

12 December 2018

## Auditor-General's report to parliament

### Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program

The urban renewal projects on former railway land in the Newcastle city centre are well targeted to support the objectives of the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program (the Program), according to a report released today by the Auditor-General for New South Wales, Margaret Crawford.

The planned uses of the former railway land achieve a balance between the economic and social objectives of the Program at a reasonable cost to the government. However, the evidence that the cost of the light rail will be justified by its contribution to the Program is not convincing.

The analysis of the benefits and costs of light rail was prepared after the decision had been announced. The business case presented overly optimistic advice on the contribution of light rail to broader economic development, while underestimating the scope and costs of the project.

The Program aims to make economic, public space and transport improvements in the Newcastle city centre. It includes the 2.7km Newcastle Light Rail, as well as urban renewal activities such as public spaces and development opportunities on former railway land.

The report identifies weaknesses in community consultation and governance structures while the Program was being planned, but found improvements in both areas during later stages of implementation.

#### Further information

A full copy of the report is on the Audit Office website.

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