

# Better Together

Our 2030 plan



## Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan Update Community Engagement Outcomes Summary

March 2018

# Introduction



The Community Strategic Plan (the Plan) represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by local government. It is a shared community vision developed to inform policies and actions over the next 10 years. The first Newcastle 2030 CSP was adopted in 2010; revised in 2013; and is due for reoption in June 2018.

Extensive community engagement was undertaken from June to November 2017 to ensure community input would inform the development of the new version of the Plan.

More than 2,700 people and stakeholders across our community have been involved to date in developing the draft plan. A detailed report with all the findings has been prepared and is available on Newcastle City Council's website [newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

There will be another opportunity for the community to provide feedback in May 2018 when the draft Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan will be on public exhibition.

## Timeline



**Your Say**  
**Jun – Aug 2017**

Seeking your ideas and knowledge.



**Data**  
**Crunching**



**Your Say**  
**Oct – Nov 2017**

Checking we're on track.



**Preparing**  
**Draft Plan**



**Public Exhibition**  
**May 2018**

Another chance to have your say.



**Final**  
**Plan**

June 2018

# What we asked you



Our community engagement program aimed to answer eight key questions.

These were:

- 1 Has there been a change in the community's awareness of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan?
- 2 Are the core values in the existing CSP still relevant and do they represent the values of the Newcastle community?
- 3 Is the current Vision Statement appropriate or does it need to be modified?
- 4 What are the strengths of Newcastle and its people?
- 5 What does the community think are the challenges facing Newcastle?
- 6 Are the current strategic directions appropriate or do they need to be modified?
- 7 What does the community think are the opportunities for Newcastle?
- 8 What are the community's priorities for services and projects?



# How we engaged with you



To answer the key questions we invited people to participate in eight separate engagement activities. The activities were selected to suit diverse groups within our community and to encourage the participation by as many people as possible. These were:

## Survey #1

The first survey was open from June to August and received 691 responses. The main focus of the survey was obtaining community feedback regarding the Vision Statement and the strategic directions in the current Community Strategic Plan.

## Survey #2

The second survey was open from 1 November to 15 November 2017 and received 907 responses. The main focus of the survey was to identify the importance of 52 proposed new strategies.

## Community workshops

We held five workshops from 19 June to 5 July 2017 in Merewether, Newcastle, Wallsend and Jesmond, that were attended by 115 people. These workshops focused on identifying the strengths and challenges facing Newcastle.

## Community events

We spoke to people at the Multicultural Expo, NAIDOC Family Fun Day, Hunter Homeless Connect Day, Wallsend Winter Fair, and Tarro Reserve playground opening. At these events we asked people what made it great, and what made it hard, to live or work in Newcastle.

## Online ideas wall

We set up an online ideas wall for people to tell and show us their big idea for Newcastle. A total of 799 people participated, posting and 'liking' 179 ideas.

## Service priorities - budget simulator

We invited people to create their own mock budget for 18 Council services by increasing or decreasing the allocated funding for each service in an online budget simulator. We had 319 people, including 85 high school students, create a budget for Newcastle.

## 'Your 2030 vision' cards

Attendees at community workshops, visitors to engagement hubs in our libraries, and visitors to community events were all invited to enter a competition by completing the sentence: "In 2030 I want Newcastle to..." on a competition card. There were 209 total entries.

## Service priorities - dot poster

People were asked to indicate with sticky dots which services they would like to receive greater investment on a service priority dot poster. These were used at our community workshops, community events, and engagement hubs in our libraries. Approximately 810 people participated in this activity.

# Community involvement

Approx. **2,700** people contributed

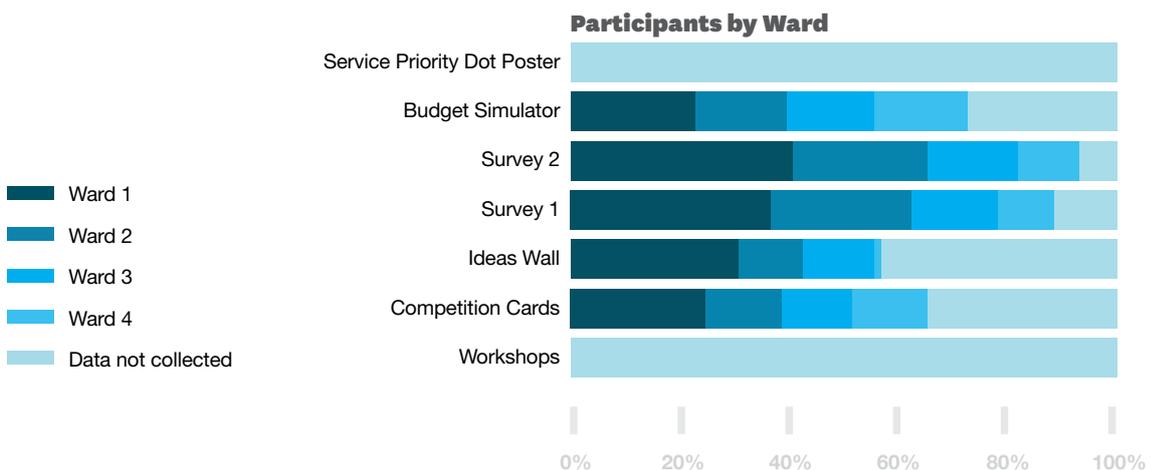
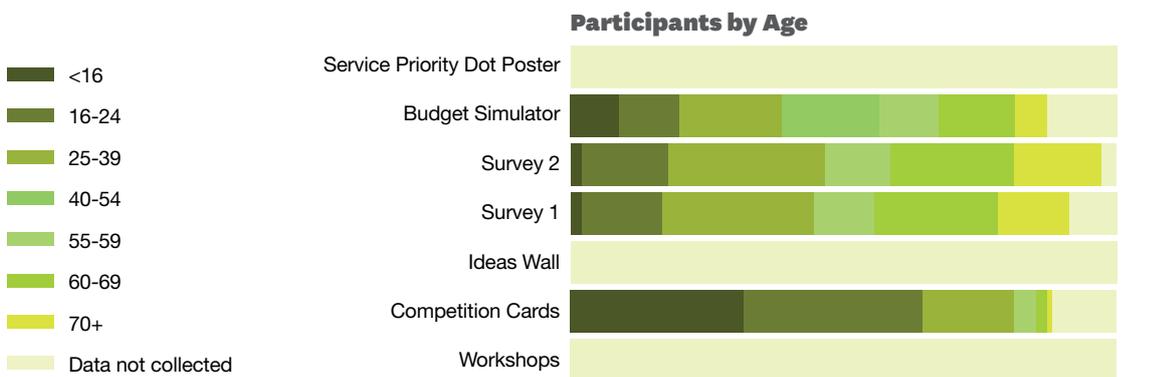
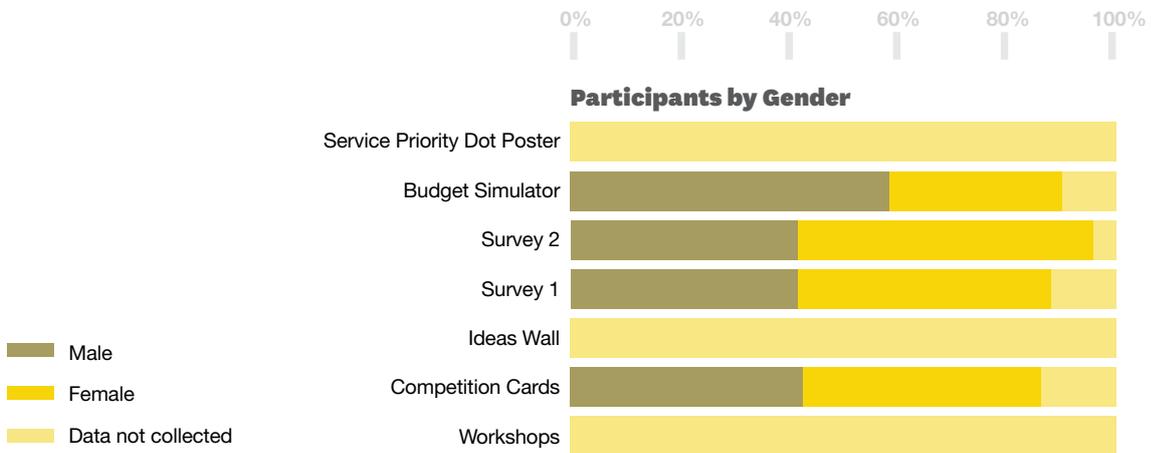
**1,591** Surveys completed  
**799** Participated in Ideas Wall  
**319** Created a budget

**115** Attended Community Workshops  
**810** Got involved at libraries & events

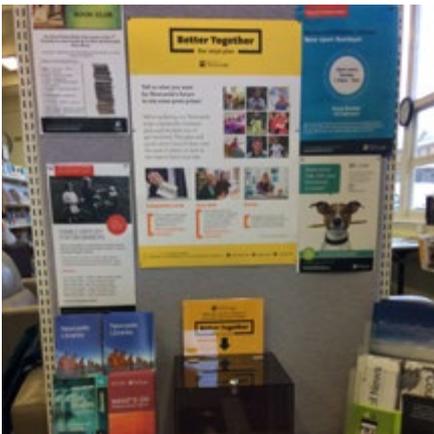
Significant effort was undertaken to create opportunities for people to participate across the Newcastle local government area (LGA), especially hard to reach groups.

People living outside the LGA, who regularly visited or worked in Newcastle, were also encouraged to participate.

The graphs below demonstrate the broad representation of Newcastle stakeholders involved in the engagement activities.



# Where we met with you



**1** Has there been a change in the community's awareness of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan?

There has been a small increase in awareness (4%) of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan since 2012.

**2** Are the core values set out in the existing CSP still relevant and do they represent the values of the Newcastle community?

The majority of the core values in the existing CSP were found to still be relevant. However, the research identified some additional values that are strongly held by the community, which did not feature in the 2013 CSP.

The most frequently mentioned values (in no particular order) were:

Community

Resilience

Active lifestyle

Engaged citizens

Creativity

Leadership

Innovation

Inclusion

Diversity

Environmental sustainability.

# What you told us

## 3 Is the current Vision Statement appropriate or does it need to be modified?

**a Survey #1** - Participants in Survey #1 were shown the text of the current Vision Statement below and asked:

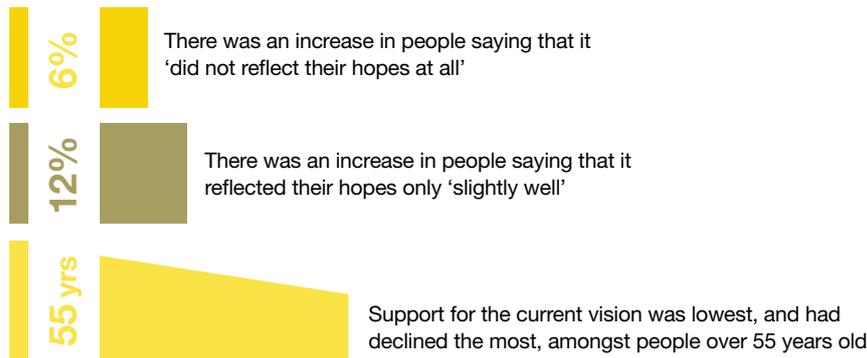
**‘How well does this vision reflect your hopes for Newcastle in the future?’**

*In 2030, Newcastle will be a smart, liveable and sustainable city.*

*We will celebrate our unique city and protect our natural assets. We will build resilience in the face of future challenges and encourage innovation and creativity. As an inclusive community, we will embrace new residents and foster a culture of care. We will be a leading lifestyle city with vibrant public places, connected transport networks and a distinctive built environment. And as we make our way toward 2030, we will achieve all this within a framework of open and collaborative leadership.*

The Vision Statement was found to reflect the hopes for the future of the majority of those who participated in Survey #1, however, there has been a decline in support since 2012.

The aspects of the Vision Statement that people identified with more strongly were the protection of the natural environment, connected transport networks, and vibrant places.



The theme most frequently mentioned as missing from the Vision Statement related to:



**b Vision cards** - The responses provided in the 2030 Vision cards covered a wide range of aspirational statements closely aligned with the current 2030 plan, with one major exception. Namely, that 43 per cent mentioned economic themes including jobs and employment opportunities, business development or industry transitions. These themes or issues are not addressed in the current (2013) 2030 plan's Vision Statement.

**4 What are the strengths of Newcastle and its people?**

The five themes most frequently mentioned as **strengths** of Newcastle and its people were:

Friendly people and community spirit

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Geography and location

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Quality of life and lifestyle

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Public spaces and parks

---

Economic resilience and revitalisation.

**5 What does the community think are the challenges facing Newcastle?**

Numerous topics and issues were identified by respondents, however, the **top themes** were:

Transport

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Building and development - especially impacts on heritage, and the scale and density of development

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Economy - especially lack of job opportunities

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Changing demographics and population size

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Governance and leadership

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Environmental sustainability.

# What you told us

## 6 Are the current strategic directions appropriate or do they need to be modified?

Survey #1 included a series of questions to determine how important the strategic directions and objectives in the existing CSP (2013) were. This was ascertained with a five point importance scale. The closer the mean score was to five, the higher the survey respondents rated the level of importance of the strategic directions and objectives.

All of the existing strategic directions were rated as very important (4) or extremely important (5) by the majority of respondents, however, some were more strongly supported than others.

A large number of comments and suggestions were received about the CSP in a general sense. The main themes in these comments are represented below:



## Survey #1

The seven strategic directions and 23 objectives average scores for 2017 were:

### **Connected City** 4.4/5

Effective and integrated public transport

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Linked networks of cycle and pedestrian paths

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A transport network that encourages energy and resource efficiency.

### **Protected and Enhanced Environment** 4.4/5

Greater efficiency in the use of resources

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Our unique natural environment is maintained, enhanced and connected

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Environmental and climate change risks and impacts are understood and managed.

### **Vibrant and Activated Public Places** 4.4/5

Public places that provide for diverse activity and strengthen our social connections

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Culture, heritage and place are valued, shared and celebrated

---

Safe and activated places that are used by people day and night.

### **Open and Collaborative Leadership** 4.4/5

Integrated, sustainable long-term planning for Newcastle and the region

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Considered decision making based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership.

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Active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals

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Newcastle City Council: A local government organisation of excellence.

### **Caring and Inclusive Community** 4.3/5

A welcoming community that cares and looks after each other

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Active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing

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A creative, culturally rich and vibrant community.

### **Liveable and Distinctive Built Environment** 4.2/5

A built environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity

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Mixed-use urban villages supported by integrated transport networks

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Greater diversity of quality housing for current and future community needs

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Best practice energy and water efficient buildings and infrastructure.

### **Smart and Innovative City** 4.2/5

A vibrant diverse and resilient green economy built on educational excellence and research

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A culture that supports and encourages innovation and creativity at all levels

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A thriving city that attracts people to live, work, invest and visit.

# What you told us

## Survey #2

The outcomes of the community engagement were incorporated in the preparation of a **new set of 52 proposed strategies** for potential inclusion in the 2018 revised CSP.

**Survey #2** canvassed the level of community agreement with these new strategies.

All 52 proposed strategies were agreed with by the majority of respondents, with a mean score of 4.0 or above (out of a possible score of 5).

The **eight strategies with the highest level of agreement** were:

Conduct Council business in an open transparent and accountable manner	4.9/5
Provide quality parkland and recreation facilities that are diverse, accessible and responsive to changing needs	4.8/5
Ensure long-term financial sustainability through short, medium and long term financial planning	4.7/5
Provide opportunities for genuine engagement with the community to inform Council's decision-making	4.7/5
Provide clear, consistent, accessible and relevant information to the community	4.7/5
Encourage and support long-term planning for Newcastle, including implementation, resourcing, monitoring and reporting	4.7/5
Advocate for public transport improvements	4.7/5
Maximise water efficiency and recycling.	4.7/5

The **three strategies with the lowest level of support** were:

Increase collaboration with artists and practitioners in the cultural sector	4.0/5
Build community readiness by engaging the community in risk management processes	4.1/5
Acknowledge and respect local Aboriginal history, cultural heritage and peoples	4.2/5

Those who participated in Survey #2 were also asked what alternative or additional strategies they thought should be included in the revised CSP. A wide range of topics were mentioned in the responses. The most frequently mentioned themes that emerged from the responses were:



## 7 What does the community think are the opportunities for Newcastle?

Two engagement activities were used to identify what the community think are the opportunities for Newcastle.

These were the digital Ideas Wall and a question in Survey #1, which both asked people what their 'big idea for Newcastle' was.

A wide range of ideas were put forward; from location specific projects to region-wide long-term aspirations. Many ideas related to services and assets provided by Council, however, many others would require other organisations' leadership; or partnerships between government, community, institutions and/or the business sector.

### a The most frequently mentioned themes in the ideas put forward were:

Transport, including cycling and public transport

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Built environment and public places, including building design, urban form and density, parks and public spaces, heritage

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Economy, including industry restructuring and tourism

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Environmental sustainability, including renewable energy, resource efficiency, waste reduction, street trees and green spaces.

### b Many of the big ideas provided focused on addressing challenges. Examples of these were:

Improve public transport at a local, regional and intercity scale

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Improve cycleways and cycling safety

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Broaden the economic base away from coal based industry by supporting and grow the tourism industry and innovative businesses

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Continued city and suburban revitalisation with a focus on quality development and activated public spaces and parks

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Improve environmentally sustainability and improve energy and resource efficiency, green buildings and green space throughout the city.

### c Other ideas focused on building on the strengths of Newcastle and its people. These suggested ways to:

Improve and capitalise on the geographic attributes of the city and the region, especially the beaches and coast

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Strengthen community spirit by creating vibrant and active events, public spaces and community infrastructure

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Strengthen and support equitable, inclusive and friendly communities so that everyone has the opportunity to thrive



# What you told us

## 8 What are the community's priorities for services and projects?

Two activities were used to answer this question. These were the service priority dot poster and the online budget simulator, both of which were configured to gather responses relating to pre-determined Council services.

The services that were either allocated increased funding or received the most dot votes are likely to be the community's top priorities. Conversely, those that were allocated reduced funding or received low numbers of dot votes may be considered a lower priority.

All the services were ranked in order of priority for both activities.

- a** Four of the identified **top** six priority services were common to both activities. These were:

Parks and playgrounds

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Cycleways, shared pathways and footpaths

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Environment

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Ocean baths and beaches.

- b** Four of the identified **lowest** six priority services (indicated through reduced funding or fewer dot votes) were also the same for both activities. These were:

Customer service

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Waste collection services

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Community engagement

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Waste diversion.

**Budget Simulator**



In the budget simulator activity the majority of services had their budget allocation maintained at the current level, suggesting that participants are satisfied with the current service levels for those activities.

**Dot Poster**

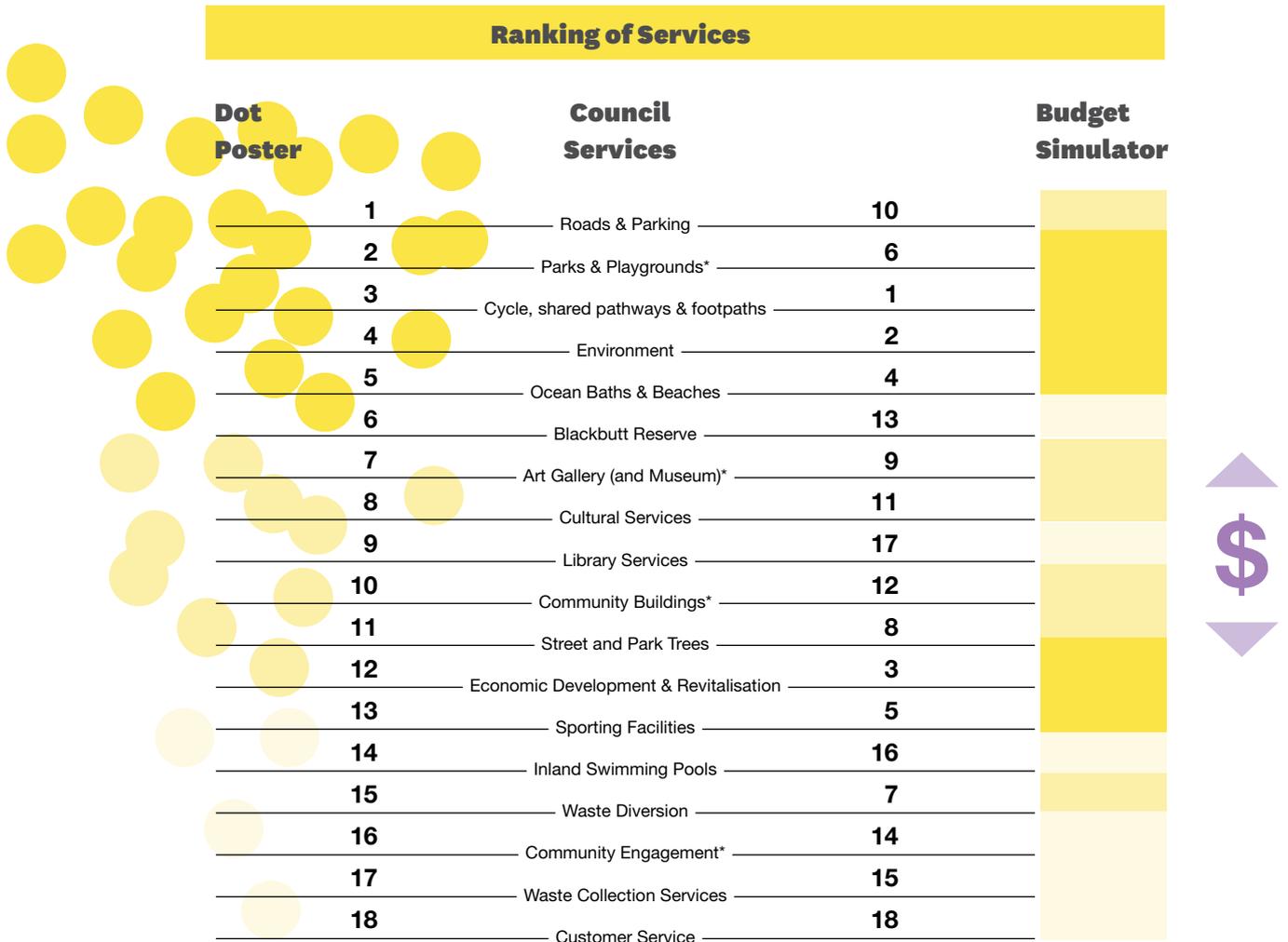
It should be noted that the low priority services identified by the dot poster, should not be interpreted as services that the community wants reduced. The fact that they received a low number of dots could be because people are actually satisfied with the service as it is.

**Key**

Ranked in order of most votes or fund increases.

-  Top six items to increase
-  Middle six items to increase
-  Bottom six items to increase

The graph below shows the relative ranking of the services:



\*Service items that were revised or varied between the different activities

## What next

A draft of the new Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan will be presented to Newcastle’s elected Council in May 2018.

Following their endorsement it will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days and the community will be invited to make submissions. You can register with us to be directly notified when the public exhibition period opens.

Just head to the Better Together page on Council’s website, [newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au) where you’ll also find details on how to make a submission.

Following a review of all the submissions the final plan will be presented to Council for endorsement and then sent to the NSW Office of Local Government by 30 June 2018.

# Better Together

Our 2030 plan



 NewcastleCouncil  CityNewcastle  CityNewcastle

[newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au) 