. Multiply this by the number of people who alight the train at Civic and Newcastle stations every morning and the flow on effect starts to become alarming. Parking in Newcastle is already at a premium, imagine the influx of these once there are former rail commuters bringing their vehicles into the city trying to find all day parking spaces too.

I can think of no other major city in Australia (or the world) who does not have a railway station. Tourism will not flourish it will diminish as tourists look at ways they have to get to Newcastle and it will become too hard so they just won't come. Train travel offers an inexpensive and comfortable journey, I always see backpackers and tourists at Newcastle station.

Teenagers will have to think of other ways to visit the beach and I'm not even sure if you are allowed to take a surf board on a bus at all and if you are you can imagine the complaints that are going to arise about that especially since the buses are going to be more crowded than before with people being forced to catch them instead of a train.

It is unbelievable that the people who are advocating the most to get rid of the rail corridor are the people who don't even use it, this is obviously so or else we wouldn't be having this debate at all.

Newcastle is a beautiful city with it's rail link there, there is no denying that. We have personally had four different lots of overseas family visit us here and we have taken them to Newcastle and they have all been awed by it's beauty and all have commented on how lucky we are to have such a regular train service to get around on. These family members were from America so comments like that should not be taken lightly. We are lucky to have such regular and reliable trains to get to our beautiful city on, it's a transport option for everyone. If you take that away from Newcastle you will be taking away it's availability

and appeal to the masses both here at home and any visitors thinking of coming to the city from afar or overseas.

You could do a lot to beautify the rail corridor and keep it. It seems to me that the 'beauty' of the corridor is more the concern than anything else of the people wanting to be rid of it which is not a good enough reason to get rid of a lifeline that so many use for their livelihoods.

Newcastle and it's surrounding suburbs are growing cities, imagine that growth declining because there will be no affordable reliable transport option for those wanting to move here. You read it everyday in the real estate section of the papers "close to train station, within walking distance to such and such railway station", being near public transport is good for property value not bad for it.

I have spoken to many many people who take the train and those who do not, not one of them I have spoken to has said it's a good move to take out the rail link. Obviously those who commute will never agree for the obvious reasons that it will be far more difficult for them to get to and from work (isn't the government supposed to be focusing on families? why then would you want mothers and fathers alike to be away from their families for longer times everyday because you're going to cut the rail line and force them to travel longer each day), for those who don't commute there are the concerns of increased parking fees due to the influx of car commuters and the lack of available car spaces. They worry about the increase of buses in their city and the traffic problems that will cause. They worry about the effect it will have on their business - not one person I have spoken to has said it will bring more people to their business quite the contrary.

Ending the rail line at Wickham will be a big mistake for Newcastle, it's suburbs, it's people and it's reputation as a great place to live.

Christine Kenton