

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 4 January 2013 2:23 PM
To: Public Hazzard's Office Email
Subject: Help, please respond by email

Good afternoon Brad,

I would like to communicate my total opposition to the current suggestion to cut the Newcastle Rail line and replace the train with buses, I say suggestion as there has been no formal plan for the community to witness and read. How in the world can we respond with feedback when we are not aware of any details of the plan. There was an announcement just before Christmas that the rail line would be cut and a period of consultation will begin, well can you please tell me why we were denied the consultation before a decision was made? How can we discuss anything when we don't know what the details are?

The current Rail infrastructure that Railcorp has at Newcastle is 4 platforms and several storage sidings, all these facilities are used regularly, the new plan apparently only has 3 platforms and no storage sidings. My communications on the Newcastle Herald web site tells me that Railcorp has been denied any say in what infrastructure that they need and they have been denied any involvement in the Planning process. The communication also advised me the modelling of the infrastructure has been done, but when I requested copies of this modelling, I have been denied an answer. The bottom line is that the four platforms are regularly used and so are the storage sidings, if all this infrastructure is reduced to only three platforms, then the consequence has to be massive delays to Newcastle station as incoming trains have to wait until a platform is available. There has not been any drawings or artist impressions on where the buses will leave from. The lack of information and transparency of process is very concerning as it appears that a handful of Developers are running the show.

The last costing that was verified as adequate was completed by Railcorp a few years ago and the cost was 600million, in light of all funding cuts that have been happening especially in areas of essential services (Rescue services have had funding for two helicopters removed, Education funding reduced and Fire brigades closed), you would have to wonder how the Government can find 120 million down payment for cutting a rail line and replacing the service with buses that the train users can currently use but don't use. Why have Railcorp been denied any say?

How on earth can the NSW Government agree to paying 120 million when there is no detailed plan, they don't even know what they are paying for.

There logic behind cutting the rail has always been communicated as connectivity, yet there are serious concerns that the land that the Rail line currently occupies has not been undermined and would support High rise buildings. It would be a simple matter for an owner of a building that has been deliberately allowed to run down, to simply demolish the building and build into the rail corridor. We were promised all the green zones with Honeysuckle and when the final product was completed, there are no green zones and all buildings, so it is possible to build in a disused corridor. The hollow promises by Politicians accounted for nothing as there are no green parks or cycleways but plenty of buildings. There is a reason why Developers are behind this plan and why we have been denied any say or have been denied any viewing of any plan.

NBN news conducted three surveys recently, the first survey was an interview survey of Newcastle CBD Shop owners and over 50% wanted the rail line to stay, out of the balance all of the people interviewed wanted light rail, there was no support for buses, the second poll showed 75% wanted heavy rail, 23% wanted the line cut (with buses or light rail) and 2% didn't care, the last survey taken today reflected 70% wanted heavy rail, 26% wanted the line cut (with buses or light rail) and 4% didn't care. A survey was done several years ago by HVRF and this had biased questions, had a select target of only Newcastle residents and was paid for by GPT and returned a 70% request for cutting the line. Every survey that included people outside the Newcastle CBD has reflected that most people want the heavy rail line to stay.

Level crossings could achieve connectivity at a fairly viable cost. When you think about it, how many people who go to Honeysuckle for lunch would then go shopping in the CBD, out of them most the car owners would simply drive

to the other side of the tracks anyway. In the last 3 years there has been over 30 level crossing installations in the State of NSW, I know this as I work for [REDACTED] who installed the F type level crossing devices. Locations include Koolkhan, Kankool, Quipolly, Moss Vale Kearnsley, Leeton and many others, I can provide a full list if you want. There has not been a recording level crossing incident in Newcastle branch line, so level crossings are safe. If a level crossing can be installed where the equipment works off Track circuits only and where the XPT runs at 160kph as well as long heavy freight trains run, then a Risk Assessment on a line where the trains are only passenger trains travelling at 15kph into a Station terminus has to return a lower safer score. The level crossing at Stewart Avenue on the Newcastle branch line is a new level crossing, which means that level crossings can be installed.

If the developers didn't want the land, then why have they not considered the option of level crossings or as much as I am apposed to Light rail, the facet is that light rail will still give connectivity. The answer is the land and how land values will increase if there is no rail line, this is any rail line or highway will have similar effect to land prices.

The facts are:

- 1/ There has been no community consultation before a decision was made
- 2/ There is no detail plan to comment on, how are we suppose to comment when we don't even know any details like frequency of bus service, where the buses will depart and go to, how many services and what delays inadequate infrastructure will create.
- 3/ Proposed Infrastructure is inadequate and there has been no evidence of any consultation with Railcorp on what they need to run their services
- 4/ 75 % of the community is apposed to the cutting of the line
- 5/ Other options have not been explored that would allow the train to remain
- 6/ Cost to the community at a time when essential services are being cut
- 7/ Lack of transparency of process
- 8/ Evidence that Developers could build on the rail line
- 9/ No details given and claims have been made by Developers but when we asked for any written plan or reference to where they resourced the information from, there has been no reply.
- 10/ The proposed plan to cut the rail line and use recycled CBD buses is unacceptable, this is a third world cop out solution we deserve better, if we are going to spend 600 odd million (last verified Railcorp costing) then we should expect something better than buses, we have the option of using buses now and choose not to. The statistics show that bus service in Newcastle is massively under-utilised, at least 2500 people per day use the train into Newcastle and the number would climb if there were more parking at Suburban stations.

Please respond receipt by email

Regards
[REDACTED]