

Newcastle 2030
End of Term Report
2012 – 2017



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.

Image: ANZAC Memorial Walk



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Newcastle City Council

Authorisation
Interim CEO



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 over \$1 billion in 2016/17.

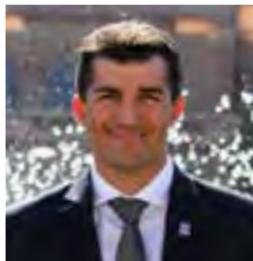
Newcastle City Council is encouraging this investment with a record capital works program that's both maintaining our historic city while helping reinvent it. We are revitalising the coastline with the Bathers Way project, improving Blackbutt Reserve and delivering shared pathways and roads while championing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

Jeremy Bath
Interim Chief Executive Officer

The End of Term Report is a useful mechanism for reflecting upon the performance of Newcastle City Council in meeting the expectations of our community and its ratepayers.

Fortunately for the city, there's much to be proud of during the past five 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 five year term, we have steadily improved our financial performance to return four consecutive surpluses.

Our improved financial position has allowed us to invest in an expanded capital works program. We have delivered works valued at \$292 million over the five years, with the annual value increasing from \$42 million in 2012-2013 to \$82

million last financial year. These numbers have value but what matters most is the size and importance of the projects we promised and delivered. Our rebuilding of the Bathers Way is creating what is well on the way to becoming one of Australia's great walks. Extensive improvements to the facilities on the Carnley Avenue side of Blackbutt Reserve including new picnic shelters, pathways and playground, have created an public park and animal reserve of the highest quality. The good news is this work will soon be repeated with similar improvements to the Richley Reserve section of Blackbutt. Also, our cycleways network is becoming more connected and cycling is today emerging as a viable alternative to driving.

The expanded works program is making transformative changes to the City as well as addressing our infrastructure that

had sadly been left behind in years gone by. Examples include the restoration of historic assets including the stunning Newcastle City Hall, Merewether Ocean Baths and the stabilisation of cliffs, creek beds and seawalls.

As a result, our City is literally changing before our eyes. Investment in the city centre is at an all-time high. Approved annual development applications passed \$1 billion for the first time during the past year. As of the time of writing, there was another \$713 million in development applications yet to be approved.

With this change comes opportunity. Council is confident in its ability to take advantages of these opportunities to meet the needs of the Newcastle community today and many decades into the future.

WHY WRITE THIS REPORT?

The End of Term Report ¹ 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 Premier & Cabinet Division 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 five years to strategic directions identified in the *Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan* and progress made towards achieving community goals.

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

HOW DOES COUNCIL DELIVER OUR COMMUNITY VISION?

COUNCIL'S FOUR-YEAR DELIVERY PROGRAM AND ONE-YEAR OPERATIONAL PLAN (ANNUAL BUDGET) 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 that are not the responsibility of Council.

Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan strategic directions



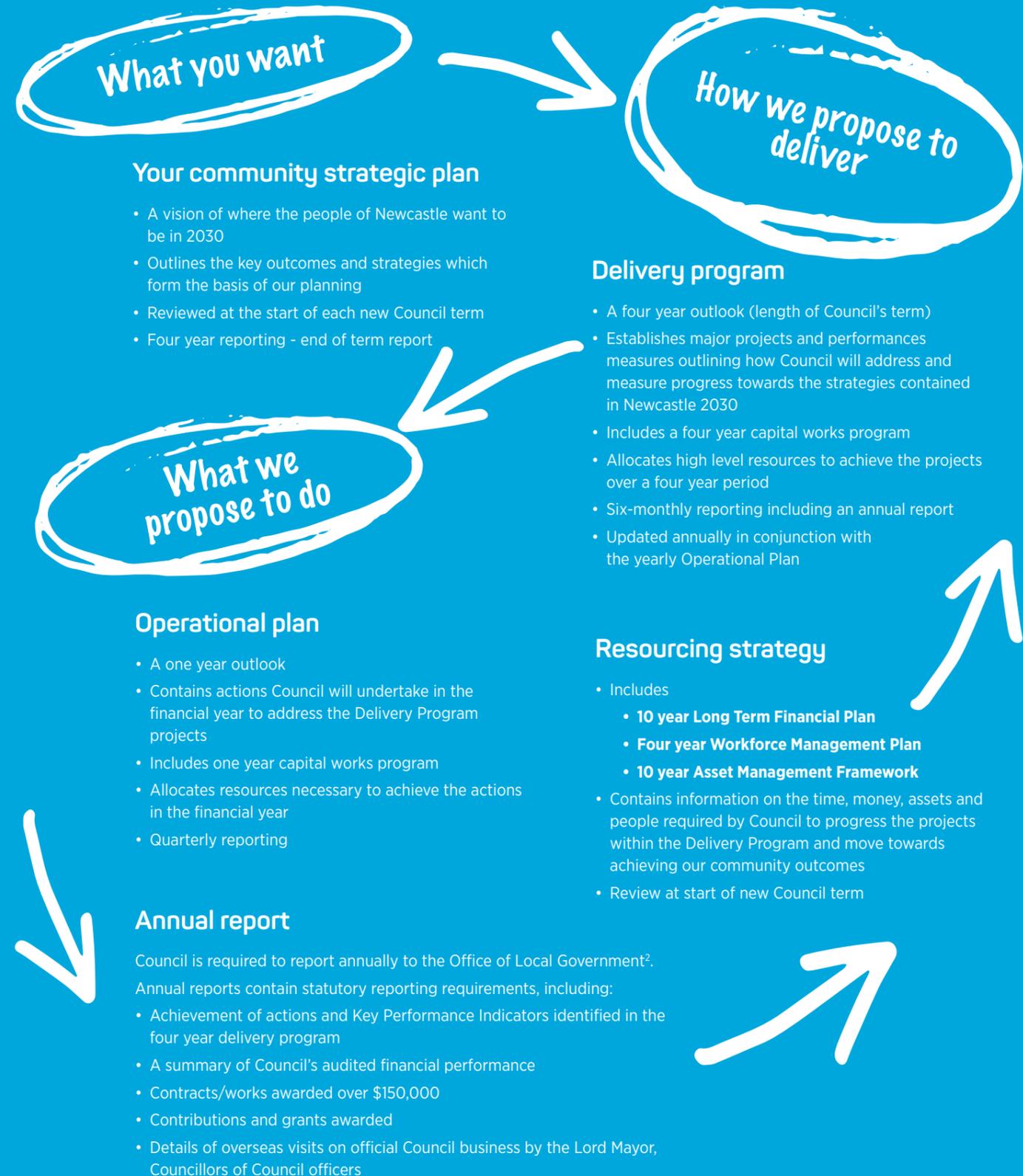
Council's Strategic Documents

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 2015](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy 2016-2019](#)

DELIVERING OUR COMMUNITY VISION



SPECIAL RATE VARIATIONS

THE INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL (IPART) APPROVED TWO SPECIAL RATE VARIATIONS (SRV) IN THE LAST FIVE 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 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 years (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 SRV projects, and to view our annual reports, please [visit our website](#).

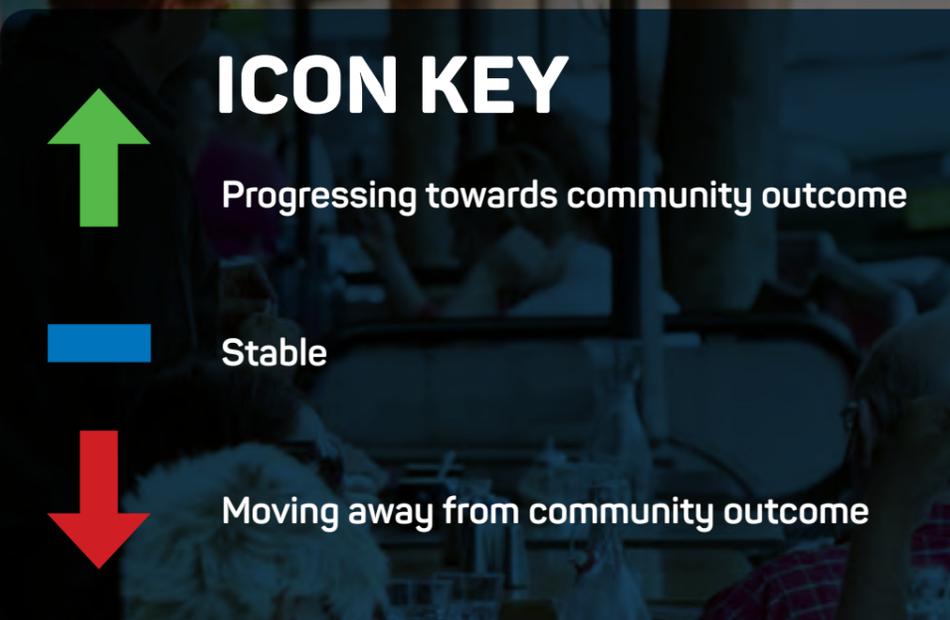
[Road to Recovery](#) was a community engagement program undertaken as part of Council's 2015 SRV application. This program aimed to ensure all ratepayers and members of the community were informed of the SRV proposal and had an opportunity to comment. Council directly engaged with 1,730 members of the 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) data collected every five years. Community indicators will be reviewed in the next version of the CSP to be delivered in 2018.

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 five 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
- A transport network that encourages energy and resource efficiency

Making progress (2012 - 2017)

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.

Road Works - Council undertakes a range of local area traffic management, pedestrian access, road maintenance and asset preservation works to improve amenity, connectivity and accessibility of our road and footpath networks. Recent works include implementation of a 40km/h pedestrian activity area on Blue Gum Road in Jesmond; installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Hobart Road and Durham Road, Lambton and kerb extensions and pedestrian refuge at the intersection of Howe Street and Morehead Street, Lambton.

Light Rail - Following the State Government's announcement of light rail for the Newcastle City Centre, Council has worked with Transport for NSW, Urban Growth and Roads and Maritime Services to ensure that Council's vision for high quality public domain and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists are realised.

CYCLEWAYS PRIORITY PROJECT

A survey was completed in 2014 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.

- Road improvements
- Connectivity of bike paths
- Additional bike paths
- Bike path improvements



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	↑
Adequacy of available public transport (ABS#)	Commuter trips by bus and ferry in Newcastle increased from 2006 to 2011	↑
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 526 in 2016	↑

Updated Census data will only be available in October 2017.

* 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). Council did not participate in the 2017 counts.



On Your Bike

Since 2016, Council in partnership with Transport for NSW undertook cycling education and promotion. Projects included cycleway mapping, local discovery rides, cycle skills classes and the 'On Your Bike' campaign.

Cycle Skills Classes

To encourage people to get back on their bikes and give cycling a go, during 2015, 2016 and 2017 Council offered free bicycle skills and maintenance classes. Classes were aimed at people who have not ridden for a while and needed a few pointers and those that want to improve their skills and confidence on shared paths and streets. The hands-on bike maintenance workshops were designed for cyclists of all abilities who want to be able to undertake essential repairs, adjustments and maintenance required to keep their bike operating safely and efficiently. The classes have been implemented as part of Council's ongoing cycling education and promotion project.

Victory Parade Pedestrian and Cyclist Crossing

In a first for Newcastle, the existing pedestrian crossing west of the entrance to the Jenny McLeod Retirement Village has been upgraded to include a cycle-only crossing and traditional pedestrian crossing. Currently, a cyclist should dismount to use a pedestrian crossing. The cycle only crossing enables cyclists to cross without having to dismount, giving them the same legal right of way that pedestrians have at a pedestrian crossing. This type of crossing is not common in NSW and will be trialled by Council for 12 months, to enable users to provide feedback via an online survey.

Installation of the cyclist crossing is part of a larger program of works, which has included construction of a shared path through Brickworks Park from Iranda Grove to Victory Parade, continuation of the path along Victory Parade, reconstruction of the bus stop, new street lighting and provision of kerb ramps at the Chalmers Road intersection to support possible future extension of the pathway.

The Newcastle Transport Strategy was adopted in December 2014

Council is responsible for the construction and maintenance of around **3,500km of roads, footpaths, drainage and kerbs and guttering**

There is approx. **260km of footpaths** and **60km of dedicated shared pathway/ bicycle trails** throughout the Newcastle LGA



Where are we headed... a snapshot

Pedestrian network improvements: Council has undertaken design and construction of multiple pedestrian safety improvement projects, particularly targeting safety around schools. These works include kerb ramps, footpath, raised crossings and pedestrian refuges. Over \$2M of funds will be allocated in 2017/18 for construction and design of projects, with the aim of realising a connected pedestrian network.

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 to encourage increased use of sustainable transport modes.

Cycling in our city: Through the *Newcastle Cycling Strategy and Action Plan*, Council aims to encourage more people to cycle than use their car for short trips. Most trips taken are less than 10km, and could comfortably be made by bike given Newcastle's relatively flat terrain. In 2017/18, we aim to invest more than \$3M in cycleway design and construction projects. Perception of safety is a key barrier to increased participation in cycling, so we are going 'back to the drawing board' to identify the safest and most attractive options to encourage riders of all types to get on their bike.

Regional cycling project: Council is working with neighbouring local government areas to progress design of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail, a 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. This trail will link to another path stretching from Shortland to Tarro along a water pipeline corridor. Exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement and concept design is expected later in 2017.





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 - 2017)

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 2015/16, 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 at Carnley Ave. Blackbutt continues to run four Junior Ranger Programs each year, with approximately 800 children attending each session.

Stage one of the Richley Reserve Adventure Playground was recently completed which consists of pathways and shelters. Stage two will include an adventure playground for older children and a toddler playground to ensure all children have a place to learn and play. Stage two will be completed by mid-2018.

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. Council has planted 4,020 new street and park trees involving 1,667 residents and community members at 26 'Living Streets' events.

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 Elernmore 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.

Coastal Protection - Council's coastline extends 14km from Merewether to Stockton, and is subject to a number of coastal hazards. The preservation and restoration of coastal vegetation protects the built and natural assets of the coast and improves coastal amenity. Specific coastal protection projects include;

- restoration of Stockton Hunter River wall
- heathland planting at Pitt Street Reserve, Stockton
- Merewether Seawall rehabilitation
- restoration of Themeda grasslands at King Edward Park and the Obelisk
- cliff stabilisation at Bar Beach and Newcastle South
- dune restoration at various beaches
- coastal vegetation planting and stormwater quality improvement devices in conjunction with the Bathers Way project at Dixon Park; and
- coastal environment education initiatives: including the Marine Discovery Series and interpretive signage.





Solar photovoltaic systems

Over the past five 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 our environment

Over the past five years, 25 Landcare groups have committed to weekly working bees alongside Council's Bushland Services to restore and rehabilitate our coastal areas, bushland reserves and wetlands. The work of volunteers included rehabilitating vegetation, removing weeds, mulching to improve moisture retention and limit weed growth, installing fences and planting species native to the Newcastle LGA.

The volunteers contributed over 6000 hours annually and have planted over 40,000 plants since 2013, improving visual amenity while also restoring an important ecological community throughout our city.

Since 2012



Council rehabilitated **2km** of Ironbark Creek (Toohrnbing)



Council planted **4,020** new street and park trees across Newcastle



Council ran over **134** environmental education engagement activities, involving approximately **9,292** local residents

Council planted **417,000** native plants in coastal restoration projects and **368,000** plants in bushland restoration projects

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 and 2016	↑
Household water usage (Hunter Water)	The average household water consumption (KL) has decreased from 177 KL in 2012 to 171 KL in 2016	↑
Household electricity usage (Ausgrid)	In 2013, the average daily electricity consumption per household was 14.6kWh, decreasing to 14.2kWh in 2015 and 2016	↑
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 eight species declining, eleven stable and four species where status is unclear	↓
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 - 2017)

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 surrounding areas. Market Street works, Façade Improvement Program, Renew Newcastle, Christmas celebrations and other events have been funded by Council to encourage revitalisation of the city. Alongside significant investment by the NSW State Government in light rail and the Newcastle Interchange, Council has been developing public domain plans in key areas of the city in the West End, Civic and East End to complement State Government planning.

Coastal revitalisation -The Bathers Way, a 6km shared pathway stretching from Merewether Ocean Baths to Nobbys Beach is now more than 50 per cent complete and is on track to be finished by 2021. The number of people using completed sections of the Bathers Way has almost doubled since work began.

Completed sections include Merewether to Bar Beach and Newcastle Ocean Baths to Nobbys Beach. Bathers Way construction is under way around Strzelecki Lookout, Cliff Street, and York Drive, where a shared pathway will link the Memorial Drive section of the walk with King Edward Park, and above the newly reconstructed South Newcastle sea wall.

Work has begun to replace the retaining walls between Newcastle Beach and Shortland Esplanade. This stage also includes a new 4m-wide shared pathway, landscaping, lighting, fences and pedestrian crossings. When the current project stage is complete, works will continue to the South Newcastle precinct, linking Newcastle Beach to South Newcastle sea wall and King Edward Park.



Festival and events city - Newcastle won a prestigious international award four times since 2012 for delivering a diverse range of festivals and event. Newcastle outranked other cities with a similar population size to be named the 2016 International Festivals & Events Association World Festival & Event City. This award confirms Newcastle's place as a world class participant in the festival and event sector, providing visitor experiences from sporting events to arts and cultural festivals, markets, conventions and exhibition.

Cultural Facilities - Increased activation has been a feature of the last four years, by leveraging programming in our Cultural Facilities and Libraries, events such as the Gallery's outdoor Summer celebrations for Like Us: Patricia Piccinini (2014), Mambo 301 Years of Shelf Indulgence (2015) and the Spanish street party to celebrate John Olsen: The City's Son attracted thousands of people. Newcastle Museum's 5th birthday celebration, Newcastle Region Library's dog parade to launch A Soldier, A Dog and A Boy by Libby Hathor (2016) as part of Newcastle Writer's Festival as well as the Civic Theatre's presentation of Velvet in a Spiegeltent in Civic Park, are all part of celebrating culture and activating our city.

Newcastle Museum - In August 2016, Newcastle Museum celebrated its fifth anniversary with five hours of festivities at a special late night event, 5 on 5, with live music, food stalls and entertainment. The event explored Newcastle's past, present and future both inside and outside the Museum, with stunning photographic projections, a sensory art installation, Circle, the new permanent installation of over 1700 newly donated grocery-related objects from the Owen's family and storytelling by the Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre.

In 2015, Newcastle Museum hosted 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.

The museum continues to expand its audience base via exhibitions and programming covering topics as diverse as science, tattooing, migration, World War I, the human body, retail heritage, Westpac Rescue Helicopter service, the 1950s, the Pasha Flood, radical Newcastle and local national parks.

Fort Scratchley - Fort Scratchley continued to be popular with locals and tourists alike. Cruise ships are acknowledged with a firing of the guns. The Fort Scratchley Historical Society's annual fundraising event, Music of the Guns, featuring the Australian Army Band Newcastle is an annual sell-out.

Activating the site to reveal the Fort's history is well received by the public. Civic Theatre Subscription Season featured Through these Lines (2014) and Dust of Uruzgan (2016), while Tantrum Youth Arts presented Manning the Fort (2016), a site-specific, contemporary theatre production that told the story of the members of the Australian Women's Army Service stationed at Fort Scratchley in WW2.

Newcastle Region Library - Over the past five 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 including 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 (<i>Parks and recreation areas - Council's Community Survey +</i>)	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 (<i>Recreation facilities - Council's Community Survey +</i>)	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 (<i>Council</i>)	The number of event licences approved by Council continues to increase. There were 383 event licences approved in 2013, 405 in 2015 and 409 in 2016	↑
Satisfaction with heritage conservation in Newcastle (<i>Council's Community Survey +</i>)	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 (<i>Council</i>)	The number of people attending cultural facilities has continued to increase since 2012; with over 1M people visiting Newcastle Museum, 700,000 visiting Civic Theatre and 360,000 visiting Newcastle Art Gallery	↑
Perception of safety in public areas around Newcastle (<i>Council's Safe City Plan Survey</i>)	Data collected in 2016, shows 63% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they feel safe in the Newcastle LGA	↑
Crime rates (<i>Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research NSW</i>)	The crime rate in Newcastle has decreased since 2013, from 3,459 recorded offences to 3,404 offences in 2016, based on 13 crime categories for outdoor space locations	↑

+ Council's Community Survey is conducted every two years, the next survey will occur in 2018.

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. Council 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.

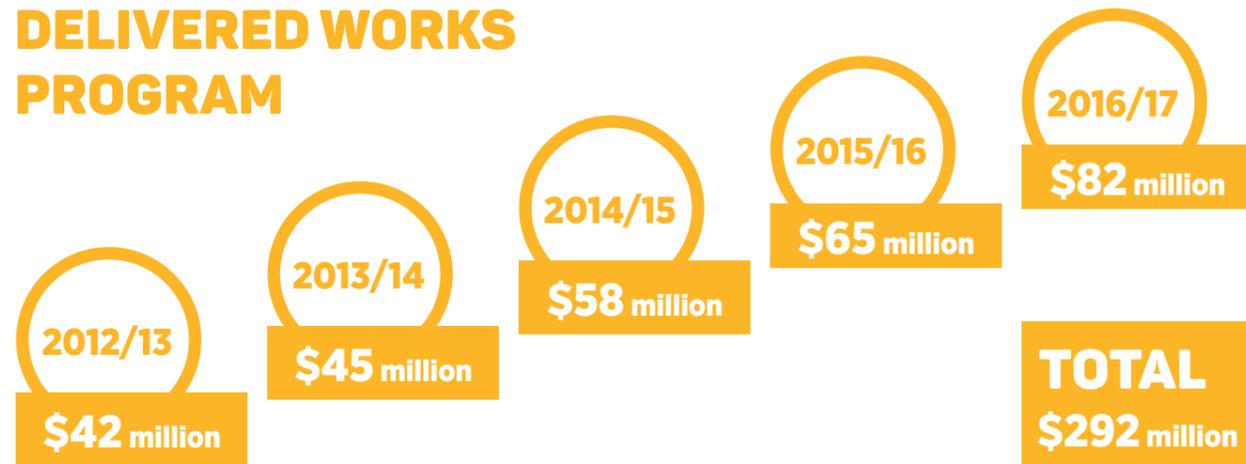
Open Space

Playgrounds - Significant playground transformations have been delivered at Nesbitt Park, Campbell Park, Willow Close and Cowie Street Reserve with an upgrade of playgrounds and provisions of seating and shade.

Exercise Equipment - Council has invested approximately \$200,000.00 in providing exercise equipment at Warabrook Recreation Reserve, and Lambton and Islington Park. This project was delivered in partnership with University of Newcastle Research Centre of Physical Activity & Nutrition.

Sporting Fields Renovation - Council in partnership with local sports clubs have implemented a ground renovation program, including upgrades at Gibbs Bros Oval, Merewether, Tuxford Park, Shortland, Tarro Recreation Area, Tarro, Alder Park, New Lambton and Myambalah Crescent, Merewether.

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 ambient 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.

City Centre Revitalisation - Over the next few years Council will continue to develop and construct improvements identified in the West End, Civic and East End plans in association with the rollout of State Government projects like Light Rail and Corridor Improvements. The NSW State Government recently released the Newcastle City Centre Cycleway Network Strategy, incorporating the proposed cycleway network; ensuring Council takes a considered approach to the entire streetscape to add value to the City Revitalisation Program of works.





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 - 2017)

Social Strategy - The Social Strategy (2016-2019) is a four year framework outlining key priorities and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to investing, promoting and delivering community development outcomes in Newcastle. The Social Strategy was adopted by Council on 8 December 2015.

Key achievements to date include:

- development and adoption of the Multicultural Plan 2016-2019, Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2018, Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-2019 and the Safe City Plan 2016-2019
- ongoing support for community groups such as disability groups, childcare centres, community facilities, seniors centres, Men's Sheds and youth

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.

The Multicultural Small Business Program has been delivered in partnership with The Business Centre and other community organisations. This project involved a series of capacity building workshops focused on business skills to support emerging multicultural communities in Newcastle. Twenty aspiring business people from 10 different countries graduated from the program.

Building on Street Safe success - In November 2016, Council announced it would extend its financial support for a volunteer-run street safe program after the incidence of alcohol-related offences fell dramatically in the Newcastle CBD during a nine-month trial. The Streetsafe Night Time Outreach Program run by the Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Network together with Council and NSW Police helps vulnerable, intoxicated people get home, preserving peace on the streets and easing the burden on emergency services. Council committed to provide \$30,000 in support to ensure the program continues for another 12 months.

Cultural Strategy - The Cultural Strategy 2016-2019, adopted by Council in November 2015 provides a four year framework detailing the priorities for Council's investment in arts and culture in Newcastle. It defines Council's role in culture and positions it to meet the cultural needs of the city in a targeted and strategic manner. Cultural Facilities in partnership with the Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee are facilitating 'Cultural Conversations' with local Aboriginal community members and organisations. Cultural Conversations are being held with a focus on relationship building to support increased communications between Council and 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 year one of the plan, implementation has focussed primarily on internal systems and processes to ensure a solid foundation of accessible and inclusive business practice.

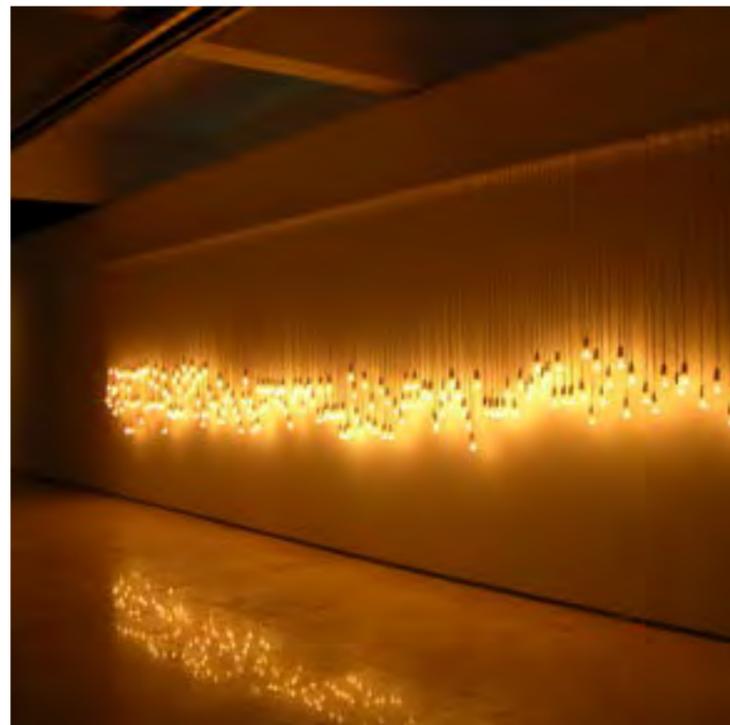
Initiatives have included, staff awareness raising and training across the built environment and inclusive design, accessible communications focusing on digital and print mediums and disability awareness for frontline staff.

A snapshot of other project initiatives included digital accessibility audit of Council's website and remediation program in development, initiatives to improve early access thinking for identified public domain projects, initiatives to increase inclusion in coastal and public facility locations, development of staff resources to support inclusive practice and increasing access of Council events.

Reconciliation outcomes - Since 2012, Council has delivered and 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
- Developed an Aboriginal Dual Naming program for eight landforms in Newcastle; and
- Developed in partnership with Reconciliation Australia and are now implementing our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2018



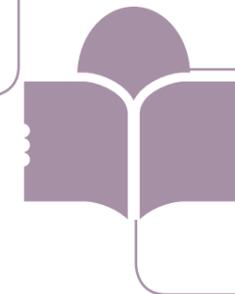
Newcastle Art Gallery - Newcastle Art Gallery hosts a Guided Tour program and Community Access Workshops were individually tailored for visitors and groups with a wide range of audiences with specific needs, providing them with alternative ways to appreciate, enjoy and interpret works on display. Newcastle Art Gallery is host to Art Cart, school holiday workshops, public talks and exhibition tours as well as specially designed learning opportunities for students and teachers.



The **Make Your Place** program allocated **\$180,000** in grant funding for **108** community-driven place activation projects. The associated community resource contribution is valued at over **\$670,000**.



Over **3,600** young people have attended **50 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 2016/2017** 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.

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 AEDC is held every 3 years, the next data collection will be undertaken in 2018	↓
Volunteer participation rates (ABS)	In 2016, 19% of persons aged over 15 years of age volunteered. This is an increase of 3% since the 2011 census	▬
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)	In 2012, the wellbeing index was 4.14, where 1 is low and 5 is high wellbeing	▬
Companion animal ownership (Council)	Companion animal registrations for cats and dogs have increased with 3629 animals in 2012 and 3782 animals registered in 2016	↑
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	▬

+ Council's Community Survey is conducted every two years, the next survey will occur in 2018.

∞ The HVRF Wellbeing Survey has now ceased.

Refugees welcomed with bikes and cycle safety tips

Council teamed up with Catholic Care and a support agency to teach recently arrived refugees how to cycle safely in Australia. Seven refugee dads laughed their way through Cycle Skills Workshops for beginners at New Lambton after Catholic Care committed to getting the men and their families mobile on two wheels.

With help from Dan "The Bike Man" Endicott at the University of Newcastle's Bike Love Corral, around 35 refugees received bicycles and training to ensure they understand Australian road rules. It was a great combination of cycleways and cycling education, which are among Council's top priorities, and the city's status as a refugee welcome zone. Council also runs ongoing free cycle skills and bike maintenance workshops for the general public.

Newcastle Art Gallery

New and diverse audiences were drawn to Newcastle Art Gallery for accessible and popular summer exhibitions including Like Us: Patricia Puccini and 301 years of Mambo. These exhibitions were supported by major outdoor community events attracting thousands of Newcastle residents and visitors. The Gallery drew on its extensive collection to complement exhibitions and ensure its significant works were made accessible to local audiences. Collaboration with local artists in developing exhibitions and programming was an ongoing commitment.

Staff Access and Inclusion forum

Staff from all areas of our organisation packed the Civic Playhouse in May to hear Sydney 2000 Paralympics silver medallist Paul Nunnari address matters of access and inclusion. The event aimed to raise awareness of the need for disability inclusion across everything Council does. Paul talked about his personal experiences after a childhood injury and shared stories to help staff consider the world from the perspective of someone living with disability. This forum was an awareness raising initiative about the new landscape of disability inclusion brought about by the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016 - 2019.

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 Library strategic plan will be developed, in consultation with the whole 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

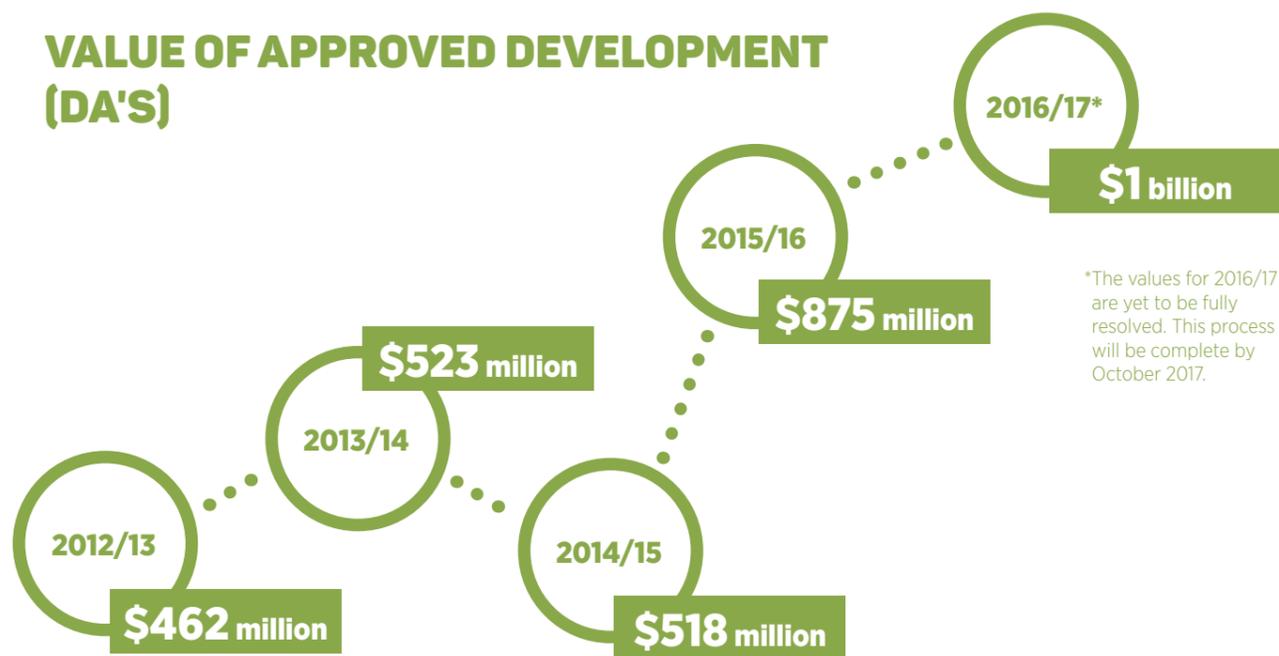
Progress (2012 - 2017)

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 and affordable housing - The Building Better Cities Committee (BBC) continues to support the development of affordable housing solutions through expenditure of Commonwealth grant funds. In April 2017, the Committee resolved to fund an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to seek bids from Tier One Community Housing Providers for the design, delivery and management of an affordable housing project within the Newcastle Local Government Area. Allocating \$3.01M for this partnership, the EOI process aims to deliver an affordable housing project located in proximity to existing transport and employment opportunities.

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.

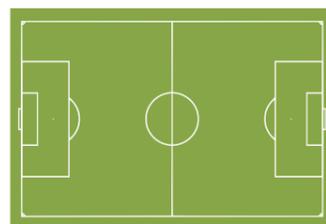
VALUE OF APPROVED DEVELOPMENT (DA'S)



Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Listed heritage items (<i>State Heritage Register</i>)	Sixteen archaeological sites, six heritage conservation areas, 684 local heritage items and 46 items on the State Heritage Register	↑
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, 4,992 solar voltaic systems were installed in Newcastle's LGA, increasing to 6,473 in 2016	↑

+ Council's Community Survey is conducted every two years, the next survey will occur in 2018.

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 five years, Council has determined over 1,300 development applications per annum, which assists 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. This development includes apartment towers above a commercial centre. The retail components already attract people from a wide catchment area. The residential component which is currently being constructed will have the feel of a self-contained community that is well served in terms of amenity, convenience and inner city lifestyle.

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, initiated the preparation of a masterplan to guide future growth in Wickham. Workshops have been conducted with local land and business owners and a range of government agencies to help identify opportunities for the area. The draft masterplan was recently completed and was endorsed by Council for public exhibition in March 2017. The draft masterplan provides a blueprint for guiding future development in Wickham and will influence land use mix, connectivity, the public domain and built form.

Library upgrade - The city branch of Newcastle Region Library will undergo a major refurbishment in the coming year. Newcastle Region Library successfully gained a State Library Infrastructure Grant of 200k with over \$1million provided from Council's capital works program. The project will include a fresh look and feel relocating the staircase, creating a new flexible layout on the ground floor with mobile shelving; state of the art technology zone and maker space on the first floor and the creation of quiet spaces separate to collaborative and active zones to meet the needs of different users. High end technology will complement and support smart city initiatives by the council, university and TAFE. The library will become a central place for people of all interests to meet, learn and exchange ideas.



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 - 2017)

National Geographic Project - The National Geographic Project is a multi-faceted project aimed at three key economic development opportunities for Newcastle; showcasing smart city initiatives, that it is a great place to work or invest, as well as being a great place to visit on holidays. National Geographic Traveler Magazine in the USA ran a special feature article nominating Newcastle as the "next world smart city to watch in 2017". The article also appeared online in the National Geographic Traveler Smart City Hub alongside video content and a photography exhibition of Newcastle. Council also contributed 15 videos of people who have moved to Newcastle to work or establish businesses and the reasons why they made that move. The 15 videos reached 709,666 people on Facebook and have been viewed 257,580 times.

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. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Tourism Satellite Account, an estimated \$808 million of Newcastle's total economic output is generated from tourism across sectors such as transport, accommodation, food services and retail, which represents 30% of the Hunter region's total tourism output. Tourism supports a range of infrastructure including restaurants, the airport, our cultural facilities such as Newcastle Museum and Art Gallery and other services. Newcastle's tourism industry employs over 4,131 people (4.7% of jobs in Newcastle). Newcastle welcomed over 1.16 million overnight visitors in the year to March 2017, up 7.5% on the previous 12 months.

Economic Development Strategy 2016-2019 -

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.

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.

Initiatives include:

- Free WiFi access across Newcastle Region Library branches in 2012
- Self-service radio frequency identification (RFID) technology was introduced in 2014
- 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
- The development of a Digital Services and Innovation Team in 2015 who drive smart and connected initiatives including Tech Savvy Life Long Learning programs, Bring Your Own device assistance and E-smart community development

- Partnerships with the University of Newcastle in the Global Newcastle project, designed to showcase the Libraries' extensive archives collection to develop local stories and a sense of place.

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 Williamtown, 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.

2012-17



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. Since launching, it has presented fun and educational shows to over 7,500 students. The program builds on Newcastle Museum's decades-long experience and expertise in developing and delivering science education.

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; activation events in Hamilton and Wallsend, innovation projects supporting the development of solar energy and the fashion industry, and a number of training and education

activities. Council also entered into a specific sponsorship agreement with Renew Newcastle.

Hunter Innovation Project

In 2016 Council, in collaboration with core partners University of Newcastle, Newcastle NOW and Hunter DiGIT, was successful in winning State Government funding through the Hunter Infrastructure Investment Fund for the Hunter Innovation Project. This project has a value of \$17.8m, and is designed to establish the innovation infrastructure foundations for Newcastle to be competitive in both existing and emerging markets.

The Hunter Innovation Project (HIP) funding is delivering; city centre WiFi, Smart City Infrastructure including smart parking and lighting, an Internet of Things network in the city centre and an Innovation Hub. Further work is underway through the HIP to establish a digitally enabled innovation district and digital precinct in the city centre, and to support development of the city and regional innovation ecosystem. These projects are cornerstones of Council's ambitious Smart City Strategy which was recently on public exhibition.

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 2013, the value of new commercial development applications was \$70M, increasing to \$238M in 2017	↑
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	↑

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

Where are we headed... a snapshot

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.

Visitor Services and Tourism - 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 in partnership with Destination NSW and Virgin Australia Supercars to deliver the season-ending round of the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship for 5 years commencing in November 2017. We expect the Supercars event to boost the visitor economy by \$57 million and see 81,000 new visitors over 5 years, with a 220 million TV audience.



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

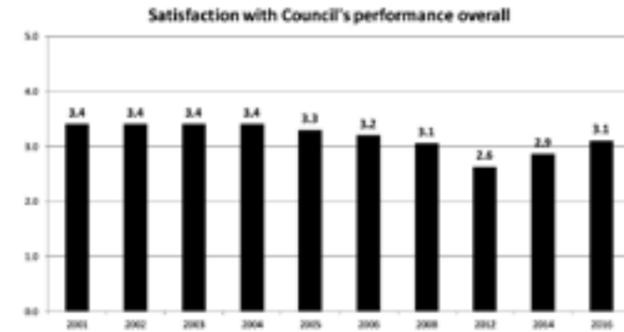
Making progress (2012 - 2017)

Communication with our community - Council's Communications and Engagement Unit works to inform the community of Council activities, programs and achievements and to provide information and opportunities which encourage community participation and feedback. Key corporate communications activities include publishing Council's quarterly newsletter Council News which is delivered to all letterboxes in the local government area, managing Council's website and social media channels, and managing Council's brand and style guide

Over the past term there have been several major communications campaigns. These include the information campaign during and after the April 2015 superstorm and a campaign to increase awareness of Council's delivery of four priority projects: City Centre revitalisation, coastal revitalisation including the Bathers Way project, Blackbutt Reserve and cycleways. These campaigns include media coverage, social media campaigns, designated webpages, and showcase videos for each project.

2016 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The 2016 Community Survey was undertaken to better understand key issues, community needs and community priorities and to determine levels of importance of, and satisfaction with, the services and facilities provided by Council.



SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE IS AT ITS HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE 2008.



IMPORTANCE

A series of 33 Council services and facilities were presented to participants for rating on importance (from not important at all, somewhat, moderately, quite or very important). All of the items were relatively important to participants. Percentages shown are those who indicated the facility or service was either quite or very important.

Five most important facilities and services

- 1 Long term planning and vision for the city **95%**
- 2 Garbage collection and disposal **94%**
- 3 Standard of service to ratepayers **93%**
- 4 Council's performance overall **92%**
- 5 Response to community needs **92%**

Five facilities and services of lesser importance

- 1 Providing cycleways **71%**
- 2 Footpaths in Newcastle area look good **70%**
- 3 Roads in Newcastle Council area look good **65%**
- 4 Arts, entertainment and culture **66%**
- 5 Community event & program sponsorship **56%**

MORE IMPORTANT

Facilities and services that the community think are **more important than in 2014**

- UP 10 RANK PLACES** Parking in the Newcastle CBD
- UP 8 RANK PLACES** Regulating traffic flow
- UP 7 RANK PLACES** Environmental programs to improve the environment

LESS IMPORTANT

Facilities and services that the community think are **less important than in 2014**

- DOWN 8 RANK PLACES** Swimming pools
- DOWN 8 RANK PLACES** Children's facilities and services
- DOWN 6 RANK PLACES**
 - Facilities and services for youth
 - Library services
 - Sporting facilities

Percentages shown are those who indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the facility or service.

FIVE FACILITIES & SERVICES MOST SATISFIED WITH

- 1 Library services **75%**
- 2 Maintenance of beach facilities and beaches **74%**
- 3 Parks and recreation areas **70%**
- 4 Garbage collection and disposal **68%**
- 5 Sporting facilities **60%**

FIVE FACILITIES & SERVICES LEAST SATISFIED WITH

- 1 Parking in the Newcastle CBD **35%**
- 2 Long-term planning and vision for the city **24%**
- 3 Management of the Newcastle CBD **24%**
- 4 Management of residential development **31%**
- 5 Providing cycleways **34%**

Communications and Engagement - The Communications and Engagement Unit works to ensure the community's voice is heard regarding Council activities, services and facilities. Council has expanded its engagement program to increase community awareness and understanding of decisions and gain insight into community opinion through coordinated engagement programs. These programs involve a range of tools such as workshops, focus groups, surveys and information sessions. Corporate or 'whole of Council' engagement projects in the last term have included the Road to Recovery engagement program and Council's Community Survey; a biennial survey to canvass community views regarding Council's facilities and services (described in further detail below).

The engagement team has worked collaboratively with Destination NSW and Supercars Australia to engage with the community around the Supercars Newcastle 500 event to be held in November 2017. There have been a series of information sessions with Newcastle East residents and a designed microsite has been developed on Council's website. A Major Events Residents Working Group (MERWG) has also been established and meets monthly. The goal of the MERWG is to ensure residents' concerns can be raised in a solution-focused manner.

There have been significant efforts made to engage with the community on a wide range of Council services, issues and facilities over the Council Term. This work has been enhanced by the acquisition of exciting new engagement tools to increase community involvement in our projects.

One of these tools is an engagement hub which creates dedicated project pages providing eight feedback tools in one integrated online platform. Residents can undertake surveys, post ideas, participate in forums, download documents, register for workshops, make formal submissions and download documents making it ideal for managing large projects with multiple activities.

Council's new budget simulation tool allows residents to attempt to balance costs and services for some of the main services Council provides in a fun easy way. It allows Council to identify community needs and expectations regarding service levels, asset management and budget sustainability in an interactive, transparent and educational manner.

Council's engagement team is continuing to focus our efforts on determining local priorities and gaining community feedback on issues facing Newcastle residents.

Council engages with the community on a broad range of projects. Some key projects include:

- Satisfaction surveys for Council services and facilities including; Customer Service, Newcastle Museum, Newcastle libraries, Blackbutt Reserve, Beach Kiosks, Beach and Ocean Baths facilities, Civic Theatre and Waste Services
- Strategic Planning issues including; Heritage Conservation, Local Planning Strategy, Safe City Strategy, Smart City Strategy, Newcastle After Dark, Special Rate Variations, Show Day, Public Domain Plans, Wickham Master Plan and Community Strategic Plans

- Infrastructure projects such as; Cycleways Program, Young Street road and footpath reconstruction, Bibby Street road and footpath reconstruction, South Stockton Active Hub, Wickham Traffic Management Study.

State level partnerships - 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 UrbanGrowth NSW in the facilitation of community workshops and ran a community survey with over 700 respondents.

Council continues to liaise with Hunter Development Corporation and Transport for NSW to deliver the NSW Government's revitalising Newcastle plans.

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.

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.



Since October 2012 there have been **185** Council meetings



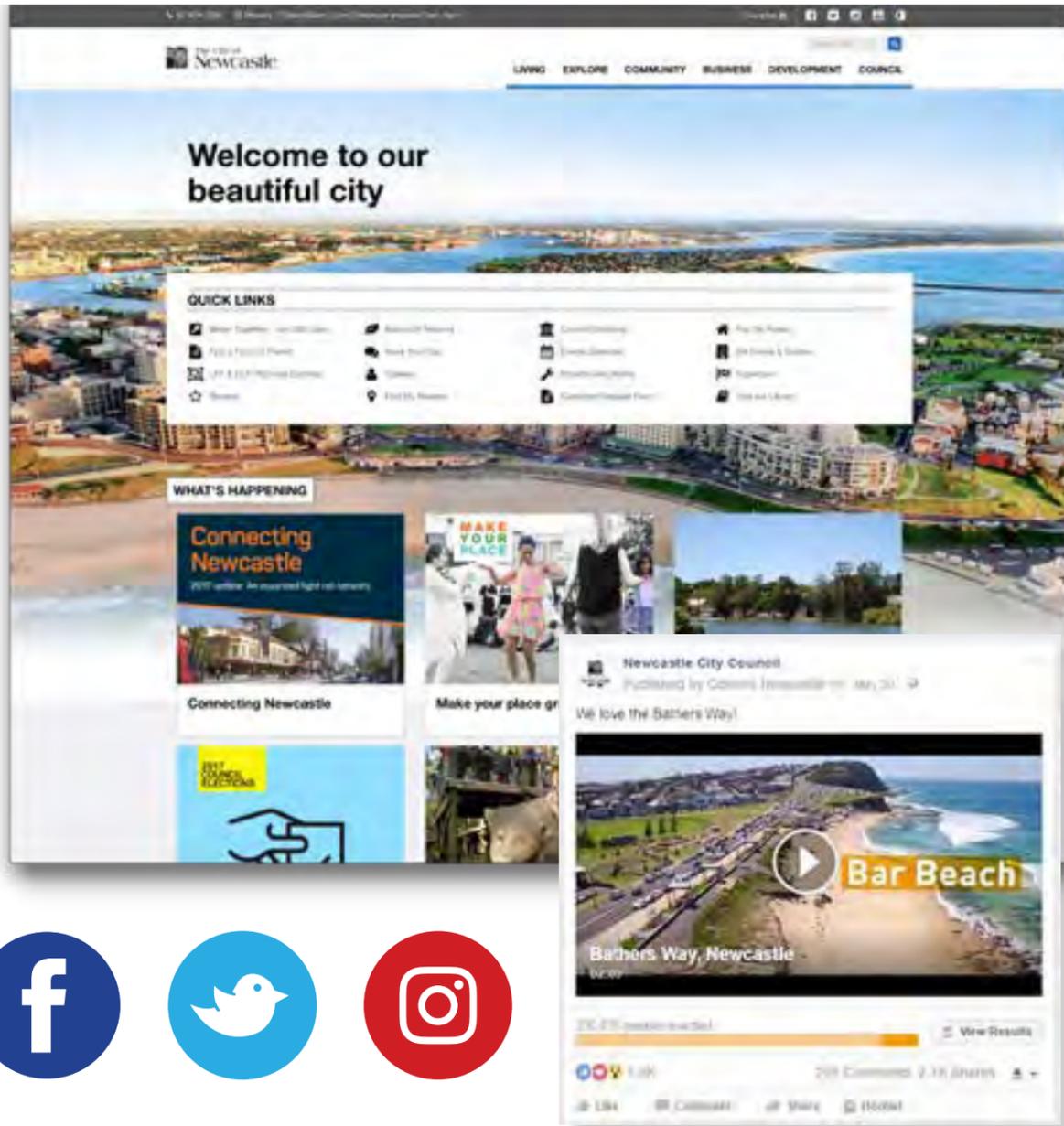
Community engagement panel Newcastle Voice has more than **2,300** active members



Council's engagement team undertook **86** community engagement projects to help inform Council decision making. Approximately **30,000** surveys have been completed by residents during the course of these projects on a range of topics

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Major infrastructure projects (Hunter Development Corporation)	The Newcastle LGA has received \$167M 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	↑

+ Council's Community Survey is conducted every two years, the next survey will occur in 2018.



Getting social

Council's social media presence has grown substantially over the past term and now has 11,000 followers on Facebook, 6400 on Twitter and 1000 on Instagram. 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 several produced in 2016 and 2017 to promote Council's priority projects. Building our social media audience is a positive way to create brand awareness and build relationships with our community.

Website redesign

Council launched a new corporate website newcastle.nsw.gov.au in 2015, which was awarded best Government and Municipal site in the 2015 Kentico Site of the Year Awards. The awards seek out the best Kentico content management systems and involve a public vote.

This was part of a larger project to move all Council websites to a consistent platform and included the redesign of several websites including Newcastle Art Gallery, Newcastle Museum and Civic Theatre Newcastle. New sites were created for Blackbutt Reserve and Newcastle Region Library.

Customer experience was a priority throughout the project and all sites are responsive and compatible with a range of devices.



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. A new online platform - Engagement HQ - launched mid-2017 and provides an opportunity for people to post ideas, participate in surveys, download documents and interact directly with Council about specific topics. 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 2017/18 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. Infrastructure to ensure it is positioned to best meet community needs.



NEXT STEPS

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, Workforce Management Plan, four year Delivery Program and one year Operational Plan. This report will also be incorporated into Council's 2016/2017 Annual Report.

During the 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 version of the Newcastle 2030 CSP to be delivered in June 2018.

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