



**Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle**

16 August 2007

NEWCASTLE CBD REVITALISATION

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (9.42 am)—Yesterday the developer General Property Trust released a \$500 million redevelopment plan for the Newcastle CBD, which is hoped will lead to a significant revitalisation of the city centre and the creation of around 3,000 direct jobs. The plan involves opening up the Hunter Street mall, the main thoroughfare, and redeveloping the surrounding site to include residential, commercial, retail and entertainment outlets. For some time the CBD of Newcastle has been a missing link in the revitalisation of our city. Now this development has the potential to complement the successful work that has been done in the Honeysuckle precinct and create a new retail heart to our city.

Under Labor's better cities program, the waterfront at Honeysuckle has been transformed into a vibrant café, commercial and residential area. I am proud to say that, having been a board member for almost five years of the Honeysuckle Development Corporation, the results are excellent. Similarly, the GPT proposal looks like an opportunity to capture retail, business, tourism and entertainment opportunities for our growing population.

There has been much debate in Newcastle recently about crime and antisocial behaviour in the inner city and about the balance between development and protecting heritage. This proposal by GPT can be a great opportunity for community discussion about how our city moves forward, how we balance a vibrant nightlife with a growing number of residents and how we create modern amenities while remaining true to our heritage values. I look forward to assisting at all levels of government the smooth progress of this development so that its potential is optimised and the right balance is struck. By working together, I am confident we can get a great outcome for the city of Newcastle. I also know that hypothetical designs by Newcastle University architecture students for the civic precinct just west of the Hunter Street mall are currently on display and there are discussions and plans afoot for the redevelopment of the west-end itself.

A revitalised CBD, served by rail into the heart of the city, with the Honeysuckle precinct and the civic cultural precinct to the west, plus the Coal River Heritage precinct and the Newcastle Hospital redevelopment site to the east, presents an exciting prospect and vision for a new beating city heart. Such a heart could also spread new energy and we would hope reinforce the links, both physical and knowledge based, to our new centres of learning at the university, TAFE and CSIRO, to our innovative manufacturing,

industrial and sustainable energy centres, to our air and seaports and to our growing suburbs and residential centres. These are very exciting times for the city of Newcastle and an opportunity to create a very modern and vibrant liveable city.

With climate change upon us, of course, the challenge of creating sustainable cities is great, but in the wake of the long weekend storms in Newcastle creating survivable and liveable cities is also essential. We can meet these challenges with a vision of creative energy, and certainly this proposed investment is a mark of confidence in the future of Newcastle. I congratulate GPT on its commitment and I look forward to examining the details of the proposal and helping to ensure we get the best outcome for our city.
(Time expired)