

**urbanrenewal - Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy**

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**Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy**

I would like to add my voice to those calling for the retention of the rail service to Civic.

Living near Muswellbrook, I am a regular train traveller, both to Newcastle and Sydney.

I am acutely aware of the value of these services as I studied part time in Sydney for 4 years. During this time I got to fully appreciate the significance of rail to the people of the Upper, particularly the elderly who could travel affordably and independently to medical appointments, hospital, shopping or in many cases for babysitting their grand children with relative ease and comfort.

Another category of travellers is the Upper Hunter school students. Train transport is a fabulous way for schools to be able to offer equitable access to Newcastle excursions. The cost of hiring a bus inevitably rules out the children from financially struggling families but the train, at student prices is within reach of most students and can be easily covered for the few who may have difficulties. Changing from a train to a bus means splitting the group and increased travel time, time out of precious excursion opportunities.

The train to civic also means our kids can get directly to the beach with their boards and bikes.

Travelling on to Sydney means switching at Hamilton. I am concerned that Sydney trains may only be travelling to Broadmeadow. This will add time to an already typically slow journey. Being able to make Sydney and back in a day is a significant benefit of the rail service. Adding travel time on both journeys will mean a less significant window of opportunity in Sydney and less margin for error, when it comes to delays.

The people of the Upper Hunter, who make good use of the train for work, study and recreation impress me. I wonder at the system that allows people to travel undetected, due to poor ticketing structures.

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