

## Kacey Cogle

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**From:** Gary Foster <gandjfoster@pip.com.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 December 2012 8:23 AM  
**To:** Public Hazzard's Office Email  
**Cc:** gosford@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Public Constance's Office Email; Public Pearce's Office Email; Public Piccoli's Office Email; Premier's Office; Public Roberts' Office Email; strathfield@parliament.nsw.gov.au; wyong@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Andrew Cornwell; albury@parliament.nsw.gov.au; easthills@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Public Humphries' Office Email; Public Skinner's Office Email; Public Souris' Office Email; portstephens@parliament.nsw.gov.au; riverstone@parliament.nsw.gov.au; rockdale@parliament.nsw.gov.au; swansea@parliament.nsw.gov.au; linda.burney@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Luke.Foley@parliament.nsw.gov.au; maroubra@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Matthew.Mason-Cox@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Public Dominello's Office\_Email; Public Goward's Office Email; Public Hartcher's Office Email; Public Baird's Office Email; Robyn.Parker@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Public Gallacher's Office Email  
**Subject:** Attached letter  
**Attachments:** Hazzard HDC questions6-12.pdf

Good Morning Minister,

Please see the attached letter and following comments.

Gary Foster  
Spokesperson for the  
Newcastle And Hunter Regional Transport Alliance Incorporated  
0438776103  
Skype: garynow1

The Hon B Hazzard  
Minister for Planning  
NSW Parliament  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2001

6/12/12

Dear Minister,

#### Newcastle Rail questions

Recently it has been mooted in the Newcastle Herald that a \$60million sum has been earmarked by the Hunter Transport and Infrastructure board supposedly to conduct work on the truncation of rail services between Wickham station [or other location] and Newcastle station. This declaration raises some very serious resulting circumstances which I seek comment on from you as the responsible minister. Also, it must spelt out precisely the benefits expected to flow to the community. The board is deluding itself and seriously letting down the community if it considers this proposal to have public transport and revitalisation benefits for Newcastle and the Lower Hunter.

This \$60million is taxpayers' money, our money.

There are a number of factors which need to be explained and these include:-

- Covering the tracks  
This would be an absurd waste of valuable resources when the transport task of getting passengers from Wickham to Newcastle station is being achieved in four minutes by present rail and will take far longer by bus.
- Buses will add to the traffic and exacerbate the gridlock predicted by 2016.
- The board must clarify precisely what is intended by "potential for private investment along the rail corridor".
- Does this mean that the government is proposing to sell off the corridor once the rail is removed?
- Why is the Infrastructure board behaving like a remove infrastructure board if indeed it is recommending rail removal and spending of an initial \$60million for this purpose?
- What is the final total of expenditure for all elements of the removal task?
- The board must clarify precisely what is intended by "potential for private investment along the rail corridor"

Preserve us from another threat that the proposed mall development is conditional on the rail being removed. There is no physical or technical reason why any development in the mall or anywhere else in the city centre could not proceed with the rail intact. Rail enhances development and emphatically does not hinder it.

Gary Foster

3 Moira Street  
Adamstown NSW 2289

The content of this letter has been extracted from the Newcastle Herald of 5/12/2012. The following pages show the overwhelming support for the content of the letter by Alan Squire on behalf of Hunter Transport for Business Development, Newcastle. Hunter Transport for Business Development, Newcastle is a member organisation of the Newcastle And Hunter Region Transport Alliance.

I look forward to your advice

Gary Foster



Spokesperson

Newcastle and Hunter Region Transport Alliance Incorporated [NAHRTA]  
[previously known as the Hunter Transport Alliance]

**SUPPORTING GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS**

Hunter Transport for Business Development  
Local Living, Dungog  
Older Women's Network, Wyong  
Parks and Playground Movement, Inc  
Save Our Rail NSW Inc  
Terrace Book Club  
Union of Australian Women  
Dungog Men's Shed  
Newcastle University Students Association  
Hunter Tomorrow  
Newcastle Skate Shop

Ph 0438776103

Email: [gandjfoster@pip.com.au](mailto:gandjfoster@pip.com.au)

Christyna026

Whoever "Hunter Transport for Business Development" is, I agree with Alan's comments: from a simple, quick trip into Newcastle, the elderly, pregnant and/or pram-pushing passengers will need to get off the train and get onto a bus to get right into town. Now that I have attained the ranks of the (almost) elderly, I'm certainly not going to want to get off a train to get onto a bus for what on the train is a couple of blinks of an eye. And what happens when it's raining? Is there going to be cover? Somewhere for the elderly to sit? And I must agree, I'd rather the \$60 million used for something that's going to be of demonstrable benefit to those who use public transport.

Also, if people aren't encouraged to go into Newcastle, what's going to happen to it? It's pretty sad-looking now; take away easy access, and it will die even more. I have friends who no longer go "into town" because it's much easier to go to a shopping centre where parking is (relatively) easier, and everything is available in one stop. Pretty short-sighted planning, in my humble opinion.

Like Reply

1 day ago 11 Likes

Eyes wired open

Next time you hear of another budget cut to an essential service, just spare a thought to where the 60 million downpayment on a 600 million dollar project came from, wait it gets worse, this money is to downgrade our public transport system to a disused union user friendly bus service that currently runs around empty, even the free bus can only attract 137 passengers per day. The only winners from this are the developers (do you think they use public transport or would tolerate changing parking their car half way and then waiting an eternity for a bus, bearing in mind the bus cant maintain the timetable now when running around empty) who want to build along the rail corridor, not adjacent to it as some might have you think. It is amazing that anyone can rubbish a train service that they know little about and yet turn a blind eye to the pathetic state of our buses.

(Edited by a moderator)

Like Reply

1 day ago 7 Likes

cardiffresident

EWO, I suggest that you make the effort and try some of the buses. They are not as bad as you would like people to believe and they can go to many places where there are no, and never will be, trains. Yesterday on the 130 there was a lady in an electric wheel chair parked in the disabled area with all the other passengers (not isolated as she would have been if she was on one of those DDD train sets) and on the 100 bus there was ladies with large prams and little kids that were easily able to park their prams and enjoy the benefits of the fold down seats.(once again try doing that on the DDD trains)

(Edited by a moderator)

Ph 0438776103

Email: gandjfoster@pip.com.au

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Eyes wired open  
Eyes wired open

Why dont you catch the train and whilst you are on the train, I suggest that you talk to the passengers and learn why the buses are empty and they choose to use the train and ask them how they would feel if they had to change modes of transport half way, walk to a bus stop and wait for a bus. Also, you may like to tell them why you treated them with contempt by not allowing them a say in this pla, especially when you know very little about how public Tranport works, you may also advise them that the real resson for all this is to allow priovate investment along the rail corridor. Question, why wont level crossings provide connectivity instead of spending 60 million to cut the line for a land grab?

Like Reply

8 hours ago in reply to cardiffresident 1 Like

Mike

I certainly hope ANY plan to cut off the rail line has a trial /impact assessment period where the trains terminate at (say) Wickham , and the rail gates are left open to traffic on the level crossings. This will allow impacts to be determined on businesses, traffic and pedestrian flow before we spend millions ripping up the heavy rail and selling/ repurposing the land.

Like Reply

1 day ago 7 Likes

Original\_Novocastrian

Mike You are completely failing to recognose about 50% of the reason behind wanting the rail removed...connectivity + rejuvenation etc.

Your reaction is not uncommon among the pro-railers...but it is NOT just all about the TRAINS !

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Mike

Bigfeller

You are right its not just about trains.

It is about the viability of the CBD traders. On ttack work days trade crashes

Statistics show that Stewart Ave rail crossing slows when we have no trains due to track work.

Why will the Government not impliment the SOR weekend closure / simulation with the implimentation of alternate modes as part of the trial.

Ph 0438776103

Email: gandjfoster@pip.com.au

Like Reply

10 hours ago in reply to Original\_Novocastrian

Eyes wired open  
And why cant this be achieved with Level Crossings?

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Original\_Novocastrian

Original\_Novocastrian  
They won't build them anyway, but what I wanted to point out was that it is NOT just all about the TRAINS!

But that comment will probably fall on deaf ears with you too...oh well.

Like Reply

23 hours ago in reply to Eyes wired open

Eyes wired open

They built a new level crossing at Stewart Avenue and there is no reason that they cant build a new one at Newcastle, it is NOT just about BUSES EITHER. None so blind as those that dont want to see!

Like Reply

36 minutes ago in reply to Original\_Novocastrian

tina

Whenever the rail comes up, there is talk of it's removal for connectivity. When Hunter Street was in it's heyday, the rail didn't cause any problems (as in blocking the city from the harbour) The new buildings along Wharf Road are the ones creating the great divide.

Like Reply

1 day ago 4 Likes

Eyes wired open

Thats spot on, if the rail wasnt a problem when the city was in all its Glory why should it be a problem now, ever get the feeling that there is another reason for wanting the rail line cut?

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to tina 1 Like

cardiffresident

EWO and Tina -when Hunter Street was in its 'heyday' the north side of the railway line was nothing more than a dump with a few dilapidated buildings, Darks Iceworks, Honeysuckle goods yard with the rail line continuing down to Zara street. Come the late 1980's all this began to change, the land was cleared and more was reclaimed from the Harbour. New buildings have been built, there is miles of walking pathways along the water front, a beautiful park has been built and for the first time since the arrival of Europeans people are once again able to enjoy the waterfront. Connectivity was not an issue then, it sure is now.

Like Reply

9 hours ago in reply to Eyes wired open 1 Like

Eyes wired open

Another more pressing issue is private investment along the Rail Corridor. I have asked you numerous times and you have avoided the question of why wont level crossings provide connectivity? You see, it would cost a fraction of the 600 million cutting the line and replacing the trains with a poor mans transport system. Now you can see why everyone is awake to the fact that this is all about a land grab as Level crossings would fix connectivity but it would stop developers building along the rail corridor and force them to build where buildings already exist. Memo to all Newcastle community, do we deserve to accept what is essentially a retrograde public transport system or do we stand up and VOTE NO saying that we will NOT ACCEPT second best hand me down bus service!

Like Reply

6 hours ago in reply to cardiffresident

Original\_Novocastrian

It was pretty busy when they still had hitching posts for the horses all over the place but time stops for nobody & with progress there is usually some change.

Stop looking in the rear view mirror & try to "shape" the change.

You know I agree with you that a bus only solution is utter cheapskate rubbish & I will always push as hard as I can for light rail if in fact they do shorten the Newcastle rail line.

Don't forget that nothing has formally been announced & governments are notorious for "leaking" some possibly relevant "information" to gauge where public opinion is & try to gauge how much they think we are prepared to concede when they "shaft" us.

It's sort of like announcing that they are going to kill all 3 of your children, then stepping back a bit & saying...OK we'll let you save 2 of them - which two? They make you choose in the hope that you will inevitably be happier than after their first "bombshell".

Ph 0438776103

Email: gandjfoster@pip.com.au

Like Reply

6 hours ago in reply to Eyes wired open

edteech

Q - What is the reason for cutting the rail?

A - Its the land!!

Q - But doesn't cutting rail at Wickham cause 2 key roads to be closed?

A - YES! But if we cut the rail even further west at Woodville, then the roads don't get closed & we get even more land to build on!

Like Reply

1 day ago 4 Likes

Train\_Hugger

Alan, can you explain who is actually in "Hunter Transport for Business Development"?

(Edited by a moderator)

Like Reply

1 day ago 3 Likes

Eyes wired open

They obviously represent the people and at least 50% of CBD Businesses that want the rail line to stay, who do you represent T\_H?

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Train\_Hugger 3 Likes

Eyes wired open

Obviously it is a body that has subject matter experts and maybe we should listen to them. They may have members from the CBD shopkeepers in it.

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Train\_Hugger 1 Like

Blackdogbbq

EWOW - I believe 'it' is a consortium endeavouring to profit from train infrastructure upgrades.

(Edited by a moderator)

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Eyes wired open 2 Likes  
two bobs worth

Where's this money coming from?

I'm sure it should be put into the hospitals and schools as a priority over removing a rail-line!

There should be a trial period of no trains and running buses of at least 18mths. Then we would all know what is best for all of Newcastle not just the noisy minority.

Like Reply

23 hours ago 1 Like

Train\_Hugger

Alan, can you explain why it is so important that rail passengers at Wickham (less than 5% of the people travelling to Newcastle) must be able to get to the corner of Scott and Watt Streets in 4 minutes?

Like Reply

1 day ago 1 Like

Eyes wired open

T\_H - Please supply evidence that the figure is accurate. If we know that 2500 people use the train each day and according to you that represents 5% where do the other 95% (most car journeys are Driver only) park their cars as we know that no one uses the buses? Havent you heard that the customer is always right, people dont like to be inconvenienced and that is obvious to everyone in Newcastle but you. I noticed that you havent included in your plan for cars to park and ride, so why dont you want to wait for a bus?

(Edited by a moderator)

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Train\_Hugger 1 Like

Eyes wired open

T\_H Still waiting for evidence or a retraction.

(Edited by a moderator)

Like Reply

1 day ago in reply to Train\_Hugger

Geefer

Alan may have also wondered that the money the Hunter Infrastructure Advisory Board is generously donating to Newcastle was given to them by the Premier from the money collected from the customers of the Hunter Water Board when Tillegra Dam was cancelled. The Premier declared that the money would be used to begin important projects in the HUNTER and it's allocation would be decided by the community of the HUNTER. I had the impression the Premier was referring to the Hunter Valley not Hunter Street.

Like Reply

1 day ago

Original\_Novocastrian

Alan, the article makes no mention whatsoever that the future transport solution for Newcastle CBD would be a bus only one!

It is you & others that are assuming this at this particular time.

...& you know what they say when you assume...

Like Reply

1 day ago

Train\_Hugger

Alan, are there any "businesses" are in Hunter Transport for "Business" Development

Like Reply

1 day ago

Eyes wired open

Collapse

T\_H do you realise that according to the latest survey that you represent less than 50% of Business in the CBD as more than 50% of businesses support Heavy Rail and out of the ballance of those interviewed the remained support Light Rail. It appears that you are a noisy minority group.