

Newcastle 2030

End of Term Report

2012 – 2016



Newcastle City Council acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession.

Council reiterates its commitment to address disadvantages and attain justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

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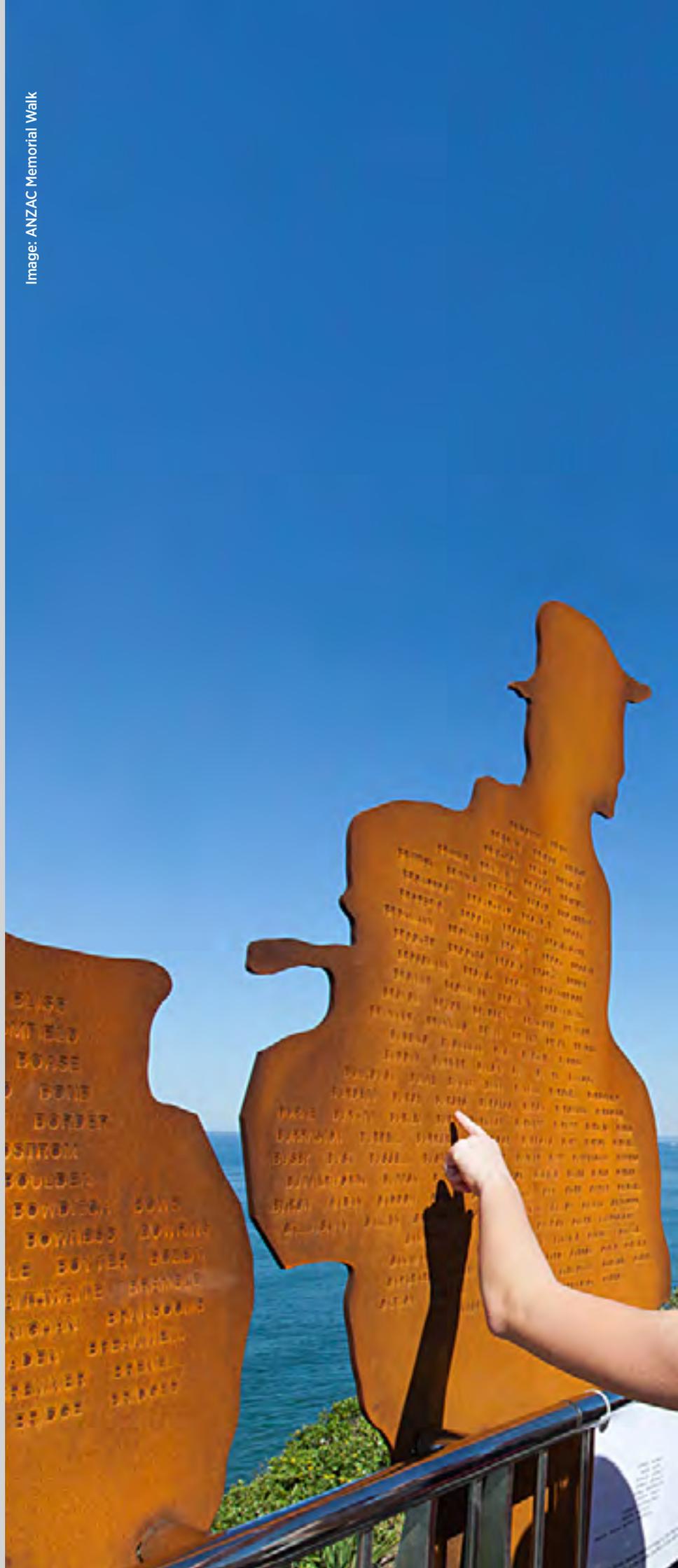
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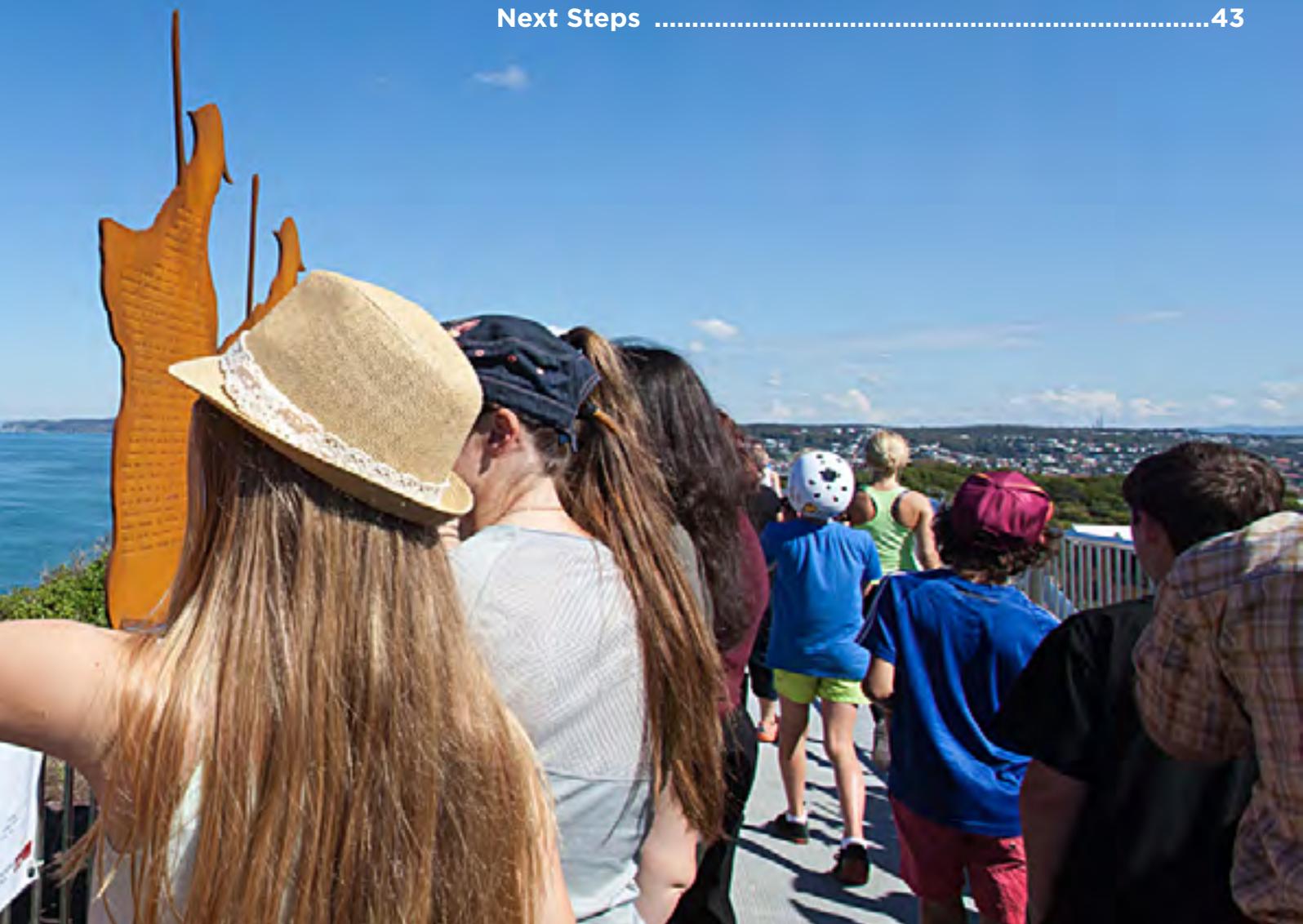
Authorisation
Interim CEO

Image: ANZAC Memorial Walk



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LORD MAYOR'S FOREWORD

Cr Nuatali Nelmes

Lord Mayor

Our shared vision for Newcastle 2030 guides the projects, activities and services we provide as we work together to create a smart, liveable and sustainable city.

This term of Council has been one of significant challenges but also substantial achievements. We are committed to collaborative leadership and refocusing our efforts on protecting and delivering high quality services and fostering innovation, investment and job creation.

Council has forged a pathway to financial sustainability as we transition from a great regional city to an emerging global city. This was highlighted with Newcastle being confirmed as a 'United Nations City' in June 2016 and its successful hosting of 2015 AFC Asian Cup matches.

Record investment has flowed into the city over the past four years, with the value of development applications lodged increasing from \$457million in 2012/13 to \$692million in 2015/16.

Newcastle City Council is encouraging this investment with a record capital works program that's both maintaining our historic city while helping reinvent it. We are revitalising the coastline with the Bathers Way project, improving Blackbutt Reserve and delivering shared pathways and roads while championing an integrated transport system that will help revitalise the CBD.

We are soundly planning neighbourhoods through our Local Planning Strategy and suburb-specific masterplans and public domain plans, and working

with Newcastle's diverse community to achieve positive social outcomes.

We are building collaborative partnerships with a range of organisations. Our Smart City initiatives are fostering relationships aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. Our cooperation with CityServe, a volunteer program improving our parks, surf clubs, sporting facilities and senior citizens centres, is another fine example.

These are just some of the highlights over this term. It has been a privilege serving as Lord Mayor and on behalf of my fellow Councillors, I thank Newcastle City Council's hard-working and dedicated staff and our volunteers who share our vision to deliver the best possible future for Newcastle and the region.



INTERIM CEO'S FOREWORD

Frank Cordingley

Interim Chief Executive Officer

There's much to be proud of when you review the performance of Newcastle City Council over the past four years.

The financial health and sustainability of Council is critical to the continued economic growth of our city and the provision of essential services to the community. In this term, we have steadily improved our financial performance to return three consecutive surpluses.

We continue to pursue the strict budget principles and corporate objectives identified in the 2013-2017 Delivery Program. Our financially sustainable status was acknowledged last year when IPART declared the organisation "financially fit for the future". This

was achieved through a range of initiatives including an organisational restructure, improvements in non-rates revenue and a special rate variation which will conclude in 2020.

Our improved financial position has allowed us to invest in an expansive capital works program. We have delivered works valued at \$210 million over the four years, with the annual value increasing from \$42 million in 2012-2013 to \$65 million last financial year.

We have made significant progress on the four priority projects identified in 2012 by our community: improvements to Blackbutt Reserve, cycleways, city revitalisation and coastal

revitalisation including Bathers Way.

This expanded works program is making transformative changes to the city as well as addressing the city's infrastructure backlog with the restoration of historic assets including Newcastle City Hall, Merewether Ocean Baths and the stabilisation of cliffs, creek beds and seawalls.

Significant positive growth for Newcastle is reflected in building approval values almost doubling in that time, with much of the impetus deriving from Newcastle City Council projects and activities.

The organisation is now in a strong position to meet the needs of the Newcastle community today and into the future.

WHY WRITE THIS REPORT?

The Newcastle 2030 End of Term Report¹ provides an update on Newcastle City Council's progress towards achieving *Newcastle 2030*, our shared vision for a smart, liveable and sustainable city. This report is a requirement under the NSW *Local Government Act 1993*, and forms part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The End of Term Report is defined by the NSW Office of Local Government as a 'report on council's achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan over the previous four years'.

The IP&R framework recognises that Council plans and policies do not exist in isolation and are all connected to deliver community outcomes. The IP&R framework is demonstrated in the diagram below.



This is the second report tracking Council's progress since Council endorsed the initial Community Strategic Plan (CSP) in March 2011 and a revised CSP in June 2013.

This report documents how Council and other stakeholders have responded over the past four years to strategic directions identified in the *Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan* and progress made towards achieving community goals.

¹ The document is titled Newcastle 2030 End of Term Report as defined by the NSW Premier & Cabinet Division of Local Government <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/>

HOW DOES COUNCIL DELIVER OUR COMMUNITY VISION?

COUNCIL'S FOUR YEAR DELIVERY PROGRAM AND ONE YEAR OPERATIONAL PLAN IDENTIFY THE MAJOR PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT COUNCIL UNDERTAKES TO DELIVER COMMUNITY GOALS.

In delivering the objectives of the CSP Council commits to leading the way in areas where it has a significant role and responsibility, and advocating on behalf of the community in areas not directly resourced, nor the responsibility of Council.

Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan strategic directions



Council's Strategic Documents

Council has written a suite of strategic documents that outline key priorities and actions to deliver our shared community vision, implement Council's legislative requirements and deliver a cohesive ongoing delivery program.

Council's strategic documents align with the seven strategic directions outlined in the CSP:

- [Newcastle Transport Strategy](#)
- [Newcastle Environmental Management Strategy 2013](#)
- [Parkland and Recreation Strategy 2014](#)
- [Social Strategy 2016-2019](#)
- [Local Planning Strategy](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy 2015](#)

DELIVERING OUR COMMUNITY VISION

What you want

Your community strategic plan

- A vision of where the people of Newcastle want to be in 2030
- Outlines the key outcomes and strategies which form the basis of our planning
- Reviewed at the start of each new Council term
- Four year reporting - end of term report

How we propose to deliver

Delivery program

- A four year outlook (length of Council's term)
- Establishes major projects and performance measures outlining how Council will address and measure progress towards the strategies contained in Newcastle 2030
- Includes a four year capital works program
- Allocates high level resources to achieve the projects over a four year period
- Six-monthly reporting including an annual report
- Updated annually in conjunction with the yearly Operational Plan

What we propose to do

Operational plan

- A one year outlook
- Contains actions Council will undertake in the financial year to address the Delivery Program projects
- Includes one year capital works program
- Allocates resources necessary to achieve the actions in the financial year
- Quarterly reporting

Resourcing strategy

- Includes
 - **10 year Long Term Financial Plan**
 - **Four year Workforce Management Plan**
 - **10 year Asset Management Framework**
- Contains information on the time, money, assets and people required by Council to progress the projects within the Delivery Program and move towards achieving our community outcomes
- Review at start of new Council term

Annual report

Council is required to report annually to the Office of Local Government².

Annual reports contain statutory reporting requirements, including:

- Achievement of actions and Key Performance Indicators identified in the four year delivery program
- A summary of Council's audited financial performance
- Contracts/works awarded over \$150,000
- Contributions and grants awarded
- Details of overseas visits on official Council business by the Lord Mayor, Councillors of Council officers

SPECIAL RATE VARIATIONS

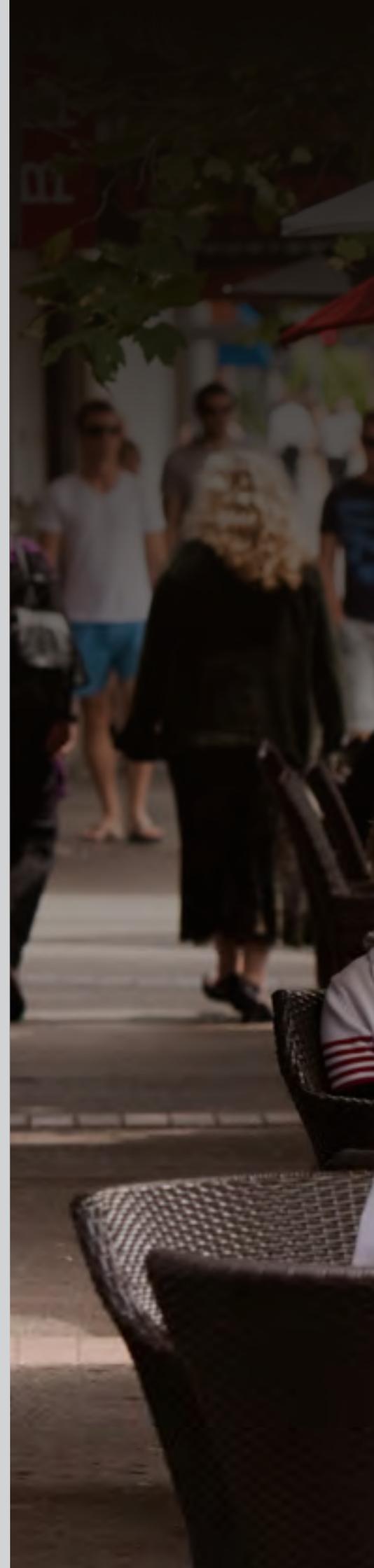
THE INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL (IPART) APPROVED TWO SPECIAL RATE VARIATIONS (SRV) IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED COUNCIL'S DELIVERY PROGRAM.

In 2012, IPART approved a section 508(2) SRV of 5% above the rate cap for one year, allowing Council to focus on the delivery of community projects including four priority projects: Hunter Street revitalisation, coastal revitalisation, Blackbutt Reserve and cycleways.

In 2015, IPART approved a section 508A SRV of 8%p.a. for 5 yrs (including the rate cap) the 'Road to Recovery' SRV on determination that Council was able to demonstrate a clear need for the additional revenue, that it appropriately engaged the community and that Council took steps to improve productivity and contain costs.

The additional revenue provided by these SRVs has enabled Council to achieve financial sustainability, accelerate completion of priority projects and make substantial reductions to our infrastructure backlog. For further information on our recent SRV, and to view our annual reports, please [visit our website.](#)

[Road to Recovery](#) was a community engagement program undertaken as part of Council's 2015 SRV application. This program aimed to ensure all ratepayers and members of the community were informed of the SRV proposal and had an opportunity to comment. Council directly engaged with 1,730 members of the Newcastle community during this process. Overall the community was supportive of a SRV.



HOW DOES COUNCIL MEASURE PROGRESS?

A range of community indicators were developed to measure our progress towards delivering the shared vision of the CSP. These indicators were selected to monitor the effectiveness of community outcomes across the Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA). Each indicator is measured using data collected by Council, government and/or community-based agencies.

Since the establishment of the community indicators in 2011, Council has reviewed service levels and program delivery in a number of areas resulting in some data sources no longer being collected. Other indicators rely on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data collected every five years. Community indicators will be reviewed in the next version of the CSP to be developed in 2017.

The following sections of this report provide an overview of Council's seven strategic directions. It includes data that reports on community indicators and Council's progress towards achieving our community's goals over the past four years.

ICON KEY



Progressing towards community outcome



Stable



Moving away from community outcome





CONNECTED CITY

IN 2030 OUR TRANSPORT NETWORKS AND SERVICES WILL BE WELL CONNECTED AND CONVENIENT. WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT WILL BE VIABLE OPTIONS FOR GETTING AROUND THE CITY.

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were for increased use of public transport as a valid alternative to driving cars, to reduce greenhouse emissions and congestion. As a community, we agreed that the ability to walk and cycle safely on an integrated network is important to support a sustainable, connected and active community.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- Effective and integrated public transport;
- Linked networks of cycle and pedestrian paths; and
- A transport network that encourages energy and resource efficiency.

Making progress (2012 - 2016)

Newcastle Transport Strategy - *The Newcastle Transport Strategy*, adopted by Council in December 2014, focuses on areas of transport within Council's responsibility or advocacy. The key purpose of the *Newcastle Transport Strategy* is to guide Council's transport-related decisions and actions to contribute, within the limits of its roles and responsibilities, to achieving the objectives of the CSP.

Local Area Traffic Management - Council undertakes a range of local area traffic management, pedestrian access, road maintenance and asset preservation works to improve connectivity. Recent works include improving black spots (e.g. Parry Street roundabout) and reducing speeds to 40km/h in high pedestrian activity areas (e.g. The Junction). Council also undertakes traffic management engagement and decision-making through the Newcastle City Traffic Committee, Lower Hunter Councils Transport Group and Newcastle Cycling Working Party.

Light Rail - Light Rail is an important component of the broader transport network and a key element for the revitalisation of the city centre. In response to State Government proposals for transport in Newcastle, Council developed *Connecting Newcastle* to represent our vision for transport and light rail. Newcastle Council has been working with Transport for NSW and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate light rail system for Newcastle and our city centre.

Cycleways - Cycleways remain a key priority for Council and the community. Work is progressing on the highest priority cycleway, a link from Broadmeadow to the city centre. Sections of shared path on Griffiths Road and Jackson Street Broadmeadow have been completed and construction on Donald Street is scheduled for 2016/17. Other recently completed connections include Alder Park (St James Road to Bridges Road, New Lambton), Park Avenue Kotara (Kullaiba Road to Northcott Drive) and Wallsend Brickworks Park (Iranda Grove to Victory Parade).

Shared Pathways/Cycleways

The total past 4 year spend on Cycleways and Shared Pathways is **\$1.5 million** in design and **\$7 million** on construction, with a total length of built works at **8.7km**

Location of these works as follows:

- Ward 1 - 1.4km**
- Ward 2 - 3.0km**
- Ward 3 - 2.9km**
- Ward 4 - 1.3km**

**2015
CYCLEWAYS
SURVEY
RESULTS**

The aim of the survey was to identify current perceptions of cycling in Newcastle, cycling behaviours including riding frequency and purposes, incentives to increase cycling, barriers for non-cyclists and to uncover safety issues.

WHO DID WE TALK TO?



POPULAR ROUTES

- THE JUNCTION TO CBD 17%
- WALLSEND TO LAMBTON 16%
- ADAMSTOWN TO CBD 19%
- FERNLEIGH TRACK 49%**
- THROSBY CREEK / HARBOUR FORESHORE 47%**
- HAMILTON TO LAMBTON 16%
- MEREWETHER TO CBD 18%

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Participants were asked to comment on 'something I like' and 'my cycleways idea'.

Overall we had 657 total visits to the site and 201 comments were left. The comments were themed and the most popular are displayed by Ward area below.



Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Use of public transport in Newcastle (ABS)	In 2006, the mode share transport public transport (train, bus & ferry) was 3.6%, increasing slightly to 3.9% in 2011. The next census is August 2016.	
Adequacy of available public transport (State Transit)	Commuter trips by bus and ferry in Newcastle have declined since 2012	
Use of bicycles for transport (Super Tuesday Bike Counts*)	Numbers of commuters on off-road bike paths have increased, however routes with on-road sections do not show significant increase	
Registered electric vehicles (Road and Maritime Services)	Registered vehicles in Newcastle classed as 'other fuel type' has steadily increased from 422 in 2013 to 485 in 2015	

* Super Tuesday is Australia's and the world's largest and longest running visual bike count. It measures bike commuter flows annually during the morning peak (7-9am).

Connecting Newcastle

Connecting Newcastle is a vision document that brings together a range of strategies and plans that have been developed and endorsed by Council over a number of years. This document provides clear priorities for the revitalisation of the city centre and was distributed to business, industry leaders, government agencies as well as the broader community through traditional and social media. [Connecting Newcastle](#) was the foundation of Council's response to the Newcastle light rail project *Review of Environmental Factors (2016)* prepared by Transport NSW.

Cycle Skills Classes

To encourage people to get back on their bikes and give cycling a go, [Council ran a series of bicycle skills and maintenance classes](#). Classes were aimed at people who had not ridden for a while and needed a few pointers and those that wanted to improve their skills and confidence on shared paths and local streets. The hands-on bike maintenance workshops were designed for cyclists of all abilities who wanted to be able to undertake essential repairs, adjustments and maintenance required to keep their bike operating safely and efficiently.

Where are we headed... a snapshot

Cycling in our city: We are investing more than \$4 million in expanding our cycling network. Through the Newcastle Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, Council is working to get more people cycling for more of their trips, preferably substituting cars for bikes. Most trips we take are less than 10km, and could comfortably be made by bike given Newcastle's relatively flat terrain.

Regional cycling project: We are working with neighbouring local government areas to progress regional cycling projects. The Richmond Vale Rail Trail (RVRT) is a proposed 32km walking and cycling path along old railway corridors that, contingent on funding, will run from Pelaw Main near Kurri Kurri to Minmi and across to Hexham. It will then link to another path stretching from Shortland to Tarro along a water pipeline corridor. The project, estimated to cost around \$15 million, is expected to generate substantial economic benefits for the Hunter and will allow pedestrians and cyclists to access and enjoy the stunning Hunter Wetlands National Park.

Safe roads and footpaths: Road safety and encouraging active transport will continue to be a priority through local area traffic management such as the installation of speed humps, reduced speed zones, kerb extensions for pedestrians. There are also pedestrian access and mobility plan works to make it easier to traverse our suburbs without the need for getting in the car.

Parking management: Management of on street and off street parking is essential for improving the safety, accessibility, amenity and vitality of centres across Newcastle and encourage increased use of sustainable transport modes.

Joint approach to transport: Council will liaise with adjoining LGA's to share information and promote consistent, best practice approaches to transport policy issues across the Lower Hunter. Significant change is in store for Newcastle, as plans for light rail and appointment of an integrated service provider are realised by the NSW Government.





PROTECTED AND ENHANCED ENVIRONMENT

IN 2030 OUR UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT WILL BE UNDERSTOOD, MAINTAINED AND PROTECTED

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were the protection of biodiversity, maintenance of bushland and urban forest and appropriate access to natural areas. The community asked for reduced waste generation, sustainable use of water, improved air quality and increased use of renewables.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- Greater efficiency in resource use
- Our unique natural environment is maintained, enhanced and connected
- Environment and climate change risks and impacts are understood and managed

Making progress (2012 - 2016)

Blackbutt Reserve - [Blackbutt Reserve](#) has 180 hectares of natural bushland, native fauna and flora species and Australian wildlife experiences. Visitors engage in both recreational and educational pursuits and interact with the environment through wildlife exhibits, tours and encounters. In 2013, the picnic area at Richley Reserve Recreation Area was updated. In 2015, an amenity block providing modern equal access facilities and a large outdoor Wildlife Arena designed to suit school groups, corporate functions and interactive wildlife shows was constructed. Blackbutt continues to run four Junior Ranger Programs each year, with approximately 600 children attending each session, with 2400 children attending annually.

Urban Forest - By integrating the goals and objectives of Council's Urban Forest Policy with programs and processes, Council is acknowledged as a leader in urban tree management. Council considers trees to be significant capital assets managed on a whole-of-life basis. Street trees help purify the air, reduce stormwater runoff, and make streets, shopping and dining areas more pleasant, influencing property values and marketability.

Ironbark Creek Catchment restoration works - Creek bed and bank erosion is one of the highest priority issues for the Ironbark Creek catchment in relation to sediment control and asset protection. Ironbark Creek has been affected by erosion, sedimentation and other environmental impacts, such as weed infestation, lack of native vegetation and gross pollutant collection typical of many urbanised creeks.

The Ironbark Creek rehabilitation project extends 1.3kms from Rankin Park to Elmore Vale. Creek rehabilitation works have remediated erosion sites, addressed sedimentation issues, improved neighbourhood access and improved habitat and quality of stormwater run-off entering Hexham Swamp.



Solar photovoltaic systems

Over the past four years Council has undertaken a number of solar photovoltaic installations to increase its renewable energy generation. These projects help Council reduce carbon emissions and costs associated with buying grid electricity and attain its goal of 30% of its electricity generated from low-carbon sources by 2020. Solar projects have been installed at Council’s Works Depot, Newcastle Regional Library, Newcastle Art Gallery, No 1 and 2 Sportsgrounds, Wallsend Library, New Lambton Library and Newcastle Museum. These systems are estimated to generate 640,000 kWh of renewable electricity and reduce carbon emissions by 520 tonnes per annum. This equates to an estimated annual saving of \$125,000 for Council in electricity and peak capacity charges.

Looking after Bathers Way

Over the past four years 40 Landcare volunteers have committed to weekly working bees alongside Council's Bushland Services to restore and rehabilitate our coastal dunes, garden beds and pathway edges along Bathers Way, from Merewether to Nobbys Beach.

The work of volunteers included rehabilitating pathway edges, removing weeds, mulching to improve soil health, installing fences and planting species native to the Newcastle coastline.

The volunteers contributed over 5,500 hours annually and have planted over 40,000 plants since 2013, improving visual amenity while also restoring an important ecological community along our coastal dunes and escarpments.

Since 2012



Council rehabilitated **1.3 km** of Ironbark Creek



Council planted **3,765** new street and park trees across Newcastle



Council ran over **100** environmental education engagement activities, involving approximately **6,500** local residents

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Domestic waste diverted from landfill (Council)	Domestic waste diverted from landfill has continued to improve from 40% in 2013 to 42% in 2015	
Household water usage (Hunter Water)	The average household water consumption (KL) has decreased from 177 KL in 2013 to 171 KL in 2015	
Household electricity usage (Ausgrid)	In 2013, the average daily electricity consumption per household was 14.6kWh, decreasing to 14.2kWh in 2015	
Air quality (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage)	Newcastle's Air Quality Index (AQI) rating has continued within the good to excellent range since 2012	
Coastal water quality (NSW Beachwatch)	Since 2013, Beachwatch continues to rate the water quality at all seven ocean beaches in the Newcastle area as good or very good	
Migratory shorebirds (Hunter Bird Observers Club)	Of the species expected within the Hunter Estuary, trends show six species declining, eight stable and two species increasing	
Greenhouse gas emission from electricity use (Australian National Greenhouse Accounts)	In 2013, there were 859,585 tonnes of carbon emissions from electricity use in Newcastle's LGA, in 2015 this decreased to 759,897 tonnes	

Where are we headed... a snapshot

Environmental management - Our *Environmental Management Strategy* recognises the important role of Council in delivering a protected and enhanced environment. It sets the direction in protecting and enhancing natural assets including wetlands, watercourses, bushland, and coastal and estuarine environments; plans for the impacts of climate change; builds a resilient environment and a community who efficiently use energy, water, waste and liquid fuels.

Urban Forest - Council will continue to implement our Urban Forest Policy to achieve an expanded and sustainable canopy cover through our street and park tree planting program. We will target suburbs with low tree numbers, integrating planting with scheduled infrastructure projects, to help improve the quality and reduce the quantity of stormwater discharge, alleviate impacts from the urban heat island effect and climate change, and create a more liveable city.

Blue and green corridors - Over the next five years Council and the community will create a healthy riparian corridor from Ironbark Creek headwaters to Hexham Swamp. We will continue to implement projects that preserve aquatic ecosystems and their surrounds.

Other exciting projects within the Environment Program include:

- Stockton seawall and dune rehabilitation
- Restoration and protection of wetlands in Wallsend, Sandgate and Beresfield
- A four year community environmental education and engagement program that focuses on the rapidly developing suburbs in Newcastle's west, within the Watagan to Stockton green corridor.





VIBRANT AND ACTIVATED PUBLIC PLACES

IN 2030 WE WILL BE A CITY OF GREAT PLACES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS PROMOTING PEOPLES HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING.

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were for public places accessible to all, to live in attractive welcoming neighbourhoods that contribute to community safety and social connectedness, and for improved liveability through increased access to vibrant and diverse cultural events.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- Public places that provide for diverse activity and strengthen our social connections
- Culture, heritage and place are valued, shared and celebrated
- Safe and activated places that are used by people day and night

Making progress (2012 - 2016)

City centre revitalisation - Over the last few years Council has focussed on delivering temporary improvement and city activation projects across the city centre to help revitalise Hunter Street and surrounds. Projects like Hit the Bricks, Façade Improvements, Markets, Renew Newcastle, Christmas celebrations and other events have been funded by Council to encourage revitalisation of the city.

Coastal revitalisation - Bathers Way is now 50% complete and when finished will stretch 7kms along our coastline from Merewether to Nobbys Beach.

The first stage at Merewether included 4-6m wide shared pathways, improvements to access and seating and redevelopment of Merewether Baths. The shared pathway along Bathers Way at Merewether and Dixon Park beaches was highly commended in the Keep NSW Beautiful Blue Star Sustainability Awards. Recent upgrades from Nobbys to Newcastle Beach (Shortland Esplanade), included a 4m wide shared pathway, pedestrian lighting, furniture, shade trees, landscaping, improved pedestrian access, road and streetscape improvements.

Events - Council runs an Events Sponsorship Program and also supports the delivery of major, flagship and business events. Recent events include Surfest, ANZAC Day, Live at the Foreshore, Super Moto, Carols by Candlelight, Port 2 Port and international sporting events.

Council's support for business events equated to over \$3.8M in economic benefit for Newcastle. Council's investment of \$110,000 into the Event Sponsorship Program delivered approximately 55,000 visitors to the city equating to \$5.1M worth of economic value.

Cultural Facilities - In 2015, Newcastle Museum opened its most popular exhibition since opening at Honeysuckle - *Tyrannosaurs* from the Australian Museum. This blockbuster highlighted the Museum's capacity to host major travelling exhibitions from national institutions. Major exhibitions are complemented by permanent exhibitions and locally produced content.

New and diverse audiences were drawn to Newcastle Art Gallery for summer exhibitions including *Like Us: Patricia Piccinini* and *301 years of Mambo*. These exhibitions were supported by major outdoor community events attracting 1000's of Newcastle residents and visitors. Collaboration with local artists in developing exhibitions and programming is an ongoing commitment.

Civic Theatre hosts over 300 performances per year including comedy, music, theatre, circus and dance. The Civic Theatre also presents its own Season, a hand-picked selection of live performance with a focus on providing audiences with diversity, inspiration and entertainment.

Newcastle Region Library - Over the past four years Newcastle Region Library has delivered a range of programs and services that have empowered communities with knowledge and information and contributed to Newcastle's vibrant and engaged community life. During this period 2,844,528 individuals visited Newcastle Region Library and an astounding 5,619,548 resources were loaned.

The Library has showcased national and local history focused community programs. Key programs included; the Three Soldier's exhibition which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, and Newcastle Stories, a series of talks that focuses on local history including well-known families of Newcastle, stories of our beaches, theatre, music and early school days.

Cathedral Park - Cathedral Park has been undergoing a series of improvements. A masterplan was adopted by Council in July 2012, with a vision to transform Cathedral Park into an outstanding open space with an 'open air museum' feel. The headstones are being progressively stabilised and returned to the recorded burial positions. This important work will allow visitors to experience the park in its historical layout and to view the headstones in context with their grave. Artworks, sculptures and native landscaping will complete the program.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Adequacy of good quality parks and recreation areas (Parks and recreation areas - Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction have risen from a mean score of 3.5 out of a possible 5 in 2012, to 3.8 in 2016	
Adequacy of natural areas for pursuit of leisure time activities (Recreation facilities - Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction have risen from a mean score of 2.9 out of a possible 5 in 2012, to 3.1 in 2016	
People attending community events in Newcastle (Council)	The number of event licences approved by Council continues to increase. There were 383 event licences approved in 2013 and 405 in 2015	
Satisfaction with heritage conservation in Newcastle (Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction has risen from a mean score of 2.9 out of a possible 5 in 2012, to 3.1 in 2016	
Cultural participation (Council)	The number of people attending cultural activities at the Art Gallery, Libraries, Museum and Civic Theatre has increased since 2012 Since 2012, over 650,000 people visited Newcastle Museum, 230,000 visited Newcastle Art Gallery and 470,000 visited Civic Theatre	
Perception of safety in public areas around Newcastle (Council's Safe City Plan Survey)	Data collected in 2016, shows 63% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they feel safe in the Newcastle LGA	
Crime rates (Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research NSW)	The crime rate in Newcastle has decreased since 2013, from 675 recorded offences to 600 offences in 2015, based on 13 crime categories	



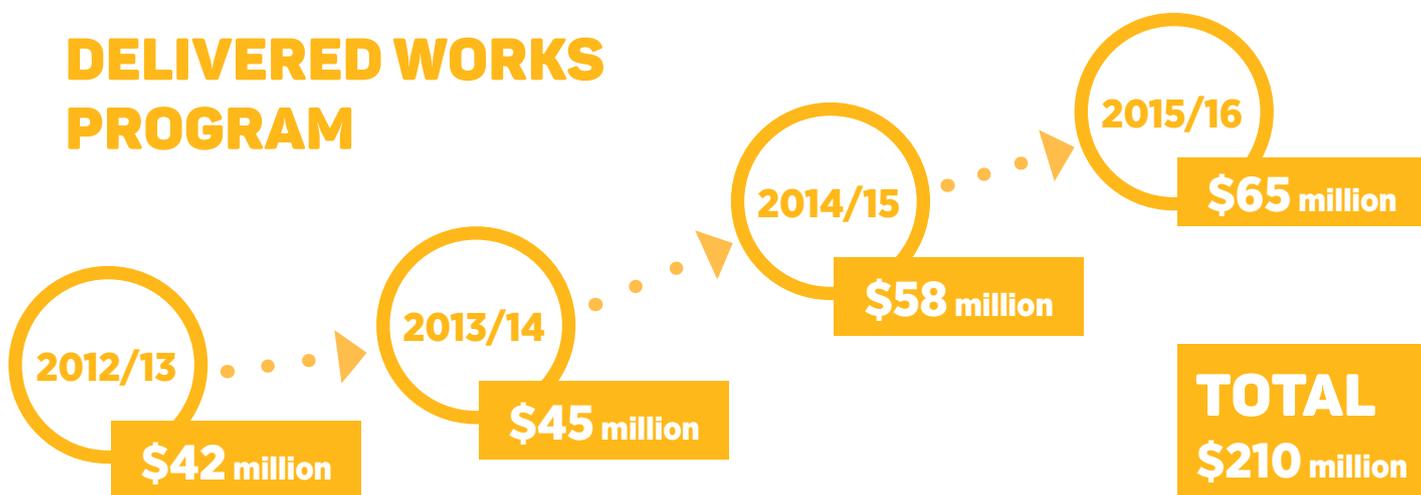
Headphones Project

In 2015, Newcastle's iconic 'eat street', Darby Street, was enlivened by a unique interactive sculpture of contemporary headphones controlled by an over-sized replica of a mobile phone. The ear-pieces form speakers and movement past the giant mobile phone activates a pre-loaded playlist. There is also capability for musicians to plug and play. The Headphones Project is the result of a collaboration between community, council, The Darby Street Traders and Newcastle NOW.

Memorial Walk

Newcastle's Memorial Walk is a spectacular coastal walk built to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ANZAC landing in Gallipoli. The structure cost \$4.5m to build and is a 450 metre long cliff top walkway that links Newcastle's Strzelecki Lookout to Bar Beach. The NSW Government partnered with Council to deliver this project. Council constructed the link that connects the viewing platform at the top of Memorial Walk to Bathers Way on Memorial Drive and rebuilt the car park at Strzelecki Lookout to increase accessibility. We fabricated the stainless steel and timber handrails at both entrances and landscaped with over 5000 tube stock. The pathway at the southern access was rebuilt by Council with grant funding from Hunter Water.

DELIVERED WORKS PROGRAM



Where are we headed... a snapshot

Civic Digest - Civic Digest is a partnership between Newcastle Region Library and Civic Theatre, and represents an evolution in library service delivery with digital screens, apps with library-provided content and high quality WiFi available in an ambient café setting. Civic Digest is a virtual branch of the Library and space for people to engage with cultural institutions in a non-traditional format. Digital touchscreens offer state of the art technology and access to Library content, Council information, event information and fun with social networking and games. The Civic Digest presents an opportunity for people to meet, connect with others and engage in cultural conversations that breathe new life into the Civic precinct as a creative hub.



Parks and Playgrounds (2012 - 2016)

Islington Park Playground

Islington Park has undergone significant transformation with around \$1 million spent upgrading the children's playground, extending the shared pathway network, installing exercise stations and upgrading sporting amenities. The popular park is used by families, young people, sporting and community groups for active and passive recreation.

Lambton Park

We have completed \$600,000 of improvements through the implementation of the Lambton Park Landscape Masterplan, including perimeter pathways, a playground upgrade and rotunda embellishment. We also supplied the local sporting club with new floodlights for training.

Empire Park

Empire Park's popularity as a beachside destination is reflected in our \$600,000 investment in a new concrete path around and through the park. Council also constructed shade structures with seating and a BBQ area, replaced the shade structure at the skate park and the roof of the existing amenities building. The shade structures match the ones located along the Bathers Way.

Blackbutt Reserve

Blackbutt Reserve is a popular destination for both locals and visitors to Newcastle. Creating new and interesting experiences, as well as upgrading existing infrastructure has been the focus on this priority project. Approximately \$1.5 million has been spent on new picnic shelters and BBQ facilities at Richley Reserve and new amenities block, wildlife arena and picnic shelters providing modern equitable access at Carnley Avenue. The amenities block was designed to blend into the natural bushland setting and compliment the immediate surroundings. The all-weather wildlife arena was constructed to cater for school students, corporate functions and interactive wildlife shows.

Civic Park

We have funded \$150,000 in upgrades to improve Civic Park's capacity to host community and commemorative events. Works included soil replacement, installation of irrigation and drainage infrastructure, turf replacement and landscaping.







CARING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

IN 2030 WE WILL BE A THRIVING COMMUNITY WHERE DIVERSITY IS EMBRACED, EVERYONE IS VALUED AND HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE AND BELONG.

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were for a caring and connected community, where we know our neighbours and support each other. We wanted to be an inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to access services, a welcoming community that embraces and celebrates diversity and provides opportunity for everyone to contribute, shine and belong.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- A welcoming community that cares and looks after each other
- Active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing
- A creative, culturally rich and vibrant community

Making progress (2012 - 2016)

Multicultural Plan - Council reaffirmed its commitment to multiculturalism in March 2015 and recommitted to being a Refugee Welcome Zone in May 2015. This was followed by the adoption of a *Multicultural Plan (2016-2019)* in February 2016. Council committed to supporting refugees and their emerging communities as well as the more established culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Newcastle. Council staff maintain positive working relationships with non-government agencies working in the multicultural sector to promote and celebrate diversity and contribute to economic development outcomes within these communities. Council staff are working with the NSW Coordinator-General Refugee Resettlement and settlement service providers to ensure recent arrivals are welcomed and safely integrated into the Newcastle community.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan - Council adopted its *Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2016-2019)* in March 2016. This four year framework sets up the key strategies and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to disability access and inclusion within the Newcastle LGA. It guides Council operations in relation to disability access and inclusion, and focuses on improved outcomes for all community members. In 2016, Council commenced work with NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet and Family and Community Services to improve inclusion at our coastal areas, with projects currently being developed for Newcastle and Lobbys Beach.

Reconciliation outcomes - Since 2012, Council has delivered and/or collaborated on a range of initiatives contributing to reconciliation outcomes, including:

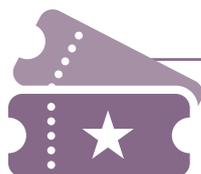
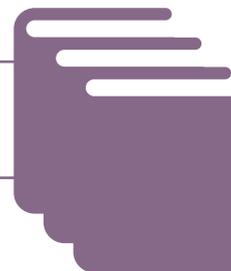
- Development and delivery of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2013-2017
- Council has increased our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce from 21 to 28 employees a growth of thirty per cent (30%).
- Delivered cultural awareness and support training for non-Aboriginal staff supervising Aboriginal personnel in their teams
- Partnered with Tantrum Theatre Company to deliver the *Stories in our Steps* theatre production
- Partnered with local schools to promote Aboriginal art and culture in partnership with Arts NSW
- Delivered the Mang-guwan Aboriginal Youth Arts Festival in partnership with Arts NSW in 2013 and 2014
- Facilitated meetings of the Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and
- Developed an Aboriginal Dual Naming program for eight landforms in Newcastle

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Social support (HVRF Wellbeing Survey 2012)	In times of need 97.7% of Newcastle residents were able to find the support they require	
Australian Early Development Index (Australian Early Development Index)	In 2012, 6.9% of children in Newcastle were estimated to be vulnerable on two or more developmental domains; this increased to 7.2% in 2015	
Volunteer participation rates (ABS)	In 2011, there was a 16% volunteer participation rate in the Newcastle LGA. This has remained stable since the 2006 census. The next census is August 2016	
Sense of community (HVRF Wellbeing Survey 2012)	In 2012, 70.5% of residents agreed their neighbourhood had a strong sense of community	
Wellbeing index (HVRF Wellbeing Survey 2012)	The wellbeing index has remained stable at 4.0 since 2012, where 1 is low and 5 is high wellbeing	
Companion animal ownership (Council)	Companion animal registrations in Newcastle have declined since 2012. Reasons for this decline could be an increased cost of registrations set by State Government and also increasing living costs	
Satisfaction with local arts, entertainment and culture (Arts, entertainment and culture - Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction have remained stable with a mean score of 3.6 out of a possible 5 in both 2012 and 2016	



The **Make Your Place** program allocated **\$140,000** in grant funding for **87** community-driven place activation projects. The associated community resource contribution is valued at over **\$550,000**.

1000's of old library books donated to the YMCA book sale.



Over 3,300 young people have attended **40 National Youth Week** events in Newcastle, including outdoor movie nights, educational forums, skate events and dance workshops.



Council produces an annual guide of activities for **Seniors Week** and in 2016 produced our inaugural *Seniors Directory*, which enables local groups to promote who they are, what they offer and why people should join in the fun year round.



Earthquake Then and Now 25 years

In 2014 Newcastle Museum curated [Earthquake Then and Now](#), an exhibition that marked the 25th anniversary of the devastating earthquake that struck Newcastle in December 1989. The exhibition focussed on photographs and personal stories of how the Newcastle community had changed and grown since this defining catastrophe.

The exhibition featured the stories of 25 people, recounting their experiences of the disaster and its aftermath. Recording these accounts gave the participants an opportunity to explore and express the ongoing impact of grief and trauma from that day on their lives. The exhibition also acted as a catalyst for other commemorative activities, as well as, media coverage from both local and national media outlets.

The exhibition gave people an opportunity to acknowledge the trauma many Novocastrians associate with the disaster, and also reflect with pride on how Newcastle responded.

Dead Stuffed Things

A 2013 loan enquiry from a Newcastle aged care facility has turned into one of Newcastle Museum's most popular outreach programs for elderly people who cannot visit the Museum. Cheekily named *Dead Stuffed Things*, the Museum's tactile taxidermy collection visits residents at aged care facilities and day centres throughout the Newcastle LGA and beyond.

People get up close and personal with creatures such as Cyril the ginger guinea pig and Natalie the wombat. They engage on various levels; immediate sensory, memory sharing, knowledge, or experience sharing. The program is inclusive and experiential, excellent for people with early onset dementia and Alzheimer's disease. As the animals are passed around and petted, stories start to flow and names are given to the animals. Suzie the sugar glider is a favourite because of her soft fur, whilst everyone admires handsome Jason the koala.

Where are we headed... a snapshot

Modern libraries - Newcastle's Libraries are transforming service delivery to add to our lending service model. New and innovative programs and services will focus on digital literacy to ensure that everyone can participate in a rapidly changing society. Community programs and exhibitions will focus on building connections and telling local stories to showcase the Libraries' wonderful local history collection. A new strategic plan will be developed, in consultation with the community and many stakeholders who value the library as a resource for learning, recreation and information, as well as those who value the library spaces as places to meet and connect with community.





LIVEABLE AND DISTINCTIVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

IN 2030 WE WILL LIVE IN AN ATTRACTIVE CITY THAT IS BUILT AROUND PEOPLE AND REFLECTS OUR SENSE OF IDENTITY.

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were for walkable neighbourhoods with green spaces and a range of affordable housing choices supported by multipurpose facilities. The community wanted to balance heritage buildings with new developments. The community asked for vibrant, safe streets, energy efficient buildings and a built-form that celebrates our unique city.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- A built environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity
- Mixed-use urban villages supported by integrated transport networks
- Greater diversity of quality housing for current and future community needs
- Best practice energy and water efficient buildings and infrastructure

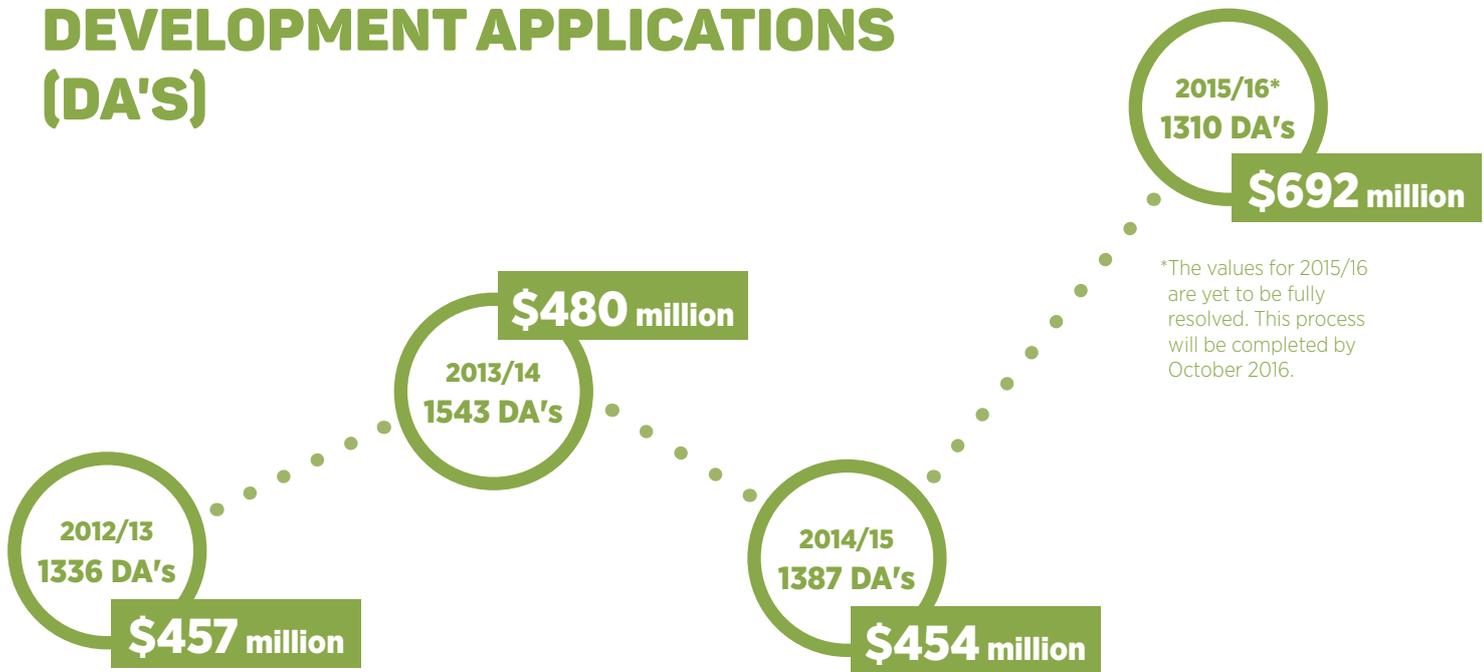
Making progress (2012 - 2016)

Local Planning Strategy - In July 2015, Council adopted the [Local Planning Strategy](#), developed after 18 months of community engagement. The Strategy guides the future growth and development of the City of Newcastle to 2030 and beyond through a series of short to long-term actions. Council has commenced actions including the preparation of a Development Control Plan (DCP) for parts of the Port of Newcastle, review of land use zones and heritage conservation areas.

Innovative housing - The Building Better Cities Committee (BBC) continues to support the development of innovative housing solutions through expenditure of Commonwealth grant funds. This has included an ongoing partnership with a Housing NSW renewal project known as This Way Home (TWH). The TWH project focuses on addressing homelessness through involving local Specialist Homelessness Services and Compass Housing Services in the allocation of temporary accommodation and ongoing site management.

Heritage Conservation Areas - Following extensive community engagement, Council endorsed a *Review of Heritage Conservation Areas Final Report* in June 2016. This report looks at ways to manage our unique heritage areas within Newcastle. The report contains a suite of recommendations including clarifying heritage guidelines for development, and establishment of two new heritage conservation areas for Glebe Road Federation cottages, The Junction, and a further precinct within Hamilton.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS (DA'S)

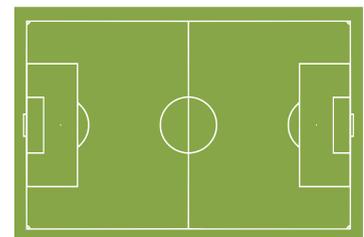


*The values for 2015/16 are yet to be fully resolved. This process will be completed by October 2016.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	Levels of satisfaction have remained stable at 90% since 2009	—
Listed heritage items (<i>State Heritage Register</i>)	Twelve archaeological sites, six heritage conservation areas, 691 heritage items, 45 heritage items on the State Heritage Register (SHR). Seven items have been added to the SHR since 2014	↑
Reasons for living in neighbourhood	The percentage of residents who nominated proximity to services as important has remained stable at 25% since 2009	—
Agreement that a range of housing types needed is available in local area (<i>Management of residential development - Council Community Survey</i>)	Levels of satisfaction have risen slightly from a mean score of 2.9 out of a possible 5 in 2012, to 3.0 in 2016	↑
Homes with solar photo voltaic systems installed (<i>Ausgrid</i>)	In 2012, 4,667 solar voltaic systems were installed in Newcastle's LGA, increasing to 5,243 in 2013	↑



Council is responsible for maintaining; **27km** of coastline and foreshore, **250** recreation parks, **124** sports fields, **5** inland swimming pools, **2** ocean baths, **206** playgrounds, **70** tennis courts, **51** netball courts, **10** skate parks, **9** basketball courts, **17** off leash dog exercise areas, **1** golf course and **60** kilometres of shared pathways



Council maintains **260 hectares** of sports turf, parks and gardens

Approximately half of all residents are located within **500m of parkland 0.5 hectares or greater in size**





Image credit: Just Stunning Photography

Adaptable multipurpose community facilities

The Fletcher Community Centre, a multipurpose community facility was built in 2014, and won the GHD Small Scale Commercial Development Award. This centre demonstrates sustainable building practices with community, environmental and social benefits.

The facility incorporates sporting amenities (canteen, change rooms) with community meeting rooms and a semi-commercial kitchen, and is adjacent to two senior playing fields. This facility incorporates an innovative stormwater harvesting system with the capacity to water all the playing fields. The facility is well used by both sporting and community groups and is a popular private function venue.

Development encouraging revitalisation

Over the past four years, Council has approved over 1,300 development applications which assist in the delivery of a liveable and distinctive built environment. The Spire Apartments at Marketown is a showcase development for the role of mixed-use urban villages supporting concentrated housing growth around transport and activity nodes.

A recently completed five-storey commercial building known as The Gateway, located on the corner of Stewart Avenue and Parry Street, shows a vote of confidence for re-development of the western part of the city centre. This building is the most substantial commercial development carried out in the city for a number of years and provides an attractive landmark at a significant entry point to the city centre.

Where are we headed... a snapshot

Wickham Masterplan - The NSW State Government's plan for a new transport interchange at Wickham has called for a revisit of plans for surrounding areas. Council has initiated the preparation of a masterplan to guide future growth in Wickham. Workshops have recently been conducted with local land owners and a range of government agencies to help identify opportunities for the area. A draft masterplan is expected to be exhibited late 2016.

Library upgrade - The city branch of Newcastle Region Library will undergo a minor refurbishment in the coming year. Newcastle Region Library successfully gained a State Library Infrastructure Grant matched with 300k from Council's capital works program. The project will include; fresh paint, new carpet, mobile shelving, a new layout, and the creation of quiet, collaborative and active zones to meet the needs of different users. The exterior of the building is also undergoing a makeover during the latter half of 2016 to replace windows and to structurally reinforce the walls. The windows will be replaced with a mixture of modern, fixed and casement double-glazed windows which will improve the energy efficiency and structural integrity of the building. The Library will introduce high end technology to support smart city initiatives and local entrepreneurs.





SMART AND INNOVATIVE CITY

IN 2030 WE WILL BE A LEADER IN SMART INNOVATIONS WITH A HEALTHY, DIVERSE AND RESILIENT ECONOMY.

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were for smart energy options and contemporary communication systems driving sustainable regional employment. The community asked for continuous cultural activity, distinctive suburban commercial centres, training and education opportunities, increased tourism, strong business growth and a mix of small and large business activity for a dynamic local economy.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- A vibrant diverse and resilient green economy built on educational excellence and research
- A culture that supports and encourages innovation and creativity at all levels
- A thriving city that attracts people to live, work, invest and visit

Making progress (2012 - 2016)

Smart City - Newcastle is committed in becoming a Smart City. Smart City is a framework to improve liveability, sustainability and economic diversity through integration of technology into urban spaces. Integrating technology improves the way we engage, fosters innovation, builds international profile and attracts talent and investment to our city.

Newcastle is one of the few cities in Australia who have appointed a full-time Smart City Coordinator to manage the Smart City Program. Since 2014, there has been significant progress toward a Smart City strategy for the city. Key partners from around the city are on board to encourage smart infrastructure that will revolutionise the city and position us well for the future.

Economic Development Strategy - The *Economic Development Strategy* was adopted by Council in 2015. This strategy was developed with input from industry stakeholders and analysis of data to identify Council's role and responsibilities in the delivery of economic development activities. The strategy focuses on five key areas: Newcastle's role as the capital of the Hunter Region, the development of key infrastructure, supporting business growth and employment, encouragement of innovation and creativity, and developing the visitor economy of Newcastle.

Tourism - Tourism is part of a broader visitor economy that includes leisure and business travel, visiting friends and relatives, special events and people visiting for health and education purposes. Based on national and international visitor surveys conducted by Tourism Research Australia, Newcastle's visitor economy generates an expenditure impact of over \$1.4 billion dollars across sectors such as transport, accommodation, food services and retail. It also supports a range of infrastructure including restaurants, the airport, our cultural facilities such as Newcastle Museum and Art Gallery and many other services. The tourism industry employs over 3,600 people (4.2% of jobs in Newcastle). Newcastle tourism represents 37% of the total Hunter tourism economic value.

Libraries - Newcastle libraries continue to strive to overcome the digital divide and provide gateways for information on digital platforms. Over the past four years the use of digital services has made incredible progress. During this period 644,407 individual Wi-Fi sessions were initiated in Newcastle libraries resulting in 177,872 WiFi hours. There was a 50% increase in eBook and eAudio usage. And 205,089 individuals made computer reservations within our Library branches.

Initiatives include:

- Free WiFi access across Newcastle Region Library branches in 2012.
- The launch of the Newcastle Region Library App for IOS and Android devices in April 2016, allows patrons easy access to e-resources such as e-books, e-Audio books, magazines, newspapers, music and movies.
- New partnerships with The Telstra Foundation and The Alannah and Madeline Foundation in a national E-Smart program to connect library users with the information and skills they need for smart, safe and responsible use of technology.
- The development of a Digital Services and Innovation Team who drive smart and connected initiatives including Tech Savvy Life Long Learning programs, Bring Your Own device assistance and E-smart community development.

Newcastle Airport - Newcastle Airport is a jointly owned partnership operation between Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council, where the principal activity of Civil Aviation is operating on a facility shared with the RAAF, based in Williamstown, NSW. A change in company structure was approved in 2012 by the Board and shareholders of Newcastle Airport Limited, resulting in a new company, being Newcastle Airport Pty Limited (NAPL). This restructure was then subsequently approved by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) in March 2013.

The previous not-for-profit, limited-by-guarantee structure restricted any debt raised to be funded through the two Airport owners. The change in company structure has provided Newcastle Airport the avenue to independently raise debt, with dividends to be paid to the owners if the funds are available. During the last four years, Newcastle Airport's passenger throughput has remained consistent at over 1 million per annum, with growth being indicated in recent times. The approval of the Airport's expansion development by Port Stephens Council, and successful completion of project stages, should see this growth trend continue.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Skills in green economy (TAFE NSW) ₃	In 2014, there were 2,800 enrolments at TAFEs located in Newcastle LGA that generate skills in occupations contributing to a green economy. This increased to 3,298 enrolments in 2015, and then dramatically declined to 1,399 enrolments in 2016	↓
Growth in creative industry occupations (TAFE NSW) ₃	In 2014, there were 3,596 enrolments at TAFEs located in Newcastle LGA that generate skills in creative industry occupations, this declined to 2,397 enrolments in 2016	↓
Growth in business tourism (Council)	Since 2013, there has been growth in business tourism for Newcastle	↑
Economic growth from commercial developments (Council)	In 2012, the value of new commercial development applications was \$103M, increasing to \$134M in 2013	↑
Occupancy of major short term accommodation (STR Global Reports)	In 2013, the average July occupancy rate for Newcastle accommodation was 70%, increasing to 75% in July 2016	↑

Since 2012

644,407 individual WiFi sessions at Newcastle Libraries



Newcastle welcomes over 1.3 million visitors a year

³ Council advocates and partners with TAFE NSW, however is not responsible for enrolments or courses provided.



Museum Express

Museum Express was launched in June 2015 following a three year sponsorship arrangement with Orica. It delivers portable, high quality science based education shows and activities to primary schools and communities in the Hunter and Central Coast regions. Since launching, it has presented fun and educational shows to over 2,400 students. The program builds on Newcastle Museum's decades-long experience and expertise in developing and delivering science education. The Museum has been home to an interactive science centre Supernova since opening as a bicentennial project in 1988 and has provided science shows to thousands of people over the years.

Economic Development Sponsorship Program

The Economic Development Sponsorship program is a well-recognised support tool for innovators and the creative sector. The purpose of the program is to provide sponsorship to support business growth and employment, encourage innovation and creativity and develop Newcastle's visitor economy. Examples of sponsored activities include; community fairs in Hamilton, Wallsend and Stockton, innovation projects supporting the development of solar energy, the fashion industry and the DiG Festival, and a number of training and education activities. Revitalisation and renewal projects have also been funded including; Renew Newcastle, The Lock Up and This is Not Art all receiving sponsorship in recent years.

Where are we headed... a snapshot

Smart City - Council is in the process of developing its first smart city strategy. The *Newcastle Smart City Strategy* will be a collaborative strategic planning document that will guide Council and a wide range of stakeholders towards a smart and innovative future. Council is working with all three levels of government, the community, educational and research providers and business and industry sectors in the development of this initiative to ensure that the *Newcastle Smart City Strategy* is a shared vision. This strategy will be exhibited in late 2016.

Tourism - Council plans to redevelop the Visit Newcastle website, making it more visually appealing and interactive for users. Council also plans to take a more strategic approach to working collaboratively with neighbouring regions to share funds and resources to generate tourist activity. Council intends to roll out a three phase Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) campaign which will focus on reengaging the local community, providing them with the tools to act as ambassadors and encouraging them to invite their friends and relatives to Newcastle.

Council is working with in partnership with Destination NSW and Virgin Australia Supercars on a bid to bring the annual season-ending round of the Australian Supercar Championships to the city from 2017.

Newcastle has proven its ability to host big events in the past, such as last year's Super Motocross and the 2015 Asian Cup football matches. The Supercars could bring up to \$50 million into the regional economy each year, with a potential international TV audience in the millions.





OPEN AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

IN 2030 WE WILL HAVE A STRONG LOCAL DEMOCRACY WITH AN ACTIVELY ENGAGED COMMUNITY AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS.

Community aspirations

Our aspirations in 2013 were for high levels of community participation and to be informed and empowered by open, accountable and democratic leadership that supported ethical and robust decision making. The community wanted a highly skilled Council workforce that delivers community focused outcomes and improved service delivery balancing customer expectation, value of service and organisational capacity.

To achieve these outcomes over the next ten years our strategic objectives were reconfirmed in 2013 as:

- Integrated, sustainable long-term planning for Newcastle and the Region
- Considered decision-making based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership
- Active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals
- The City of Newcastle: A local government organisation of excellence

Making progress (2012 - 2016)

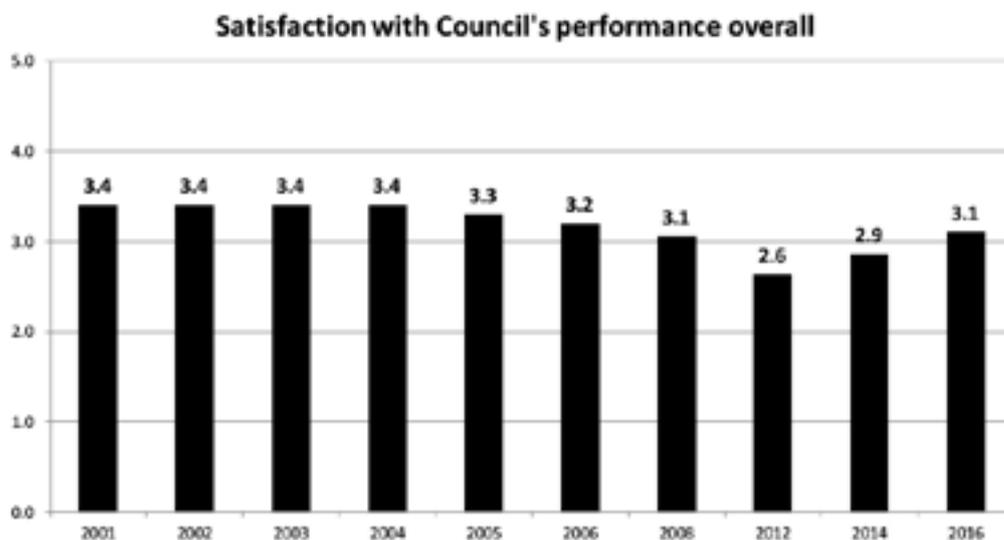
Communication with our community - Councils communications and engagement strategies inform and involve the community on issues, events, programs, exhibitions, major projects and other initiatives. The Communications team uses a broad range of communication methods including media, social media and digital platforms. This includes publishing Council's quarterly newsletter, Council News and managing Council's official website.

According to Council's Community Survey, there has been a steady increase in satisfaction with communication activities since 2012. 'Satisfaction with informing residents of Council activities' rose from a mean score of 2.9 out of 5 in 2012 to 3.3 in 2016.

During the April 2015 superstorms, Council provided an extensive six week communications campaign to keep the community informed about our emergency response, safety, road clearing, tree removal work and the clean-up. A priority projects communications campaign continues to keep the community informed of Council's four priority projects, Hunter Street revitalisation, coastal revitalisation, Blackbutt Reserve and cycleways. Activities include media coverage, editorial placement, designated webpages, and showcase videos for each project.

Community Engagement - The Communications and Engagement Team works to ensure the community's voice is heard regarding Council activities, services and facilities. The team has conducted workshops, focus groups, surveys and information sessions. Feedback provided by the community is a valuable resource to inform Council on how to best meet community needs and expectations.

A key engagement project is the *Community Survey*. Council has undertaken this survey since 1993. This information helps determine the importance of and satisfaction with services and facilities provided by Council.



The graph shows 'satisfaction with Councils performance overall' is at its highest level since 2008. The mean score of 3.1 out of a possible 5 indicates that on balance residents are satisfied with overall Council performance.

Consultation projects have included:

- Satisfaction surveys for services and facilities including Customer Service, Newcastle Museum, Newcastle Library and Beach Kiosks
- Strategic Planning issues including Heritage Conservation, Local Planning Strategy, Newcastle After Dark and Special Rate Variations, and
- Infrastructure projects such as the Cycleways Program

State level partnerships - Council has participated in a range of partnerships with the NSW State Government over the past four years, including the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy, run by the NSW Department of Planning and the Revitalising Newcastle program run by Urban Growth NSW.

In 2015, Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UrbanGrowth NSW that acknowledged Council's role in the urban renewal process and defined how the two parties would work together to implement and deliver the NSW Government's Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program. Council supported Urban Growth NSW in the facilitation of community workshops and ran a [community survey](#) with over 700 respondents.

Improving Council meetings - Council commenced webcasting meetings in March 2014. Ordinary Council Meetings and Committee Meetings (Public Voice Committee, Briefing Committee and Development Applications Committee) are webcast; confidential sessions are not. Archived webcast recordings of Council meetings are available via Council's website for approximately four months after each meeting. The live webcast can be viewed on mobile devices running iOS or Android operating systems.

Local partnerships - In recent years representative business groups, such as Business Improvement Associations and Renew Newcastle, have worked effectively with Council to deliver a shared approach to city improvement. The broader involvement of Council with the business community has encouraged a shared approach to addressing economic and social issues. A shared approach to management of local issues has assisted transparent planning and reliable feedback, and information resulting in improved collaboration and accountability.

The Library is a leader in fostering partnerships with local organisations to facilitate programs. Some key partnerships include:

- **Tantrum Youth Arts**, who collaborated with the Library on innovative projects including 'The Mystery of the Canoe Pool' which told the story of Newcastle's iconic ocean pool through an exhibition of archival materials and photos at the Library and a street performance by Tantrum's youthful performers at Watt Street sites.
- **The Confucius Institute**, who partnered with the Library to offer a two week Chinese New Year festivity, showcasing and celebrating Chinese Culture in Newcastle.
- **The Hunter Botanic Gardens, The Bee Man, African Violet Society**, various local florists and the **Blue Gum Hills Men's Shed**, who all have connected with the community through talks and demonstrations at the annual **Spring Fling** festival.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Major infrastructure projects (Hunter Development Corporation)	The Newcastle LGA has received \$109M in Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Funds since 2011	↑
Opportunity to express views on community issues (Community involvement in Council decision making - Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction have steadily risen from a mean score of 2.6 out of a possible 5 in 2012 to 3.0 in 2016	↑
Council Business Excellence (Standard of service to ratepayers - Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction have risen from a mean score of 3.0 out of a possible 5 in 2012 to 3.2 in 2016	↑
Overall Council performance (Council's performance overall - Council's Community Survey)	Levels of satisfaction have steadily risen from a mean score 2.6 out of a possible 5 in 2012 to 3.1 in 2016	↑



Where are we headed... a snapshot

Communications and engagement - Council is implementing a range of initiatives to increase community awareness of the organisation's objectives, activities and achievements. These include growing Council's digital and social media presence, increasing the use of video material and adopting new technology, such as geo-mapping to expand our range of engagement tools. Embedding engagement activities into project management processes will continue to encourage and foster positive relationships between Council and the community and provide opportunities for our community to be involved in decision-making about our city.

Financial sustainability - The 2016/17 budget will ensure Council continues to be financially sustainable into the future with a focus on increasing the level of asset maintenance and reducing the infrastructure backlog. Council will continue to review all services and capital infrastructure to ensure it is positioned to best meet community needs.

Welcome to our beautiful city

I WANT TO

- Play My Votes
- Find a Form to Download
- Have Your Say
- Event Calendar
- On Form & Budget
- LEP & DCP Planning Centres
- Council
- Services
- Find My Nearest
- Customer Request Form
- Visit our Library
- Make Request Form

WHAT'S HAPPENING



Circle exhibition on now at Newcastle Museum



bring clean wood only Sort and save at Sun



Website redesign

Council launched a new corporate website www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au in 2015, which was awarded best Government and Municipal site in the 2015 Kentico Site of the Year Awards. The Kentico Site of the Year awards seek out the best Kentico content management systems and chooses the top three from each category to put to public vote.

Council is currently consolidating all websites onto the Kentico platform, including new look sites for Blackbutt Reserve, Newcastle Region Library, Fort Scratchley, Emergency Newcastle, Newcastle City Hall and Newcastle Business Events. These sites are designed with a customer focus and built to be viewed on devices and desktop computers. The sites feature user-friendly navigation and improved searches. The current phase of the project includes website updates for Newcastle Art Gallery, Newcastle Museum and Civic Theatre Newcastle.

Social connections

Increasing our engagement through social media channels has been a priority during this delivery program period. We have a strong and increasing social media presence with 12,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter. One of our most successful social media campaigns promoted the Bathers Way project. A showcase video released in May 2016 reached more than 330,000 people on Facebook with 155,000 video views. This video is one of three produced across 2015 and 2016, along with regular updates and posts with professional images. Building our social media audience is a positive way to create brand awareness and build relationships with our community. Our social media channels have become a key information source for our community during significant storm events.







An aerial photograph of a coastal area. The top half shows the deep blue ocean with white-capped waves breaking onto a sandy beach. The bottom half shows a sandy dune area with sparse green vegetation and a concrete path or road running along the edge.

NEXT STEPS

Council mergers

As part of the NSW State Government's Fit for the Future local government reform process, 35 proposed Council amalgamations across NSW were announced in December 2015. Newcastle City Council is being considered for a proposed merger.

Should a merger occur, the newly merged council is required to adopt a revised CSP by June 2018. The related community engagement process will involve consulting with the community to gain an understanding of shared values, visions and goals for the new local government area. This feedback will be incorporated into the development of the revised CSP.

IP&R Framework

This End of Term Report will inform the review and development of the next suite of documents required under the IP&R framework, including the revised CSP, Resourcing Strategy, four year Delivery Program and one year Operational Plan. This report will also be incorporated into Council's 2015/2016 Annual Report.

In development of this report, Council recognised the need to review current community indicators to better monitor and report on progress towards community goals. These indicators will be reviewed in the next revision of the Newcastle 2030 CSP.

