

urbanrenewal - Newcastle Renewal Strategy

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Subject: Newcastle Renewal Strategy

I wish to protest in the strongest possible terms at the "decision" to truncate the heavy rail line at Wickham. I'm astounded that this "decision" was made with no input from either the people of Newcastle or more importantly, from those who are affected by said "decision". All through the debate on this issue there has been absolutely NO evidence of a credible nature that in any way supports the truncation of the line at Wickham. Indeed, the NURS clearly states the strategy can be achieved with any transport option and this is clear evidence that the "claims" made that the truncation is essential for the NURS to go ahead is simply untrue. It was stated by Premier O'Farrell that the decision would be made by the people of Newcastle, the very same people who have been excluded totally from the process. We have seen in the media, both online and the printed media, many statements that are at best ridiculous in support of truncation. We have been told that there is a consultation period for people to offer their views, however it is of no value if any consultation is after the decision and not prior.

It is astounding to say the least that the "decision" is contrary in every respect to current world practice, that is, the expansion of public transport rather than a reduction as is the case with Newcastle. To state that a change that involves longer travel times, increased inconvenience, lesser level of facilities etc could in any way be construed as a "better" service to the people is best described as an insult to the intelligence of the general public. We have also seen the new "system" described as "seamless", although I'm not quite sure that the definition in a dictionary would be the same as what is being claimed. What is also beyond belief is that we have no discernible plans, costing's, etc for the proposal other than a projected cost of in excess of \$650 million, all to come from the taxpayer at a time when there are severe cuts to public spending. If this is fiscal responsibility then I have serious concerns as to the future of NSW. The scarce public funds available would be much better spent on projects that are required now, are far more important and provided positive benefits to all taxpayers, examples being a rail overpass at Scone, Glendale Interchange, Adamstown Overpass, Fassifern-Hexham rail bypass etc. It is very evident that the ONLY beneficiaries of the decision are those who have the means to develop the rail corridor for substantial personal profit, this is despite claims the corridor would be retained in public hands. I can assure you that people are not so naive to believe such comments.

I sincerely hope the "decision" is revisited and a fair and equal opportunity to have input is given to all rather than a select few.

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