



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

The Manager
Centres and Urban Renewal
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY 2001
urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au

Submission on behalf of Save Our Rail NSW Incorporated

Prepared by Joan Dawson; assisted by Michael Micevski, Garry Zimmerman and Peter Sansom.
info@saveourrail.org.au

President: Joan Dawson; Vice President: Kim Cross; Secretary: George Paris; Treasurer: Zane Alcorn.

Introductory Statement

Save Our Rail NSW Inc is a group of unpaid volunteers working on behalf of the community to retain infrastructure and services and to advocate for public transport improvement. Membership (currently exceeding 2000) is drawn from all parts of the Hunter Region and includes experienced professionals, young workers, students and retirees with varied levels and fields of expertise.

Save Our Rail favours progress and development and the enhancement of the future prospects for the Hunter Region and Newcastle through improved transport and better usage of existing assets. Our previous proposals reflect this:

- Newcastle Rail Improvement for the Hunter Community with Appendix A – Critical Analysis of HBC Proposal, Warabrook (March 2006);
- Transport Development for the Hunter Community (Jan 2007);
- Newcastle Towards a Sustainable and Vibrant City with Appendices A, B,C, D. (Dec 2008);
- Western Transport Initiative (WesTrans) Concept Proposal – includes Western Education Link Line (WELL) and Commuter “Clipper” buses (Nov 2010).

These and other SOR documents can be viewed on the website at saveourrail.org.au

Save Our Rail NSW Incorporated is not party political but is a Community Group. The members gain no financial advantage from any proposal or development.

With a vision for a thriving and sustainable Newcastle, Save Our Rail sees no alternative other than to keep the Hunter Region on track and connected by retaining existing “heavy” rail lines direct to Newcastle Station.

Save Our Rail has identified problems, considered emerging technologies and addressed community need.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

The solutions advanced would retain sustainable public transport while addressing the need to improve connections between the new commercial developments and established business areas of Newcastle.

There is no evidence that development proposals in Newcastle City Centre are in any way hindered by the retention of the heavy rail line to Newcastle Station.

Save Our Rail has demonstrated in proposals that rail services are essential to the success of Newcastle's revitalisation and that continuation and improvement of the heavy rail transit asset is the key to future prosperity.

Hunter Region Infrastructure Fund

The fact that a large chunk of the Hunter Infrastructure Fund has been allocated to Newcastle's renewal for the purpose of cutting the line is of great concern to other parts of the Hunter Region with genuine needs which they consider to have a higher priority than cutting off the rail line, which will have adverse impacts for them rather than any benefit.

Cessnock, Dungog, Maitland and Lake Macquarie Councils have passed resolutions of support for retention of the line. They see the importance of the direct link between their communities and Newcastle, its harbour and beaches.

They realise that if the funding is used for a questionable purpose in Newcastle CBD it will not be available for use in their communities.

There is a question as to the propriety of using Infrastructure Funding to cut off infrastructure.

The appointment of the members of the Hunter Infrastructure Fund raises questions in that two experienced community applicants with great knowledge in transport were overlooked with those appointed being well known to and chosen by HDC, then rubberstamped by the Minister.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
 Islington 2296 NSW
 Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Access between Newcastle Harbour and Hunter Street

North/south access over the Newcastle Rail Line is the perennial excuse for proposals of truncation, which have included cutting at Civic, Broadmeadow, Woodville Junction, removing the electric provision to Warabrook and truncation at Wickham.

While it is important to improve connections over the rail line there is no evidence that this cannot be adequately provided with the rail line intact and functioning.

Save Our Rail proposes pedestrian level crossings at intervals between Wickham and Civic stations, the most important being at Steel Street and Worth Place. Further pedestrian access at other key locations could enhance retail success in Hunter Street.

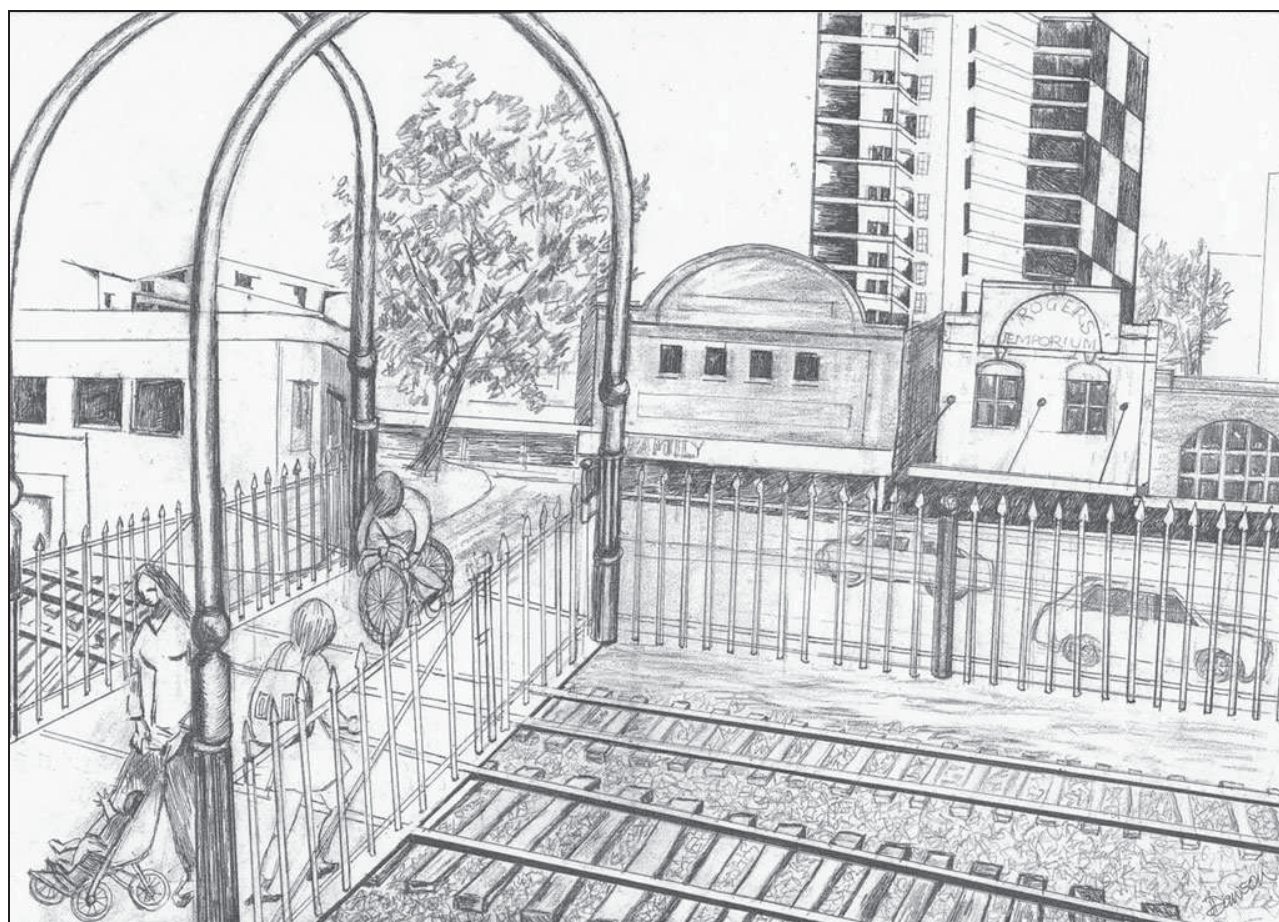


Figure 1: Concept drawing of "archway" pedestrian crossing at Worth Place (artwork by Joan Dawson)

Note: It has been stated that provision of new level crossings is not permitted. The national body for safety standards and regulations (ALCAM) does not indicate this to be true. Our enquiries reveal that level crossings are being currently built (one even in the Newcastle LGA to carry coal trains to the port). They are approved when there is a demonstrated need and a risk assessment is carried out. Councils can make application, providing evidence of need and documentation as required. Newcastle City Council should make such an application in line with its recommendations to the NSW Government for three crossings.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
 Islington 2296 NSW
 Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Other “non level” crossings between Hamilton and Newcastle Stations could be explored. They could be in the form of novelty crossings – tourist attractions such as an “adventure forest” or other theme project. A curving bridge with gradual inclination (DDA compliant) could enhance the Cottage Creek precinct or a building to building link could be considered.



Figure 2: Marriott Hotel pedestrian bridge, Baltimore USA (above left and above right)



Figure 3: Pedestrian crossing with water feature, Hastings NZ (above and right)



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Stewart Avenue

The issue of traffic using Stewart Avenue must be addressed with the possibility of a grade separation of road and rail. The issue also involves the presence of three sets of traffic light, road exits at Wharf Road, Hunter Street and King Street.

This is a major thoroughfare, which could have reduced use by means of re-routing of through traffic. Currently the Pacific Highway brings heavy traffic into this inner city junction unnecessarily. Some use of appropriate signage could direct much of this highway traffic onto alternate roads.

Road and rail could be separated by means of a high road overpass, lowering the rail line to allow a low level road overpass, placing the rail line in a trench or tunnel.

A suggestion is to lower the middle section of Stewart Ave with a cutting of about 700m which could allow through traffic to pass through the area unhindered.

Save Our rail previously proposed a raised section of rail. This would be the cheapest option as there would no land acquisition as in a road overpass. This could be a very attractive option creating a distinctive feature as in the Vancouver Sky Train.

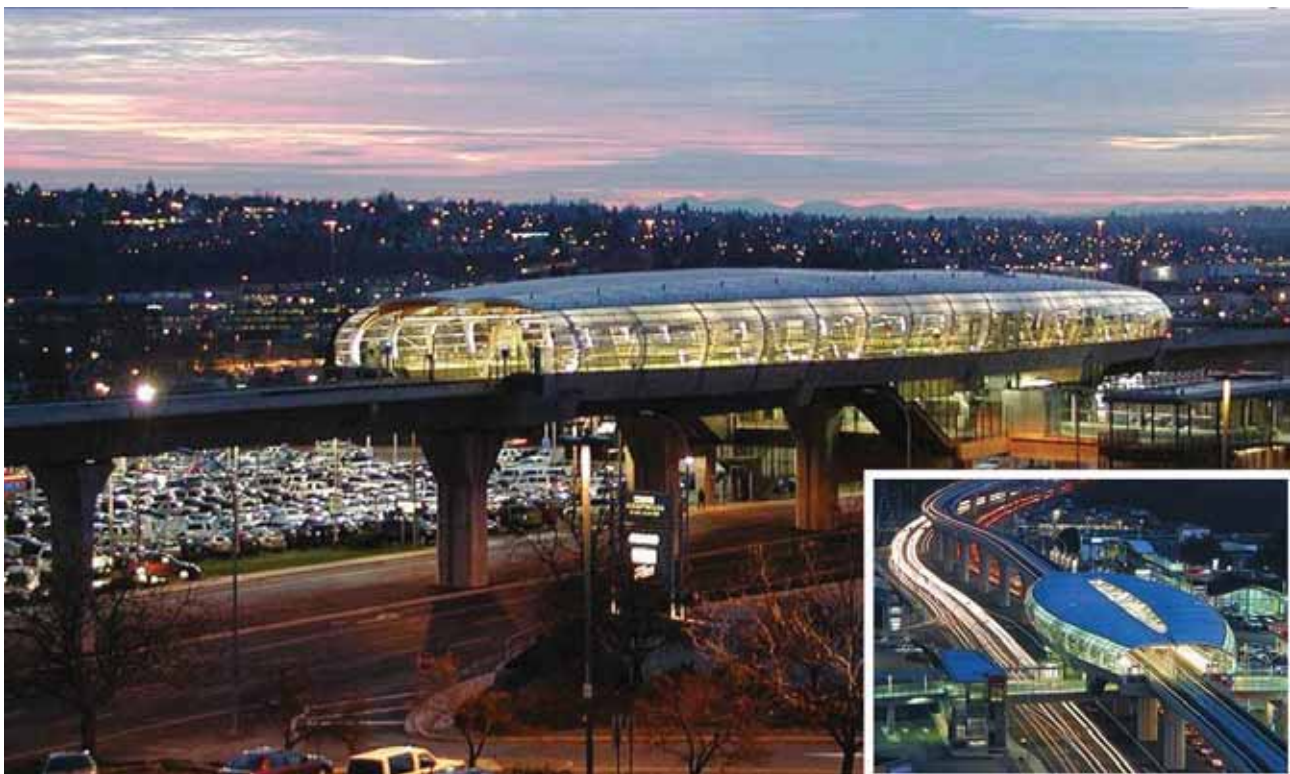


Figure 4: Brentwood Town Centre Station (Vancouver), Canada

We note that the NSW Government is planning to create a much longer and more expensive raised rail line in Sydney's North West. Why not a little one for Newcastle?

Much less expensive than Wickham truncation!



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

The Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012

General Comments

This SEPP proposal, NURS, has some worthwhile features, however any likelihood for a successful outcome from the various initiatives is jeopardised by the decision to truncate the existing heavy rail line to Newcastle Station.

It is obvious that this report was largely prepared prior to the Government decision of December 2012 to cut the Newcastle Rail Line at Wickham.

This raises questions regarding the status of the document. Is this Version 10 or Version 15? Are we to accept this as the final version?

The Government and its Planning Department seem to have been originally documenting strategies and principles to build on existing transport and assets, with advice from Newcastle City Council, reference to successful cities elsewhere, and in response to community needs via Hunter regional councils.

A worthy set of initiatives, which could aid city renewal with its rail transport intact, seems to have then been scrapped and substituted by an untidy cut and paste version which will lead to failure. What went wrong and why the change in direction?

We believe the good intentions of the Government have been undermined by the intrusion of false and misleading advice by a minority group of Novocastrians of power and influence and probable vested interests.

The references to rail truncation seem to be awkwardly inserted into what could have been a reasonable document for discussion and finalisation.

Specific Comments

The opening statement in the Executive summary indicates that it was written with the premise that existing rail services would continue – *“a framework for the city to successfully grow... improve the city’s economy, access, connections”*. These aims can only be achieved while having available a mass transit provision.

- The current rail service to Newcastle has “mass transit” capability and is principally an **intercity** service, connecting Newcastle with Sydney, Lake Macquarie, Central Coast and Maitland. To suggest it could be replaced by a bus service down Hunter Street is ludicrous. It would be like saying your car could be replaced by a dinky tricycle!
- The statement says “improve access” Also Section 6 Transport access and Connectivity in the Guiding Principles reads “maximise accessibility and **convenience** of public transport to and within the city centre and prioritise a range of transport modes to reduce private vehicle use. ... Support infrastructure and public domain improvements to attract people to the city centre.”



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

- Currently trains travel directly between Wickham and Newcastle stations in 4 minutes. If passengers are offloaded to scramble along the platform and queue to achieve a place on a bus before jolting down Hunter Street there is no question that this would not only be physically **inconvenient** but would cause **considerable delay** in arrival at the destination. Estimates vary from 20 to 30 minutes. A commuter needing punctuality in the journey to work will not be prepared to tolerate this delay and would probably opt for the car.

A liberal Party survey in Maitland indicated that more than 50% would travel by car if a forced transfer at Wickham was introduced. The result of such a trip interruption would have the opposite affect than the stated principle of “reduce private vehicle use”. An increase in car use would occur, added to by the factor of extra buses. Chaos would be ensured with the proposal to narrow Hunter Street.

Goal 8 of the Government Targets 2021 is “*to increase the share of commuter trips made by public transport – To and from Newcastle CBD during peak hours to 20% by 2016*”. **An interrupted trip certainly does not improve access to Newcastle** and would prevent achievement of Goal 8, as well as:

Goal 9, which seeks to “*put customers at the centre of public planning and provision to ensure their needs, preferences and opinions are reflected in the decision making, planning activities and operations*”.

Seamless

Politicians, including Member for Newcastle, Tim Owen have spoken of the truncation of the rail line at Wickham being a transport improvement and that it will be “seamless.”

SEAMLESS? Tell that to the mum with a couple of toddlers and a pram, or the granny with her crook knees, the blind bloke who has been able to use trains because he can count the steps and memorise the distance to the train. The dictionary defines “seamless” as having no join, as being smooth. Any person who sews garments will tell you that it is continuous and uninterrupted because there is no change in surface/material. Getting off at Wickham for a total change of mode will not be smooth or wrinkle free or like having no change in material. **It will NOT BE SEAMLESS.**

Tourism

This will have serious implications for the tourist industry which is considered to be important for Newcastle’s future. Following the closure of the steel industry and in consideration of the natural assets of Newcastle a promising start has been made in launching the city as a tourist destination.

The Lonely Planet Guide listed Newcastle in its top 10 destinations for 2011. This is a backpackers’ guide, the manual for the cheap trip market. These tourists do not arrive on the grand cruise ships – they fly in on one of the cheaper airlines and look for places that are accessed by train. If their guide book indicates they have to change to a bus this will inevitably be a turn-off. No one with a huge backpack would choose a trip that involves a change of mode 3 stops from their destination. If there was an alternative place they could get to in a “seamless” fashion that is the way they would go.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Currently Newcastle has a direct train service from city to city and from inland Hunter Region centres. This cannot be improved by cutting off the head. Prof Graham Currie (Monash University) used that expression in stating that to do that would negatively impact on the entire network of the Hunter and even on other rail services on the NSW coast. Currie, in his independent review of the Lower Hunter Transport Working Group report, also said:

“The passenger rail services in the Hunter region are a high quality feature of the region’s public transport system. Many cities of substantially greater size than Newcastle lack rail services of this scale and would covet the opportunity for such a substantive resource as a means for providing sustainable transport into the future. Newcastle is clearly gifted in the physical and natural resources it possesses. It is unfortunate that its sustainable transport system is to be discarded so easily based on what can be factually identified as biased, flawed and misrepresented advice.”

The flawed LHTWG report is still being used as reference material by the HDC and HBC. It is part of the faulty advice being provided to the Government. The Government has been misled into making a decision based on misrepresentations.

Major Events

Cutting the rail line at Wickham would create huge problems for the successful organisation of major events – New Years Eve celebrations and music festivals such as Fat As Butter. Trains currently carry the crowds to these important drawcard events. Buses will not have adequate capacity for the thousands who flock to the foreshore on these occasions. Even providing large numbers of buses will not overcome the problem as there will be limited movement possible down Hunter Street. Buses could be banked up trying to get through and contributing to the traffic themselves, especially as it is planned to narrow Hunter Street.

Steamfest will not be able to come to Newcastle ever again. The 3801 will be *up the line without a track!* Newcastle and Maitland have a historic rail connection with the opening of rail between the two cities in 1857, part of Australia’s heritage. This is celebrated annually at Steamfest and both cities benefit from the influx of tourists who come to enjoy the historic trains and ride up and down the line.

Newcastle will be the big loser if it cannot be part of Steamfest. What if it is linked instead to some other city – Taree? Gosford? Lake Macquarie? Doesn’t have the same historic link

Events are crucial to the success of tourism, an important component for Newcastle renewal.

Disability and Frail Aged

Passengers with reduced mobility would be greatly disadvantaged in an in-trip change of mode. Such a forced interchange would probably be contrary to Disability Discrimination guidelines. Certainly it would prevent many in the category of disability from being able to use the service.

The NURS document states that the AECOM study would be used. This study indicates that because stabling of trains cannot be accommodated at Wickham (insufficient space) that operation will need to be at Hamilton or even further back towards Broadmeadow.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

AECOM says Beaumont Street and Railway Street crossings would be closed as a result. These are two important access points for traffic movement into Newcastle, and their closure would ensure traffic chaos, some suggest gridlock.

Closure of Beaumont Street would also affect passengers who change trains at Hamilton for the Hunter Line connection with the electric service. Those with disability, including frail aged cannot use the stairway over the line, currently using the level crossing to move from one side of the line to the other. Again this could be in breach of DDA guidelines.

The level crossing is also used by the general public as a link between the two sections of Beaumont Street and its closure would have an adverse effect on businesses in Beaumont Street. When the Hamilton Business Chamber officers became aware of this possibility they expressed outrage.

Honeysuckle Success or Dodo?

The Executive Summary refers to the “success” of Honeysuckle. The ugly buildings blocking any access or views to the waterfront do not represent “success” to most people.

The buildings have been built without reference to existing Newcastle architecture. They certainly cannot be said to be “sympathetic” to the fine collection of heritage buildings of which Newcastle should be proud. Rather than being protected many seem to be gradually falling into “demolition by neglect.”

The business success of this precinct is not evident – a photo taken mid morning on a Thursday shows dead empty pavements. The Hunter Street Mall is busier even though it is seen as a failure just because GPT pulled out.



Figure 5: Honeysuckle empty pavement, mid Thursday morning



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

The statement “*parts of the city have experienced decline*” is relevant to the development of Honeysuckle. It should read “**BECAUSE of Honeysuckle other parts of the city centre have experienced decline.**”

There are no “new” enterprises in this precinct – Hunter Water, Sparke Helmore, GHD, NIB, Government Offices including HDC, the Museum, even the licence for the Crowne Plaza Hotel came from the other side; the list goes on. **All were existing entities in Hunter Street and simply moved to the fancy new premises leaving Hunter Street to languish.**

Having closed off several crossings over the rail line during the establishment of Honeysuckle, thereby restricting some valuable access points the developer, (HDC) then **falsely and without evidence lays the blame for the hunter street decline on the existence of the rail line.**

This ridiculous premise – as well as being a lie – is being perpetuated in HDC and HBC documents. False and misleading statements are repeated in HDC and HBC proposals which have been used to advise the Government. *(Reference Appendix C SOR proposal points out the many false and misrepresented statements, including references to the flawed Lower Hunter Transport Working Group report).*

Many factors have caused Newcastle CBD’s decline including:

- the rise of Shopping Malls – Kotara Fair, Charlestown Square, Jesmond Centre, etc;
- the closure of the Royal Newcastle Hospital, relocated to Rankin Park;
- closure of BHP;
- the Newcastle Earthquake (closed Newcastle for 3 years).

The rail service bringing customers, tourists and workers has been valuable to the city and cannot be cited as a burden. If it closes Newcastle will decline further.

The main inhibitor of development in Newcastle LGA is its situation on undermined land. Almost all of Newcastle is undermined by old coal mines. This causes delay in building progress and adds huge costs in grouting the mine shafts, required by the Mines Subsidence Board. *(This has been identified at workshops and forums. Reference Appendix C SOR proposal, p9.)*

The land under the Newcastle rail line and a part of Wickham are the only sites in Newcastle not undermined. This must not be ignored as a factor in the cry to rip up the rail line.

Developers who own land adjacent to the rail line must see the potential for expansion onto the corridor, increasing their footprint and increasing the chance of unimpeded building.

It is not credible to state that this land will not be sold if it ceases to carry trains. It will not be left idle as it is too valuable, especially if there is a change of Government.

The most valuable slice of real estate in the Newcastle LGA? Not for sale? Fairies in the bottom of my garden!



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Community Consultation

We understand that some of the owners of properties along the rail line hold key positions of power and influence. Some elected officials have an undeclared conflict of interest and should be of interest to ICAC. The ownership of all properties proximate to the Newcastle Rail Line should be investigated by ICAC, as it has relevance to the advice being given to the NSW Government.

The power groups, HDC, HBC, Property Council, Newcastle Alliance and Newcastle NOW have enjoyed a privileged position of consultation with the O'Farrell government which has accepted their advice as representing community opinion. It only represents a minority.

This Government which promised to consult widely with the community has not fulfilled that promise.

Neither Save Our Rail nor the wider community were consulted prior to the decision to truncate the Newcastle Rail Line. No meetings were held in Lake Macquarie, Maitland or Upper Hunter locations.

A meeting in the Newcastle City Hall in 2012 to determine Long Term Master Plan priorities overwhelmingly indicated the opinion that the Newcastle Rail Line should be retained. Table after table in a gathering of about 130 people, reported that their top priority was to keep the rail line.

This was not recorded in the report of the meeting. Following protests from SOR and individuals there was a minor change inserted into the middle of an unrelated item. This record has not been adjusted satisfactorily despite my strong objections.

After the decision was announced by Mr Hazzard I stated that SOR, the major community organisation concerned with transport, had not been able to meet with the Minister for Planning. This was relayed over the ABC and that afternoon I was contacted with an invitation to meet with the great man the following week. We had an interesting discussion but no reversal of the decision. Mr Hazzard agreed to come to Newcastle to workshop with all concerned parties, but to date has not kept this promise.

An information meeting was held this year at Newcastle City Hall. This was certainly not a proper consultative forum. Speakers delivered a message followed by a question period. Limited numbers of people were allowed to queue to speak on microphones set up for the purpose. Community members were informed they could not address the question of the rail truncation, only other initiatives in the NURS, even though this was a major thrust of the strategy.

Many did state their objections to the rail truncation and some were prevented from speaking further by the microphone being turned off in mid sentence! **Is this democracy at work and true consultation?** I was at the meeting but was not able to get a turn to speak as I was still waiting in the queue when the meeting closed.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Revitalisation Projects and the Rail Line

Economic Initiatives

- **Diversification of Economy and Job Creation**

In many cities throughout the world programs of renewal have been necessary, including cultural, education, port operations, freight and logistics. This SEPP statement lists a “*transport*” strategy that “*encompasses aspects of city making that have been proven to be successful elsewhere*”.

Invariably there has been a requirement for adequate mass transport to complement the programs.

Rail has been the great enabler and the key to the success of many cities. In cities throughout the world when rail has been removed, this has been found to have been a foolish decision and there are many documented cases where it has been re-installed at great cost.

Newcastle claims to be “*different*”. Its business chamber and development body demand the existing efficient mass transit system be removed. This flies in the face of expert advice and examples of successful cities throughout the world.

There is no logic in this Newcastle disease.

Programs for job creation would be enhanced by adequate transport to bring the workers and customers. Trains bring people – Newcastle needs people! What is the problem? What’s going on?

The statement “*promoting the city centre as the main location for commercial office tenancies*” surprised me, and caused me to think that perhaps the left hand doesn’t know what the right hand is doing because of the following: Government offices were actually **moved out of Newcastle CBD** and relocated to nearby Lake Macquarie city recently. Allowing a proliferation of shopping ‘malls’ in fringe areas has been a policy disaster which should have been prevented, but for the Government of NSW to move office workers out of this city, when it is about to spend \$500 million to attempt to revive the CBD, is seriously alarming and back to front.

- **Additional Dwellings**

Adding to housing stock is crucial to the progress of Newcastle as a city. However if the preferred passenger transport mode is removed people will not so readily be attracted to move into the city.

The building of the dwellings is not hindered by the presence of the rail line. Advertisements for inner city units and other dwellings list the rail as a sales pitch. I personally know people who have stated they would only move to a place with rail transport.

Increasing inner city dwellings is not dependent on removing the rail line.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

- **University Campus**

The building of a university campus in the CBD is an initiative which could bring students into this area, though with its online focus it is doubtful if there would be 3000 as suggested in media reports. Irrespective of the number, students require cheap efficient transport. That exists with the rail line in place.

The statement in the Urbis report “...if the rail is not removed this may jeopardise the development of the CBD campus going ahead.” **is absolutely false and misleading.**

It was refuted by the previous Vice Chancellor, Nick Saunders (*ref. Appendix C, SOR proposal, p19*) who stated that the City Campus is not contingent on rail removal.

The planned University campus will gain benefit from the current rail provision which would provide links between the Callaghan Campus, the new city campus and the Ourimbah campus. It is nonsensical to encourage the University presence in the inner city and at the same time remove the transport they would need.

- **Relocation of Court House**

A recent tribunal hearing was held to determine approval or rejection of the proposed replacement Newcastle Court House building. The provision of parking was extremely limited in the design being presented, therefore it was stated that this building should not be allowed to proceed unless more parking was added.

The tribunal overruled this objection and approved the planned building on the basis that the parking was adequate for the court officials and an occasional disabled attendee, **because of its proximity to Civic Station!**

Conclusion

Initiatives to improve Newcastle are welcome but I have not found one item that cannot be undertaken now, with the rail line in place. There is no attempt to justify the proposal to remove the rail line and no reason provided to justify a huge expenditure on building a massive interchange at Wickham. The Wickham site is not adequate for the terminus operational requirements, such as stabling and the number of buses required to replace trains would be difficult to fit into the space, where access in and out will be difficult.

Newcastle Station is much more suitable as a terminus, the function it currently meets. It has an established bus layover and is close the ferry wharf. There is room for a sympathetic expansion of buildings as previously proposed by Save Our Rail, with a large development on the Harbour side. This new building would have potential for revenue raising through leasing and other activities.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
Islington 2296 NSW
Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

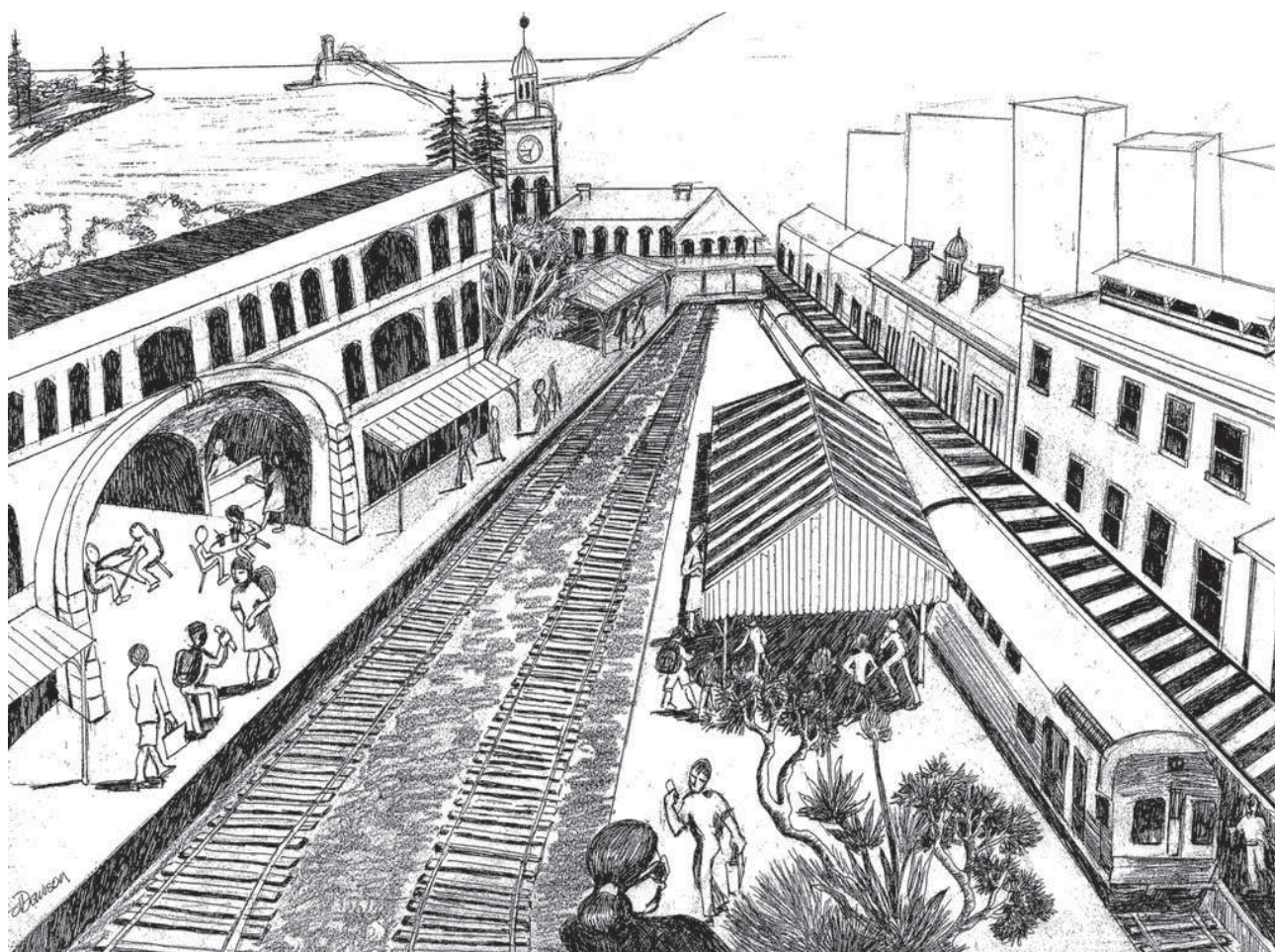


Figure 6: Possible sympathetic development at Newcastle Station (artwork by Joan Dawson)

Newcastle Station has huge unrealised potential. It has large upper storey areas which are currently unused and could be opened up. The magnificent “*silver service dining room*” could be a major tourist attraction, serving high tea or luncheon in style. The twenty odd bedrooms could become backpacker accommodation. There are many possibilities for this grand old building which is being wasted.

Save Our Rail in its major proposal (*Newcastle Towards a Sustainable and Vibrant City p30*) outlines a case for improved access by opening the western end of the station, as well as re-opening the original entry to Bolton Street.

Some cosmetic initiatives put forward in the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy have merit, such as making Wheeler place more inviting and a few minor changes to the Hunter Street Mall. These can be done now.

There is absolutely no reason that the rail line removal would suddenly make the place become more attractive or have any bearing on whether owners can’t smarten up their premises. Newcastle owners are the reason for the drabness – a bit of TLC is what is needed, not destruction of a public utility to allow private profit.



Save Our Rail NSW Inc.

PO Box 212
 Islington 2296 NSW
 Ph: 0408 618 198
saveourrail.org.au

Save Our Rail, however suggests that water features could assist in an enhancement program along the rail line. The geographic similarity of Newcastle and San Diego means this city could look just as great using a dose of creativity.

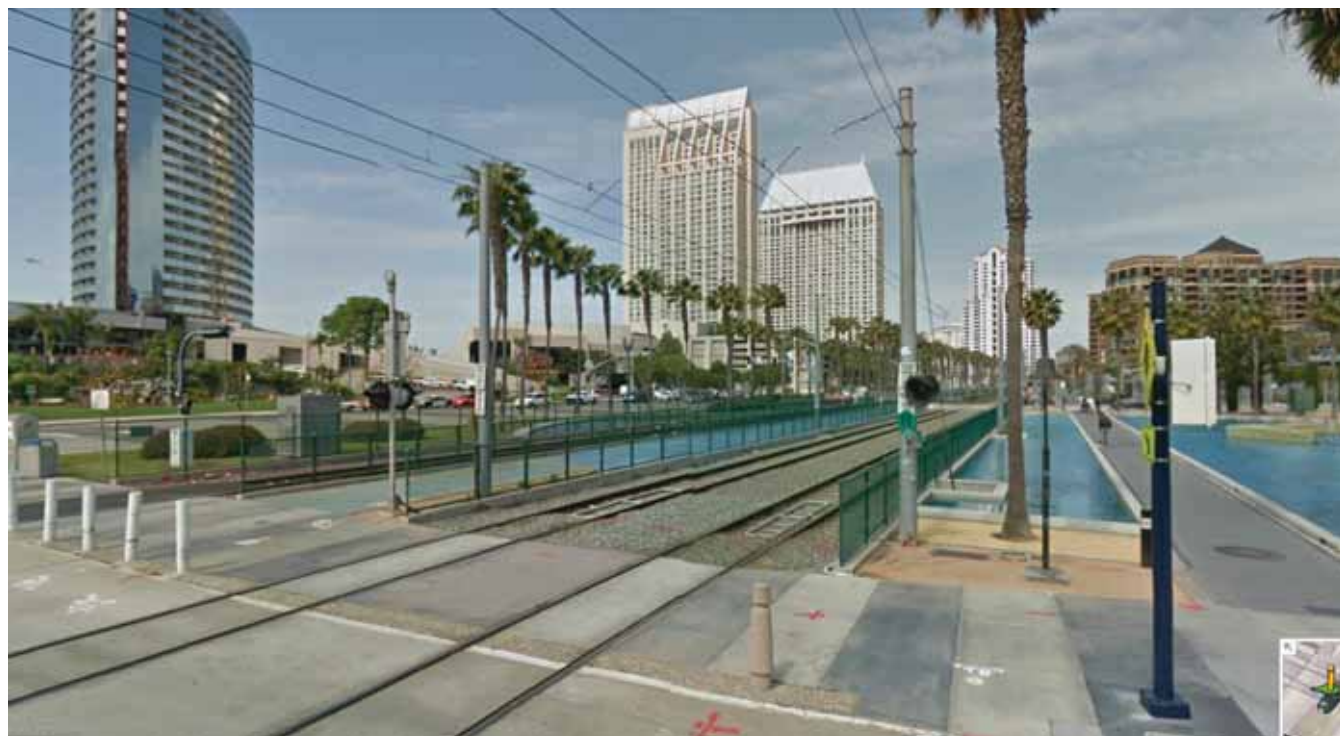


Figure 7: Level crossings over landscaped railway track, including a water feature: San Diego, USA

If the Japanese had bombed the Newcastle Rail Line during WW2 there would have been much distress and inconvenience and a huge blow to progress. Mr Greiner has come to Newcastle and declared that the line should be ripped up and likening the city to Beirut. This would have a similar effect as bombing it.

If this city falls victim to his plans it will become like Beirut. We will have a city with its heart ripped out. The City strategy must not be aiming for destruction but looking forward, with tourists arriving, with promotion of the rail and its value for tourism and events, with improvements to access between the city precincts. It can be done, and it does not need the loss of a valuable transport artery.

IMPROVE NOT REMOVE