

**From:** Melanie McKinnon <melanie\_mckinnon@bigpond.com>  
**To:** <urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 25/02/2013 9:14 am  
**Subject:** Newcastle Urban Renewal

To whom it may concern

I attended the recent workshop addressing issues related to the Urban Renewal Strategy In Newcastle..Overall I was pleased with the proposed changes and relieved that at last there is to be some real progress relating to redevelopment of this city .

However the overriding impression from the workshop is that Newcastle people are increasingly disenchanted and cynical about the intentions of both State and local politicians and the city continues to be polarised about what should happen in terms of redevelopment. While the objective of the workshop was to gather input regarding the strategic plan it was clear that most of the audience was intent on discussing the removal of the rail line .

In their defence it seems likely Newcastle people have good reason to be cynical about the intent of politicians and local leaders given the lack of transparency related to the recent incident with the iconic fig trees . Their cynicism is further justified given the appalling state of public transport currently available to Newcastle residents.( Having lived in Marrickville for 4 years in recent years I know what good public transport looks like.) IThat cynicism and anxiety is reflected in this current debate about the removal of the train at Wickham . While I am "polllyannerish" enough to believe there will be adequate transport infrastructure to replace the train beyond Wickham I acknowledge the concern of others about what that replacement infrastructure will look like , the comparative cost and most importantly the potential for development along thee rail corridor.

My challenge for politicians/ developers / authors of this strategic plan is for greater transparency about their intentions in order to ensure community support and agreement . Someone in this discussion needs to step up to a leadership role that engages Newcastle people in way that promotes trust and enthusiasm about proposed changes .

On that note can there are two key questions that need to be addressed  
Why do we need to stop the train at Wickham ?Whenever this discussion arises I am told there are plenty of examples where major cities have successfully integrated rail traffic into city centres and the money saved on the removal and subsequent development of Wickham interchange could be spent on other aspects of the redevelopment .

If the rail removal and interchange is a fait accompli could we have a guarantee that the existing rail corridor will be committed to green space in perpetuity .

I ( and a great majority of Newcastle residents ) look forward to your response on these questions .

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment - I look forward to a revitalised (and less polarised) Newcastle

Melanie McKinnon  
26 Bryant St  
Tighes Hill  
NSW 2297

maj.mckinnon@gmail.com