

RECEIVED
14 MAR 2013

mp 9-3-2013

The Hon Brad Hazzard
New South Wales Minister for Planning and Infrastructure
and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW

Dear Sir,

I am writing with my family's and local residents' concerns re the proposed termination of the Newcastle rail service at Wickham.

I often take my grandchildren from Maitland to Newcastle to the Foreshore and a trip across the harbour on the ferry and am oftensurprised as to how many other families and extended families do the same, a pleasure that should be easily accessible for all. We also meet our families at either the Museum of the Foreshore (our family travel in from Cardiff by rail). Two weeks ago we met 3 families from Muswellbrook and 1 family from Scone who also do similar outings with extended families.

Our concerns are that we (the citizens /voters) north of Newcastle were not consulted and our needs not taken into account.

For example my husband is an amputee and it is not an option to break the journey into Newcastle at Wickham and then, waiting and getting in and out of a bus after getting off the train and doing the repeat on the return journey. We will no longer travel by train and also not go to the Newcastle CBD (which is in need of people such as us to help rejuvenate). It is well known fact that the population is ageing and this proposed cutting of the rail is yet another act of discrimination against the elderly, less mobile and also to parents with prams and toddlers and the young with their surfboards and bicycles.

It is also of note that the Maitland City Council area is the fastest growing in the State of NSW and it should be that infrastructure is being added to and enhanced rather than being scrapped in such a retrograde fashion. It would seem to us that it would be logical to increase the number of, or upgrade rail stations north of Maitland (e.g Brantxon, Farley, the proposed Huntleigh estate etc), update rail services and timetables, thus encouraging increased rail travel into Newcastle.

The installation of lifts at Victoria Street should also be a priority (we have to travel from East Maitland to Maitland by car in order to catch the train to Newcastle because there are no disability facilities at East Matiland or Victoria Street rail stations). An appalling situation in this the 21st Century!

No other city in the world would even consider cutting the rail to the CBD, and in fact many vibrant, forward looking cities are increasing railways by the addition of heavy and/or light rail (e.g Budapest, Melbourne, Warsaw and Perth to mention a few that cities I have visited recently).

If the railway between Wickham and Newcastle is such an *"inconvenience and an eyesore"*, why not drop the line underground? There are soft sediments beneath the rail line; the technology and equipment is readily available to persue such a venture. Surely some thinking outside the square is required so as not to cut off Hunter Valley residents (and Newcastle and Lake Macquarie residents) from the Newcastle CBD, Foreshore and Museum.

Yours sincerely

Janece McDonald PhD

on behalf of

Janece McDonald & Lawrence Henderson 7 Dixon St, East Maitland 2323

Blake Savek & family 418 Currawong Circuit, Cams Wharf 2281, Corinne and Corie Smith & family PO Box 176, Swansea,

Scott and Carmen Slavek & family 13 Calomonda Close, Belmont Nth 2280

Bill and Rose Pavicic 3 Cumberland St, East Maitland 2323, John and Murial Fenwick 11 Dixon St, East Maitland 2323