

18th April 2013

Manager
Centres and Urban Renewal
Department Planning and Infrastructure
GPO BOX 39
SYDNEY 2001

Dear Sir or Madam:

Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

After living for 15 years in the public transport wasteland that is the lower Hunter around Cessnock, it was with pleasure that my family moved to Newcastle last year (May 2012). The decision to move was a major one with three motivating factors:

- The ability for our teenage sons to have independence of travel
- To become a one car family instead of two
- To fully immerse ourselves in a city which we have enjoyed visiting for many years

Now I work in Hunter Street. I walk to work every day and it is a simultaneously uplifting and depressing experience. Uplifting to see the number of young start up business's making their mark in the buildings that are available to them – The Emporium, Studio Melt, Space, Nook Store, Terrace Bar etc. not to mention the amazing coffee shops and world-class restaurants. On the other hand, depressing to see the number of beautiful empty buildings full of character, history and stories, being sat on by 'speculators' apparently without any sense of responsibility for what they have purchased nor vision to do anything until the apparently troublesome train line is removed.

I have yet to see any argument explaining why the train line is a hindrance to the revitalisation of Newcastle. If the plan is to create more housing, jobs and to also develop the city campus of the University, then to take away a vital piece of infrastructure now is incomprehensible.

The financial figure I understand to remove the rail line and build a new interchange is in the region of \$220 million. How is so much money available to take away something so important, important enough for every major city in the world to invest in?

Just imagine what wonderful things could be achieved for Newcastle with \$220 million.

This is an opportunity to think big, give back to a city and a region that gives so much to NSW. Improve not destroy our rail network, reinvigorate our buildings and public spaces. Put your trust in the people who live here and love it with passion, not in developer speculators whose interests are self and politically motivated.

I have lived in many places and in different countries; Newcastle is a city of contradictions but without doubt the most amazing place to live. If the train line is removed this would be the first nail in the coffin – it will never come back, and so to would go the uniqueness of this city, making way for the sanitised vision of the developers and their local government friends.

Kind Regards

Nicola Ward