

SUBMISSION TO DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN

Thank you for extending the time needs to make a submission. Christmas and summer holidays are very time consuming.

Congratulations for starting with a draft and presenting it for community consultation, not like the dictatorship that was done over the heavy rail debacle.

Please this time listen to the ordinary people who live here and truthfully explain your final decisions. Many people have chosen not to comment on the draft as they do not trust the NSW Government – hence the results at the last election – a government who plainly does not understand this city. These Novocastrians have just given up, its not worth their time and energy.

First up and the most important fact. As my grandchildren are 7th and 8th generation of Novocastrians on at least 5 branches of the family tree, I take offence at the name Hunter City. The person/s who instigated this name has shown a great disrespect to our community. The city is Newcastle or the City of Newcastle.

Would you call the City of Sydney, the capital of NSW, Port Jackson City or Jackson City? Think not.

Hunter Region is OK as a name for the Hunter Valley but not the name of the principle city. As well the interchange is called Wickham Interchange not Newcastle.

Newcastle City is certainly unique and so are Novocastrians, a very different community to any other city. Newcastle always plays 2nd fiddle to Sydney for over 200 years, always the bridesmaid and never the bride. Outsiders do not understand its cicque and this has been very evident in the planning documents submitted by the NSW Governments public servants over the last 4 years. Many of the Hunter Region residents have decided not to submit their thoughts on the present draft as their previous submissions have been ignored and it takes considerable time and energy to do their reports. It is mainly the over 55's people who have the time and passion and inclination to write submissions and the majority of those people will not be around to see any plan completed and the developers/business people, whose companies will greatly benefit from the NSW Government plans. The younger generation on the whole are not interested and parents with children living at home are too busy, unless they have a monetary interest in the development.

Personally, as a frequent participant in what is happening in this City I am passionate about; I feel as though the local people working for the NSW Government on these "community consultations" cannot express their own real opinions, for fear of loosing their job. That is very sad.

Transport is a very contentious issue in this City of Newcastle.

Intercity transport connections should be separate to inner city transport, and the present scenario shows that these two have not been successfully combined together.

Visitors, tourists, people with disabilities, surfers, some with bicycles and aging baby boomers, (when walking, cycling and driving become difficult), require a more direct, easy accessible public transport system,

Both draft plans are just that, draft, an overview of Newcastle City and the Hunter Valley. They are an update of many previous documents that never eventuated.

2.

The next stage of the planning should show possible choices with more specific details of each Direction in the draft plan, with estimates of cost. The community should be able to choose which one they prefer.

eg. There have been several suggestions for the light rail route, including the use of the rail corridor.

It is felt, that people making decisions about our region are not listening to those who live here, nor are not given the full details and reasons for the decisions made.

Cost wise, it will not be possible to complete all the "Directions" for a long time, so the community should be able to list the "Directions" in order of priority.

eg. 1. A faster train service between Newcastle and Sydney. A Newcastle Express Service 3 times a day both ways. (Could start with 2 times.)

- Complete
2. Glendale Interchange
 3. Newcastle City By-Pass from New Lambton Heights to Jesmond. This was planned in 1960's, started in the late 1980's and still not finished.
 4. M1 to Raymond Terrace.
 5. Strict supervision of the natural rehabilitation of former mine sites.

As well the other "Directions" need to show progress to completion, not buried, redrafted and rehashed from the beginning again, 20-30 years later. This is what has happened in the past to the Hunter Region with each Government, as this area seems to be used as a political football always in a loosing game for Novocastrians.

Finally

Are we just going through the motions, has all the decisions already been made?