

# Newcastle City Council

## Events Plan

### 2016 - 2019



## Acknowledgement

The City of Newcastle acknowledges 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 addressing disadvantages and attaining justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

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# FOREWARD

In 2030, we 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.

(Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan, NCC, 2013)

# ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

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## 1. Introduction

Events provide opportunities for people to connect with other people, learn something new, see something amazing or just have fun. Events also showcase our city, develop our sense of place and identity and contribute to economic and community development. Importantly, events also play a major role in attracting visitors and tourists to our city.

Newcastle City Council is a proud supporter of events in our community and recognises the role of events in building social capital, encouraging community participation and enhancing tourism opportunities. This strategy documents how Council will attract, partner, fund, produce, promote and approve events in Newcastle, to ensure the social and economic benefits of events are maximised.

Research by Tourism Research Australia from 2014 show that 360,000 people travel to Newcastle annually to attend events, injecting an estimated \$72M into the local economy.

Newcastle City Council has received an Event City award from the International Festivals and Events Association in 2012, 2014 and 2015. This recognition

has come from our capacity to host and deliver a diverse portfolio of sporting, cultural and leisure events.

### 1.1 Definition of an event

For the purpose of this document, an event is defined as an organised, themed activity designed to attract a public audience, typically with more than 150 people attendees (City of Newcastle Tourism Plan 2010-12).

In part 4 of the strategy, we define a hierarchy of events based on frequency, duration, number of participants and impact.

### 1.2 Why are we doing a plan?

Newcastle City Council invests substantial resources annually to attract, partner, fund, produce, promote and approve events. This plan sets out our various roles in events and communicates our plan to ensure the funds and resources invested by Council in events deliver social and economic benefit in our community.

The plan also delivers a transparent framework for Council to determine funding and other assistance to events, based on a clear set of objectives and criteria. It includes a four year action plan with clear deliverables and timings.



### 1.3 Link to Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan

*In 2030, we will be a smart, liveable and sustainable city. We will be a leading lifestyle city with vibrant public places, connected transport networks and a distinctive built environment (NCC, 2013).*

Based on community engagement undertaken during the development of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan (CSP), and comments made during its first review in 2012-13, our local community strongly supports Council's role in providing and hosting events.

Four of the Plan's strategic objectives, support the provision of events:

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

*3.1a Encourage community engagement with public space through place making projects and local initiatives that bring individuals and groups together*

*4.1 A welcoming community that cares and looks after each other*

*4.1b Support local community initiatives that encourage citizens to engage collectively for the benefit of their communities, builds community capacity and fosters connectedness*

*4.2 Active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual well-being*

*4.2e Provide events to encourage use of open space and facilities and participation in activities*

*4.3 A creative, culturally rich and vibrant community*

*4.3a Provide and support opportunities for participation in a variety of cultural events and activities by people of different age groups and life stages that enhance community well-being and social inclusion.*

This Events Plan also aligns with Council's Destination Management Plan (DMP) prepared in 2013. The DMP identifies events provide opportunities to increase direct expenditure in Newcastle through visitors and the construction or upgrade of infrastructure. It also recognises events play a strong role in ensuring positive media and promotional coverage of Newcastle.

The DMP identifies numerous areas for growth in Newcastle including increasing visits by friends and relatives of residents and international students, attracting more sporting events, cruise visitors and overnight short breaks. Events can provide the catalyst for more people to visit, spend and invest in Newcastle.

Supporting the Events Plan are the following related documents:

- Events Sponsorship Policy 2016
- Events Guide (currently being updated)
- Event Authorisation (template licence).

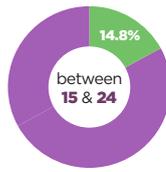


## 2. Background

### 2.1 Context

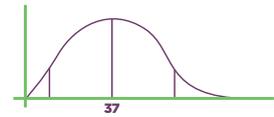


In **2011**, the population of Newcastle was **148,531** people. This comprises **49.2%** males and **50.8%** females. **2.6%** are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.



**14.8%** of the population are aged between **15** and **24** years;

The median age in Newcastle is **37** years.



By **2026**, our population is forecast to be **169,205** people. The population of the Lower Hunter, will be **634,600** people.



**12.4%** of our population was born overseas; with the majority from the United Kingdom and New Zealand, with increasing numbers from India and China.



Our labour force comprises **70,263** people. The majority are employed in the health care and social assistance sector, followed by retail, education and training and manufacturing.



**39.3%** of our population have vocational or tertiary qualifications.



There are almost **61,000** separate households in Newcastle. The largest groupings are single person and couples with children. The average household size is **2.35** persons.



**71.5%**



**21.2%**

**71.5%** of us live in detached dwellings, and **21.2%** in medium density houses. **60.6%** own or are buying their properties; **33.1%** rent.

Between **2006** and **2011**, **37.7%** of the population moved house including **21.7%** who moved to Newcastle from elsewhere in Australia, or overseas.



A survey undertaken by Newcastle City Council in **2013**, found **78%** of Newcastle sporting associations experienced growth in participation in the preceding **5** years. **68%** were expecting growth in the next **5** years. Participation numbers are highest in football, netball, and cricket and rugby league. 🏀



Figures from Destination NSW show visitors to Newcastle are visiting friends and relatives (**35%**), business visitors (**24%**), leisure visitors (**22%**) and events goers (**10%**). The four year average visitation figures for Newcastle for **2010-2013** show Newcastle attracted **2.5M** day visitors; **2.4M** domestic overnight visitors and **1.6M** international visitors.

## 2.2 Past strategies

Newcastle's first events strategy was prepared in 2000. An updated document was prepared in 2010. The current document builds on the framework established in these documents.

## 2.3 What is working well for us?

In 2011, Newcastle was named a top ten city in the Lonely Planet's 'Best in Travel' guide. In 2012, 2014 and 2015, Newcastle received the International Festival and Events Association Event City Award for cities under one million people. These accolades recognise our ability to produce and host world class events, combined with our superb climate and natural and urban attractions.

Newcastle is a robust blend of Aboriginal heritage, convict settlement, old and new architecture, a working harbour and a proud and diverse population. We are the second largest city in New South Wales, situated only two hours from Sydney.

We have a range of event ready facilities, from the international standard Hunter Stadium, to National Park, to the Newcastle foreshore and Honeysuckle precinct, six 'city' beaches, plus the Civic Theatre, City Hall, Newcastle Art Gallery, Newcastle Museum, Fort Scratchley and other built facilities.

Ease of access to and within Newcastle also complements our role as an event city. We are an easy drive or rail trip from Sydney. Once here, the city is easy to move around by public transport, cycling or private vehicle.

As the regional capital of the Hunter region, our business, retail and health services attract people from central and western NSW. Within two hours' drive, are a million people; three hours four million.

An \$80M expansion of Newcastle airport was completed in 2015 which will enable an additional three million passengers to the region annually. The upgrades include the potential for international passengers. Air routes currently connect Newcastle directly with Melbourne, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Canberra. This is complemented by the opening of a new hotel and announcement of new routes by Pelican-Air. International routes are being investigated.

Proposed urban renewal for the Newcastle city centre will include a \$510M light rail system, a new transport interchange at Wickham, new open spaces and connections to the harbour foreshore and new commercial and residential developments. Key developments include the new State Law Courts complex and a new city campus building for the University of Newcastle.

## 2.4 Snapshot of events

Newcastle City Council, along with a range of event partners, local industry and community groups, all

contribute to a diverse calendar of events annually. In 2015, Newcastle hosted a range of events. This included:

- AFC Asian Cup January 2015
- Australia Day, 26 January 2015
- The Australian Bowl Riding (skateboarding) Championships, February 2015
- Sheffield Shield Cricket, February 2015
- Guinness Book of Records Longest Surfboard Link, February 2015
- Light Up Newcastle Lantern Walk-Chinese New Year, February 2015
- Surfest February 2015
- Newcastle Writers Festival, March 2015
- Anzac Day, 25 April 2015
- Port to Port MTB mountain bike event, May 2015
- Super Moto Championships, June 2015
- The Colour Run, June 2015
- Run Newcastle, September 2015
- I Run Stadium, September 2015
- National Rugby Union Championships, September 2015
- Cyclefest, October 2015
- Electric Vehicle Festival, October 2015
- This Is Not Art, October 2015
- This That Music Festival October 2015
- Newcastle China Festival, October 2015
- Live at the Foreshore, November 2015
- Mambo Street Party and exhibition launch, November 2015
- Nutrigrain Ironman and Iron Woman Championships, December 2015
- Christmas Lights Civic Park launch, December 2015
- Carols by Candlelight, December 2015.

## 2.5 Event benefits

Events deliver a range of benefits in the community. These include:

- economic benefit through increased visitation, accommodation and other spending;
- promotion and advertising of the area through traditional and social media, attracting further flow-on visitation
- social benefit through community participation and engagement;
- exposure to new experiences, skills and knowledge for residents and visitors, and for some, this becomes the inspiration for new sporting or cultural pursuits;
- build and raise cultural awareness;

- build local pride and identity;
- opportunities for local businesses and local entrepreneurs;
- creates employment particularly in the hospitality and retail sectors, along with artists and art providers;
- capacity building and practical experience for volunteers;
- service and infrastructure upgrades.

Part of Council's role includes balancing the impact of events as in some cases negative impacts can also occur. These include:

- Noise;
- Traffic congestion;
- Litter and waste generation;
- Alienation of local communities;
- Venue damage.

Council's assessment process seeks to balance the impacts and ensure appropriate measures in place such as noise monitoring, traffic management plans; notification to residents and advertising of events and negotiating bonds for venues to repair damage.

Council's assessment process includes liaising with the Interagency Events Consultation Group which is coordinated by Council. The group comprises representatives from various Council business units, NSW Police, Hunter and New England Health, Office of Liquor and Gaming, Transport NSW, NSW Ambulance, Roads and Maritime Services, Newcastle Taxis,

Newcastle Buses and Ferries. The role of the group is to provide expert information and advice on the merit of a proposed event or application to Council and monitor the effectiveness of any recommendations.

## 2.6 Brand Newcastle

In 2011, Newcastle City Council produced a new brand for the city as a destination - Newcastle - See Change. The brand captures the evolution and energy of the city, as well as our diversity and vibrancy. Events contribute significantly to celebrating and promoting our diversity and vibrancy. Events have become an important component of Newcastle's brand and our destination marketing. Linked to this, tourism promotion and destination management, are a core element of the Council Economic Development Strategy 2016-2019.



Council works closely with the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group, Destination New South Wales and Tourism Hunter to promote the city and region, both nationally and internationally. The 2014 'It's On' campaign reached audiences across Australia and New Zealand and promoted the diverse offerings in the Hunter from the Asian Cup games, to Surfest, the Picinini and Midnight Oil exhibitions, to the Maitland Taste Wine and Music Festival and the Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival.



### 3. Council's Role in Events

#### 3.1 Multiple Roles

Newcastle City Council has multiple roles in relation to events in Newcastle: attracting, partnering, funding, sponsoring, producing, promoting, approving, licensing, liaison and venue owner. These roles will continue.

The City, through Council, currently funds significant local events including New Year's Eve, Australia Day and Anzac Day (which we deliver with project partners). For these three events, Council is also the key event organiser. The City also has an annual event sponsorship program which enables others to deliver a diverse range of sporting, cultural and lifestyle events. From time to time, there are also major events that Council contributes to, as a one off, such as the Asian Cup (January 2015) or the Port to Port mountain biking event, where a three year seed funding agreement is in place, after which the event should be self-sustaining.

Newcastle City Council is also an event consent authority and issues event licences for over 700 events annually on parks, reserves, beaches, roads, community, operational and Crown land ranging from street parties through to sporting competitions and major music events. The event application process requires assessment of event impact, risk, safety, public health, traffic and waste management to ensure appropriate controls are in place to protect public spaces and amenity.

Event impact is determined from a range of factors included estimated attendance, duration, display types and numbers of vendors or providers. Table 1 below identifies factors considered. It should be noted the factors are indicative. The event impact is also used in determining fees and charges relevant to an event.

**Table 1 Assessing Event Impact**

	Attendance	Duration	Hours	Staging/ Structures	No. Vendors	Other Factors
Low	1-1,000 persons	< 1 days	8am to 8pm	< 100m <sup>2</sup>	2 or less food and/or amusement devices	-
Medium	1,000-6,000 persons	Up to 3 days	8am to 8pm	< 300m <sup>2</sup>	2 to 10 food and/or amusement services	Fireworks, animals, road closures, camping
High	> 6,000 persons	5 days or more	Can include outside 8am to 8pm	> 300m <sup>2</sup>	> 10	Impact statement may be required

See the NCC Events Guide 2016 for more information

Council, or Council run facilities are also often the venues for events. This includes parks, sporting fields, beaches and streets as well as cultural venues including the Newcastle Art Gallery, Newcastle Museum, Civic Theatre, Newcastle Regional Library, City Hall and Fort Scratchley. The infrastructure required to operate events also includes consideration of road access, public transport connections, walking and cycling routes, parking and utilities.

The Council is also an **event promoter**. Council's website at [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au) contains a calendar of local events, as does the Council run, Visit Newcastle website. Our tourism focused facebook page 'Newcastle Australia' has more than 52,000 likes and is key tool in promoting the city, events and activities to a broad audience. We also have a growing following on twitter@CityNewcastle which provides event information and updates in real time.

Council also promotes events through Council E News and the culturally based, Creative City Newsletter.

#### 3.2 Council Funding and Resources

##### 3.2.1 Council Direct Funding

Council directly funds events including New Year's Eve, Australia Day and Anzac Day. The direct costs (not including staff costs) associated with these three events is around \$250,000 per annum. There is no proposal for Council to move away from funding these important community celebratory and commemorative events. In recent years, the Hunter Development Corporation has contributed funding to NYE and Australia Day celebrations. Council now partners with the Newcastle RSL Sub branch to deliver the Dawn Service, March and other elements of Anzac Day.

##### 3.2.2 Council Sponsorship

Newcastle City Council sponsors a range of events annually.

Consistent with the Local Government Act 1993, sponsorship is defined as a business transaction in which Council provides a financial contribution (and/or value in-kind), to support an event, in return for

negotiated commercial benefits to the City. The benefits are negotiated for each event and documented in a formal legal agreement.

Sponsorship decisions and funding at Council occur in three ways:

1. Determined as part of the Council operational plan (annual budget).
2. Event sponsorship program (ESP); (note community events are also supported through grants under the Community Assistance Program (CAP); Make Your Place grants (MYP)).
3. Other requests which are determined by report to Council or Executive Management Team, depending on the level of support requested.

In relation to 1. above, Council sometimes agrees to sponsor specific events, seen to deliver social and

economic benefit in our community through the annual budget. For example, the Newcastle Port to Port MTB series (4 day mountain bike event) was the subject of a three year funding agreement from Council. Surfest in 2016, was also specifically identified in Council's budget. Outcome based agreements, with specific negotiated goals and requirements for acknowledgement of Council support, are in place for each of these events.

### 3.2.2.1 Event Sponsorship Program

Council's Event Sponsorship Program is an annual, competitive funding program administered in accordance with the Event Sponsorship Program policy. The aim of the program is to sponsor events that will achieve the following:

- 1.1.1 Provide positive promotional exposure for Newcastle within the region, nationally and internationally,

**Table 2 Funding Assessment Matrix**

	Criteria	Score
Regional and brand exposure*	Local/district promotion	Score 1 local; 2 regional
	Attract State/ National promotion	Score 1 state; 2 national
	International exposure	Score 1 some exposure; Score 2 good exposure; Score 3 high exposure
	Consistent with Newcastle brand	Score 1 somewhat consistent; Score 2 consistent; Score 3 highly consistent
	*Note. Marketing plan will be required with the application	
Economic Impact	No. overnight visitors	Score 1 <100; Score 2 100 to 250; Score 3 >250
	Estimated impact \$ (justified by applicant and calculated through REMPLAN)	Score 1 < \$500,000; Score 2 \$500,000 to \$1M; Score 3 > \$1M.
	Rate of Return (Council staff to calculate)	Ratio of Council funding to event cost
Community and business	Access and inclusion plan provided with application	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Addresses social responsibility (addresses needs of minority-special community groups)	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Opportunities for local business/ suppliers involvement	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Positive icon brand recognition eg Nutrigrain	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no

	Criteria	Score
Participant and spectator appeal	Appeal to wide demographic	Score 2 universal appeal; Score 1 age or interest group; Score 0 specialised interest
	Brings international competition or exhibition to Newcastle	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	No. of spectators	Score 1 < 2,000 people; Score 2 2,001 and 10,000; Score 3 > 15,000
	No. of participants/ attendees	Score 1 < 1,000 people; Score 2 1,001 and 1,500; Score 3 > 1,501
Legacy	Opportunity to grow the event	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Includes charity/fund raising component	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Training and skills will be provided to local volunteers	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Applicant to fund infrastructure upgrades (for community benefit)	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Proven track record	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
Sustainability	Governance framework in place	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Multiple funding sources	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Adequate budget in place	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	State/other government funding secured	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no
	Strong business model in place	Score 1 yes; Score 0 no

*1.1.2 Provide economic benefit through increased tourist visitation and spending,*

*1.1.3 Enhance the City's image and profile as a visitor destination and event city.*

Applications that meet strict eligibility criteria are then assessed against criteria relating to

*Economic Benefit*

- *Number and origin of attendees anticipated*
- *Anticipated overnight visitation rates*
- *Image and Profile*
- *Ability to link or coordinate with other Events or programs being held at the same time of year.*

*Promotional Exposure*

- *Scope and ability to promote the city and Council in connection with the event, locally, nationally and internationally. Applicants may submit a marketing or communications plan with their application (no more than three pages).*

### **3.2.3 Other Sponsorship Requests**

Event sponsorship requests are also received outside the annual budget process and the Events Sponsorship Program, usually for major events, where the lead time is up to three years. Often, approval in principle is sought from the event organisers to secure a commitment to fund in future year's budgets. In some instances, requests for funding are put through the quarterly review process. There is currently no criteria or consistent process to assess sometimes competing proposals.

The matrix shown in Table 2 provides objectivity and guides both proponents and decision makers (elected Council or Executive Management Team) on which proposals deliver appropriate economic and social returns to Newcastle and should receive funding. The matrix will be used to determine future annual budget requests, as well as, those received outside the process. A specific application form will be required from event organisers.

### **3.2.4 Other Funding Sources**

Events are also funded across Council through other sponsorship and grant programs including the Community Assistance Program, Make Your Place Grants, Economic Development Sponsorship or Youth Week. Council also organises one off and special projects including the Mambo Street Party (November 2015), Piccinini Launch Event (November 2014), Disability Day (held every second year in Newcastle) and city centre revitalisation (including Wheeler Place activations).

### **3.2.5 Council Fees and Charges**

Council levies a range of fees and charges for events. These include application fees, venue usage fees, bonds, use of flag and banner poles and utility usage. Community and not for profit groups are charged reduced fees. The fees reflect usage and wear and tear for spaces used, as well as, compensation for reduced access to our parks and reserves.

Consistent with the Local Government Act and Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges (updates annually), Council can waive fees and charges for registered charities delivering charitable services to the Newcastle community. Council is unable to waive fees for direct costs which it incurs. Direct costs include labour, water or electricity usage and waste collection and disposal.

A Council policy and procedure has been prepared to guide the application and assessment for requests for waivers to ensure consistency with the Local Government Act.

## 4. Types of Events

### 4.1 Event Categories

Events vary in scale and purpose. It includes events with a local community focus and impact, to those that seek to attract an international audience and media coverage. Within Newcastle we recognise three categories of events, based on participation, promotion and likely impact, as follows:

1. Community events
2. Flagship Events
3. Major Events

Within these categories, we also recognise charity and funding raising events, one off or recurring events, and events organised on a purely commercial basis.

#### 4.1.1 Community Events

Community Events can be organised by a diverse range of organisations including charity, sports, cultural, hobby, schools and commemorative organisations. The target audience is limited by geographic range or through a 'community of interest' hence promotion is often targeted. Attendance is generally under 5,000 people. The lead time for Community Events will generally be 6-12 months. Council's involvement in these events occurs primarily through our approvals and licensing role, and through the distribution of grants and sponsorships. The Events Sponsorship program, the Community Assistance Program and the 'Make Your Place' place making program all offer varying levels of funding to assist with the staging of these events.

Examples could include school fetes, art shows, Christmas Carol events and Wallsend Carnivale, Winter Heat and Beaumont Street Fair.

#### 4.1.2 Flagship Events

Flagship Events are often staged annually to showcase local cultural, sporting, community or lifestyle opportunities. These can be run on a community and/or commercial basis and be recurring or one off events. A high level of coordination and organisation is required

for the event with attendance expected around 5,000 to 10,000 people. The audience typically would be drawn from the local area and region but could also attract broader interest. Council again is the approval agency for events of this kind, often held on public land reserves or streets in the LGA. Council can also be involved through sponsoring this type of event through the Event Sponsorship Program, direct or seed funding. The lead time for Flagship events is 8-12 months.

Examples could include Cyclefest, Writers Festival and This is Not Art.

#### 4.1.3 Major Events

Major events are usually one off, high profile events with national and international attendees, promotion and audience, therefore attracting significant tourism and economic benefits. They can be subject to a bidding process and include state or federal funding and/or significant private sponsorship. Event planning, organisation and implementation will include professional event organisers and a host of marketing and other specialists. The lead time for major events will be 2-3 years. The event would be expected to occur over multiple days and attendance would exceed 20,000 people.

For Major Events, Council may contribute funding and adopt as part of Council's annual budget. If requests are received outside the annual budget process, a request through the quarterly review process can be made.

The economic impact would be expected to exceed \$5 million.

### 4.2 Business Events

Whilst outside the scope of this plan, Newcastle City Council realises that a growing number of professional, academic and industry associations use, meetings, congresses and conferences to communicate with their members, to explore relevant issues and to disseminate information. The meetings industry MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) are a long established and valued sector of the Events market.

**Table 3 Event Categories**

	Attendance	Promotion	Lead Time (months)	Funding Opportunities*
Community Events	To 5,000 people	Local-district	6-12	MYP, CAP
Flagship Events	5,000-20,000 people	Regional to national	12-18	ESP, CAP
Major Events	20,000 plus	Regional to international	24+	ESP, direct or seed funding

\*Indicative only

## 5. Opportunities/Gaps

### 5.1 Things we could be doing different, better

During the development of this document, a range of workshops were held with Council staff, as well as, industry stakeholders. During discussions, the following issues and opportunities were identified by participants in response to discussion questions:

#### 5.1.1 Workshop Feedback

Directions for future events:

- Establish and distribute annual program; could be part of broader trail
- Take a regional approach on some events
- More communication (social media, websites and media partners)
- Potential for creative industries
- More surfing and sport related
- Reinforce Newcastle identity and don't compete with Sydney
- Diversify offerings including comedy, disabled events and different cultural scenes, as well as scale and cost point; hold events in the suburbs
- Use events for destination marketing
- Need to address infrastructure shortfalls, conference and exhibition space, accommodation and wayfinding signage.

#### *Should Newcastle target a 'mega' event?*

This question prompted mixed views, reiterated responses to questions 1 around infrastructure and programming. Specific suggestions included:

- Create a Spring festival building on Mattara, to incorporate NJC Spring Carnival
- Motorcycle events could be strong base
- Look at underutilised facilities inc entertainment centre, town hall and Civic Theatre
- Need improved out door facilities and attract concerts currently going to Hunter Valley
- Need to connect the various stakeholders.

#### Infrastructure

- Complete an audit of existing facilities and identify gaps in utilities, parking, toilets
- Identify capacity of venues, price point
- Need to work closely with accommodation sector; more accommodation required across city
- Investigate locations to host events including Wickham Park, Stockton, Showground and western corridor
- Improved coordination between business partners

- Exhibition and convention space required in Newcastle
- Masterplan required for current stadium - space for parking, hotels
- Improve Council's approvals process
- Improve transport and access - from airport and public transport linkages between suburbs.

#### Accessibility and Movement

- Few event spaces suitable for people with disability
- Need to improve wayfinding and information for able and disabled people - need more permanent signage, clearer bus routes and precinct naming as well as information in alternative formats
- Insufficient disabled toilets in Newcastle
- Need coach parking and drop off areas
- Investigate new locations with good public transport, walking and cycling access
- More parking inc coach parking
- Risk loser events to other locations with better facilities.

#### Economic Benefit from Events

- Council to plan and use resources more effectively
- Need better reporting and 'tier' of events should be established
- Need balance in events, grow sense of belonging
- Link events.

#### Communication and Marketing

- Need a consistent message and brand standard
- Develop marketing pack to distribute to promoters
- Losing events due to slow processes.

### 5.3 Targeting New Events

Research by Tourism Research Australia in 2014 shows almost one quarter of Australians have been to at least one regional event in the previous two years. The most popular events are:

1. Food and wine;
2. Music related;
3. Art exhibitions;
4. Sport; and
5. Garden and botanical.

There is opportunity for Council to attract and develop further events, celebrations and festivals around these themes.

In addition, looking at Newcastle specific assets, we can build on our working port, convict history and heritage, as well as, our growing reputation for innovation and research. Council's Cultural Strategy 2016-19 also identifies strong interest in developing local stories and artists.

Therefore, in attracting or designing new events the focus for Council and the event industry should be on food and wine, music and spectator sports, art exhibitions, maritime-port events, heritage and innovation.

Council has resources such as the adopted Coal River Conservation and Tourism Management Plan in 2008 to guide future planning for heritage related events.

## 6. Event Strategy

### 6.1 Objectives

In 2016-2019, Newcastle City Council will continue to have multiple roles in relation to events. To guide the Council's investment in and resourcing for events, we will deliver the following:

1. Grow Newcastle's reputation as a major event city
2. Reinforce Newcastle's identity, sense of place and brand
3. Enhance quality of life and well-being
4. Excellent, all ability event venues, infrastructure and spaces
5. Optimise the economic value of events.

## Action Plan

### Objective 1

Continue to grow Newcastle's reputation as a major event city

	Strategy		Action	Timing	Outcome
1	Develop and support new events; ensure special and flagship events are not lost to other locations	1.1	Identify, target and continue to attract new events to Newcastle	Ongoing	New events
		1.2	Develop and apply a matrix to assess new event applications requiring Council funding	Ongoing	Matrix used
		1.3	Continue to allocate annual funding for 'Event Development' to support new events	Ongoing	Funding continued
2	Streamline event approval and facilitation processes	1.4	Update the events guide, application forms and web information	March 2016	Document and associated information updated
3	Ensure a regional perspective	1.5	Contribute to the development of a regional events strategy to complement Newcastle's strategy	Expected to be completed in 2016	Regional Strategy completed; Regular liaison with adjoining areas
		1.6	Continue to work with Destination NSW and other relevant agencies to promote flagship and major events in Newcastle and the Hunter region	Ongoing	Major events scheduled for Newcastle

### Objective 2

Reinforce Newcastle's identity, sense of place and brand

	Strategy		Action	Timing	Outcome
4	Council to fund key community and flagship events including New Year's Eve, Australia Day and Anzac Day	2.1	Funds allocated to New Year's Eve, Australia Day, Anzac Day and Surfest	Annual	Council funded events continue, with partners
5	Maintain a diverse program of events to appeal to a broad audience that builds on Newcastle's assets	2.2	Review funding and sponsorship on a regular basis to ensure events remain relevant		Council funding maintained; ESP and CAP implemented
6	Build cultural tourism by presenting events that celebrate the city and contribute to its identity	2.3	Increase Council sponsorship investment in cultural events	Investigate in 2016	Increased funding to cultural events
		2.4	Target 2020 to present a major community cultural event to celebrate the city	2020	Major event

### Objective 3

Enhance quality of life and well being

	Strategy		Action	Timing	Outcome
6	Actively promote events locally, regionally and Statewide as appropriate, to encourage attendance and participation	3.1	Continue to work with the events sector to maintain an up to date events calendar at <a href="http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au">www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au</a> ; promotion through Council website and newsletters	Ongoing	Attendance optimised
7	Continue to provide funding and sponsorship for events in Newcastle	3.2	Continue to promote 'Make Your Place' and community assistance grants to fund local community celebrations	2 x per year	2 grant rounds annually
		3.3	Continue to fund the Event Sponsorship Program and administer consistent with the Council policy	Annual program	Sponsorship distributed annually; acquittal reports received and reported
8	Improve post event reporting and monitoring to ensure strong ongoing participation and enjoyment	3.4	Produce annual report detailing the economic and social benefits of event sponsorship	Annual report	Annual report
9	Respect the environment and community through responsible event management	3.5	Continue to deliver robust event assessment and approval processes to protect our physical environment and local amenity	Ongoing	Sites protected from overuse and community amenity safeguarded
		3.6	Continue to work with the Interagency Events Coordination Group to ensure input from local stakeholders for major events on traffic, public safety, compliance, risk and related issues	Ongoing	Excellent communication and cooperation
		3.7	Refuse applications where insufficient information provided or where applicants have not demonstrated compliance	Ongoing	High standards maintained
10	Ensure relevance and social value of events	3.8	Establish robust criteria to assess event proposals for Council funding to ensure economic and social value achieved	Apply as required	Objective assessment of all applications
		3.9	Improve event monitoring and feedback including participant surveys	All Council funded and sponsored events	Feedback on key events such as New Year's Eve
11	Champion accessible and inclusive events	3.10	Incorporate access requirements for all special, flagship and major event applications	As required	Improved information provision and physical access conditions for events
		3.11	Investigate access requirements for community events	Complete in 2016-17	Improved information provision and physical access conditions for events
12	Increase outdoor programming and programming in non-traditional spaces	3.12	Events Guide to provide information on how to access public space and present outdoors	2016-17	More outdoor programming

## Objective 4

Excellent, all ability venues, infrastructure and spaces

	Strategy		Action	Timing	Outcome
14	Continue to develop event friendly venues, facilities and spaces	4.1	Conduct an audit of event spaces and places and document capacity, opportunities and upgrades required	2016-17	Information base and forward maintenance and upgrade program
		4.2	Work with Urban Growth, Hunter Development Corporation and other agencies to develop accessible, all ability spaces	Ongoing	Improved facilities
		4.3	Investigate Wickham Park as an outdoor event venue	2016-17	Alternative venue for outdoor events with good public transport links
		4.4	Ensure sites including Foreshore Park, Civic Park and Nobbys Beach reserve are not over used	Ongoing	Reserves not overused
		4.5	Work with relevant agencies to prepare a masterplan for Hunter Stadium		

## Objective 5

Optimise the economic value of events

	Strategy		Action	Timing	Outcome
15	Seek the best economic return to Newcastle from funding or sponsoring events	5.1	Adopt the events funding matrix to assist in determining applications for event funding	Ongoing	Matrix applied
		5.2	Build awareness with event organisers of local suppliers including artists.  Create data base of local suppliers and artists	Ongoing	Improved facilities
		5.3	Work closely with the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group and others to increase the attractive of Newcastle through packaging and promoting the city	Ongoing	Event and tourism travel and accommodation packages developed

## 6.3 Monitoring our achievements

	KPI	Measure
Grow Newcastle's reputation as a major event city	Grow participation in events	
	Track national and international coverage of Newcastle events	Number of media stories featuring Newcastle or a Newcastle event
Reinforce Newcastle's identity, sense of place and brand		
Enhance quality of life and well-being	Deliver an annual program of diverse events delivered	Positive survey feedback
Excellent, all ability event venues, infrastructure and spaces		
Optimise the economic value of events	Return on investment in the Events Sponsorship Program to exceed 3:1	



