

urbanrenewal - Submission to draft Newcastle urban renewal strategy

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Date: 3/16/2013 3:16 PM
Subject: Submission to draft Newcastle urban renewal strategy
CC: Jo Wicks <jowicks_1@yahoo.com.au>

Attention: manager, centers and urban renewal
 Department of planning and infrastructure
 Gpo box 39 Sydney nsw 2001

I strongly object to the draft strategy. My key objection is the removal of the railway, Civic Station and Newcastle Station.

The draft strategy should build on the existing line and promote efficient use of infrastructure.

The current rail system works very effectively – with the exception of low patronage. However, rather than seeing low patronage as weakness and reason to remove the line, it should be viewed as a key opportunity. The system has extra capacity. Urban densification around the railway should occur to utilize this extra capacity. However, the current strategy removes infrastructure and promotes urban densification - which makes no sense at all.

Making efficient use of infrastructure and promoting development around railway lines is a key objective of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the SEPPs. The strategy is therefore inconsistent with the act and SEPPs.

Removing the infrastructure is also extraordinary wasteful and short sighted. A gross waste of tax payers money. Future generations will be appalled and will likely have to reinstate the line at major cost. This has happened in other cities, such as Perth. It is also environmentally unsustainable as it will promote additional private car usage and greenhouse gas emissions.

The rail line is the most significant asset the city has to encourage future redevelopment. Every other city in Australia is seeking to expand the railway network – except Newcastle – as it is a catalyst for redevelopment. The railway offers significant reductions in the required car park spaces for development proposals. Removing the rail line will result in a loss of this concession. Over the next 50 years access to rail based public transport will be a key and essential consideration by new home buyers, or people seeking to access the sydney job market. And what about newcastle accessing the Melbourne to Brisbane highspeed rail network? It won't happen because Newcastle will not have a rail line.

The current plan is not based on sound planning principles, the concept of sustainable development, or even a comprehensive public transport plan for the Hunter Region. Infrastructure funding is also not available for the plan, meaning the plan is likely to fail during implementation and no guaranteed bus replacement system is likely.

My family moved to inner city Newcastle because of good access to the railway. We had a choice of any city in Australia. If the plan is adopted I will not be looking to invest in the inner city revitalisation area as it is not based on sound long term planning and sustainability principles.

Rather than seek to vandalise a city, why not work to promote local revitalisation, rather than pandering to an outdated development sector seeking to build car-dependent retirement villages that went out 40 years ago in the 1970s. It hardly progressive and will not bring Newcastle into the 21st century.

The reasons why the city is not developing rapidly is due to urban sprawl and edge of city retail expansion at Kotara, Charlestown and Glendale. Mine subsidence is the other factor. The rail line removal will not solve these problems. It will just make Newcastle less important and less livable as a city.

I urge you not to adopt this plan. It is an act of vandalism towards Newcastle.

Any planner, MP or minister who supports this plan is clearly in the pocket of the development industry and has no regard for the needs of the community (current or future generations). The plan helps developers make few extra dollars on the short term at the expense of the community now and in the long run. Have a good hard think about the legacy you want to leave on Newcastle, and the impact on your electorate. Don't adopt this plan. The city was built around the rail line. Remove it and you remove part of what makes Newcastle a city.

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Sent from my iPhone