

## Submission Regarding Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012

Dear Sir

Having read the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 I have come to the conclusion that while the document at first glance appears to be impressive it would seem there are issues that should have been obvious to those putting this plan together.

It has been stated that the centre piece of this plan is the closure of the railway to allow better access between the city centre and the foreshore. In the Executive summary it is stated that the plan is to promote a shift to public transport to reduce the number of cars in the city centre. However when one looks at the plan for Hunter Street, which is to replace what we see now with two cycle lanes, two traffic lanes, one bus lane, for inbound buses only and a row of trees; this on top of the closure of the railway; how is this supposed encourage the use of public transport? There is no mention of the result of a traffic study to whether the new arrangements will in fact work. Has such a study been done? If such a study has not been done, then why has the decision been taken to remodel Hunter Street in this manner and close the railway?

It is stated that the plan is to have 6,000 additional dwellings and 10,000 additional jobs by 2036. Has anyone considered whether the buses will cope with the number of commuters that will be travelling into and out of the city during the peak hours? I've noticed that it would seem that those who have put this plan together seem to be of the view that everyone who will be living in the city will also be working there, however, in reality, many of the residents who are presently living in Newcastle commute to Sydney and other places for work. When it is remembered that only one lane will be available for out bound traffic that will include private motor vehicles, commercial vehicles as well as buses and if additional buses are to be used to transport commuters then that suggests more strain will be put on an already congested Hunter Street. On top of this, an additional 4,000 commuters will be required to use public transport into the city. Despite claims that there will be more buses, only three bus routes will see more buses; they are the 100, the 320 and the 363 and that will only be during the peak hours.

With a lot fewer parking spaces and the removal of suburban rail services, has anyone calculated the number of buses required to fill the needs of commuters? Considering the carrying capacity of buses when compared to trains and the number of buses that will be required to replace the trains and the number of times buses will be stopping to let off passengers, it doesn't take much to realise that the journey into the city, on a bus will be very slow indeed. This may very well have the affect of turning people away from coming into Newcastle.

Will the buses have the capacity for carrying surf boards, wheel chairs, prams or strollers? Failure to cater for mothers, the elderly or disabled may be in contravention of the anti

discrimination act. I've noticed that there seems to be no provision for the elderly or disabled. The amended plan has removed flat housing that would have catered for the elderly. Again this may contravene the anti discrimination act.

The plan places an emphasis upon connectivity between Hunter Street and the harbour at the expense of access to the city from the west. While access to the harbour may be easier on foot, many will find access to Hunter Street from the west or north, very difficult while the disabled and elderly may find it impossible.

There are no details regarding the interchange at Wickham and nothing is said about how a seamless change from trains to buses will occur. Actually there is nothing about where commuters will get onto or off a bus. There are not details regarding facilities or shelter at the new interchange.

In short, while this plan does have some merit, the plan to close the railway which I understand is the centre piece of the plan is a huge flaw that will result in serious congestion to the point that many people will feel they have been locked out of the city. This plan needs to be seriously reviewed and I would strongly suggest keeping the trains running to the present terminus.