

Personal response to NURS

Cycleways- A “dedicated” cycleway along the length of Newcastle will be a great community asset, however it should be built to a standard that primary school age children could be safely let ride along it unaccompanied, ie physically separated from vehicular traffic. A bidirectional cycleway on one side of the street, as has been built in parts of Sydney makes intersections complex and is not as safe for cyclists as a unidirectional cycleway on each side of the street, which is the standard treatment in European cities. I think the cycleway could be on either Hunter or King St, although the SEP proposal seems to consider only Hunter St without ever considering the other option..

The proposal for cycleways to be implemented promptly on a trial or temporary basis is somewhat alarming, as if a cycleway does not have to be properly planned. To be safe and effective it at least has to have connections to Hamilton, to the Corlette St coastal cycleway route, to the East-West cycleway at the sports stadium, and to the Throsby Creek cycleway past the Marina. The construction of a cycleway along Hunter St without these connections is not going to entice people out of their cars, and cycleways should be designed to enhance connectivity of the entire cycleway network.

Connection to the waterfront.

Much is made in the documents about connecting Newcastle to the harbour, but nowhere is there any option for people to actually use the harbour. There should be boat launching facilities somewhere along the foreshore between Queens Wharf and the Marina, that allows launching of kayaks canoes, and dinghies from hand trailers only. A drive on boat launching ramp for cars and trailers with attendant fish guts is out of character with the other uses, and is available at Carrington. Harbour kayak tours however are already a popular tourist activity and would be compatible with other Honeysuckle activities.

Visual connection between the city and the waterfront is impeded by some truly intrusive structures. What would the cost be to buy and demolish the Crown Plaza?

The intention to reduce the number of cars coming into the city centre is applauded, however it is difficult to see how this will be achieved while also removing rail services. The public health benefit of increased exercise from active transport, walking, cycling, or even from increasing the walking distance to carparks is a benefit that will become increasingly important as the obesity epidemic progresses.

The plan for expansion of the CBD campus of the University around Civic is a good basis for increased residential and retail demand, however it will be difficult to move 10,000 students in and out each day without a Civic rail station. A rail station was recently constructed for Macquarie University at considerable expense, and it is unclear to me why the Newcastle university Civic campus should not also have a rail station, particularly as the train from Warrabrook to Civic connects the two campuses.

Wheeler place functions as Newcastle's town square. Highly popular 'Dancing in the streets' events have been held there, and for these it needs a wide open space. I do not support changes that fragment the space, such as the pond and trees shown in the artists impression, although some shade would be welcome.

The illustration on Page XVIII suggests the planners know nothing about cycling, although bikes feature as frequently as cars in all the illustrations. In figure B the cyclist has inadequate protection from only a white painted line. If the cyclist was travelling the opposite direction the white line would put her in the danger zone from opening car doors as she passes the two parked cars. Design

faults like this should be excluded early in the process.

Cottage Creek

While at high tide Cottage Creek looks like a pretty Amsterdam canal, at low tide it is a concrete drain. Close inspection shows small fish sadly searching for mangroves. Unless it is allowed to grow appropriate vegetation I don't think it can be remediated from its current status of concrete drain. With mangroves however it would probably not handle the flows required during big rain events.

Property values. As I live 300m from civic station my property value is likely to decrease if the station is closed. In some planning documents on provision of new rail services there is a mechanism for the state to capture the increase in value of property that occurs when a station is built. If such policies were symmetrical I should be entitled to compensation for the decrease in value of my property if the station is closed.

Summary

The revitalisation of Newcastle CBD is welcome and needed. Revitalisation can be achieved with the rail service remaining, which would allow the money for a Wickham interchange to be spent more productively. Rail services at least as far as Civic should be a key element of the urban renewal.