

urbanrenewal - Attn: Manager, Centres and Urban Renewal

From: Adrian Quinn <quadrian@gmail.com>
To: <urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 1/23/2013 9:22 PM
Subject: Attn: Manager, Centres and Urban Renewal

To the Manager,

I am writing in response to the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012.

I support and commend the Planning Department on aspects of the strategy relating to:

- the creation of active spaces through mixed use zoning
- small scale building facades that address the street (nothing over 4-5 storeys on the street),
- recessed higher portions of buildings,
- the creation of new pedestrian connections and the improvement of urban character through encouragement of active lanes,
- the requirement for improved north south connections along the length of the CBD,
- the view that cycle paths must link to form a continuous network,
- the view that a Westfield style retail centre is inappropriate for the Newcastle city centre,
- the idea of a cap on city car parking spaces as a means of suppressing car traffic.
- Increased floor space ratios encouraging higher density developments
- the creation of high density residential zones near Cooks Hill and Newcastle Beach.

I object however to:

- The closure of Newcastle, Civic and Wickham Train Stations - I travel to and from Newcastle Station with my bicycle, and my needs will not be catered for under the proposed plan.
- The 90m height limit in the West End - I believe that Newcastle has a point of difference when its skyline is compared to other Australian cities and that this should be maintained. Significant density can still be achieved without 90m tall structures and I would suggest capping heights at 50m in Newcastle West and Wickham, instead focusing on FSR as a means of achieving density. A global comparison would be to look at large and middle sized Western European cities (excluding Frankfurt, London's Canary Wharf and Paris' La Defense) for an idea of what can be achieved in terms of density and activity, with lower height limits.

I would suggest that a rail connection be maintained in some form, as far East along the Newcastle Peninsula as possible. One idea that could be both strategically sensible as well as popular is burying the railway line in an uncovered or covered trench (Think of the Eastern Distributor at South Dowling St in Surry Hills/Alexandria). This would mean that all of the desired aspects of the Strategy relating to improved city-harbour connections and North-South Newcastle CBD connectivity would be achieved, without contradicting the strategy's transport goals or undermining the accessibility and jobs targets.

On the grounds of these objections, I regret to say that despite its many merits, I do not approve of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy in its current form.

Thanking you,
 Adrian Quinn.