

March 2013

Manager, Centres and Urban Renewal
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms Johnston,

Re: Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy, prepared under State Environmental Planning Policy (Urban Renewal) 2010. The exhibition period for this Strategy is 14th December 2012 – 17th March 2013.

I've spent 10 years working in California's Silicon Valley for companies such as Cisco, Sun Microsystems and Oracle on Worldwide Enterprise Projects. I came back home to Australia in 2010 and founded my own Social Media business. With the experience and knowledge from Silicon Valley, I help Australian companies with marketing, sales, and branding. More recently, I've accepted a role, down in Sydney, at Amazon as a Program Director. My role includes business development and program management of Amazon projects throughout the Asia Pacific and Oceania geographic region.

Sydney's density and cost of living are staggering. Sydney's business climate is attracting some of the most sought after business professionals in the world. These professionals are spending more time working from home (commuting). The West of Sydney is sprawled out without any effective public transport, the East is largely full and overpriced, the South is limited in space by the Royal National Park, which leaves the North.

People are looking to move North. Some of these business professionals, such as myself, are working in Sydney and residing in Newcastle City. Removing the rail network between Broadmeadow and Newcastle terminus would make traveling-to and living-in Newcastle City much less attractive, due to the additional amount of time it would take to complete the, already lengthy, three (3) hour journey.

Furthermore, "NSW 2021" calls on Transport for NSW to deliver an integrated transport system to ensure "different transport modes work together and the interests of the travelling public are put first." The NSW 2021 Hunter Regional Action plan highlights the importance of providing a high quality train service from Sydney to Newcastle City, and commits to supporting the Commonwealth government to investigate the provision of a high speed rail service.

Newcastle will continue to grow and evolve to strengthen its position as the location and setting between the river and the ocean make Newcastle a compact, people friendly city with unique attributes. Newcastle City will be a vibrant regional hub and attractive destination for businesses, residents and visitors. Providing accessible and suitable employment opportunities, a choice of retail and other services, and local, national and international investment opportunities.

Sydney professionals have higher disposable incomes than Newcastle professionals. Thus, if the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 were to support and encourage

Sydney professionals to make Newcastle City their home, it would bring a continually growing influx of monetary investment in housing, schools, food, entertainment, retail, sporting events and local Hunter tourism (Eg, Hunter Valley wineries, Port Stephens, Nelson Bay).

It would be a mistake of gargantuan proportion to scale back the present rail link. This would not only make living in Newcastle City less attractive, but would handicap the city from the future realisation of a high speed rail link connecting Sydney to Newcastle City.

The elements of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 that I completely support include:

- Increased access to the health and recreation facilities offered in Newcastle City, including beaches, associated recreation space, health care, employment and other services.
- Increased commuter use of public and active transport, reducing traffic in the city, improving air quality and addressing chronic disease risk factors.
- Addressing equity by ensuring high quality seamless access to the amenity of Newcastle City for households without a motor vehicle.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Sequeira'.

Rob Sequeira
Program Director
Amazon Web Services