

urbanrenewal - comments on Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

From: Michele Stokes <mcstokes@hotmail.com>
To: <urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 3/3/2013 8:42 PM
Subject: comments on Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

As a resident of the Royal residential development in Newcastle with no commercial interests:

- I am extremely disappointed that a decision has been made to cut the rail link at Wickham. The amount of money needed to develop this area as a result is unbelievable. It appears that by cutting the rail link to Newcastle developers will provide the money for this development in return for access to prime real estate. The state government in return appears to be "developing" Newcastle with a major transit hub. It is however an illusion that the people of Newcastle are not buying.
- We are told that the water table is an issue for underground rail- surely the water table was also an issue for the Harbour tunnel? Short sightedness is not a vision.
- Currently when travelling to Sydney I pay one fare which is cost effective enough for me to use public transport regardless of extra time. If I get off at Central to travel by light rail elsewhere it costs almost as much as the whole trip from Newcastle. Will our light rail fares be included in the rail fare from Newcastle to Sydney? If not the cost for 2 to travel to Sydney will be cheaper and more convenient by car and discourage my husband and I from continuing to be regular users of public transport.
- Claiming that buses will provide the link from Wickham to Newcastle is not reassuring given our experience using buses to get to Newcastle airport-long waits, incomplete timetables. If we travel outside peak times will there be a guarantee that services will be provided? Trains outside peak times are already unsafe. Waiting for buses during this time at lonely bus stops increases risks and discourages use by older and more vulnerable passengers.
- I do not believe that a development at the Store site will thrive. Has anyone researched who is going to support these stores? It will drag business from Hamilton and Market town and I believe that in the end they will all struggle. We already have a Woolworths, Coles, 2 Aldi's, a Foodstore and an IGA. Not once have I ever experienced a crowd at any of these stores. To develop another centre I believe will drag them all under. As our Post Office deteriorates it begs the question why a new commercial development couldn't be placed here- like the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney- a tourist attraction

at the end of a rail link to our beautiful beaches. It is in much more urgent need for preservation as an icon than the Store.

- Given Newcastle's experience in gaining funding for the Art Gallery I am at a loss as to who is funding the development of the Hunter Street Mall. Are the developers providing funds for this as well as the millions for the transit hub? Opening Hunter street to the harbour is not enough to build businesses. You need people and free parking. Creating village type residential accommodation for students instead of extensive commercial properties would bring Hunter Street back to life. Noone except residents are going to shop in Hunter Street if parking fees are in place. Non residents will always shop at centres where they can park long term for free.
- Moving the university as the FIRST step in the revitalisation of Newcastle would bring the demand back to Newcastle without cutting the rail link.
- With the Court move and University campus in place at Civic, people would return to the city and demand both accommodation and services.
- Given our experience at the Royal Newcastle Hospital development with NSW Planning Assessment Commission we know that your 'vision' is just that-pictures with no guarantees except that the rail will be cut and developers will gain access to prime real estate. It is definitely not a certainty. Developers will amend and revise at will with the community left with little say.

Not impressed
M. Stokes