

# The Newcastle Response

## Arts Sector

City of Newcastle acknowledges that we operate on the grounds of the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land and waters, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession. Council commits to address disadvantage and attain justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this community.



Newcastle is an emerging global city well positioned to respond to the local community and economic challenges of COVID-19. We are resilient and dynamic; we welcome the piloting of new programs and approaches. We are

small enough to care and big enough to deliver. Newcastle is also a gateway to both global and regional connections servicing Northern and North Western NSW regional communities; we can play an important role in restarting and providing new job opportunities for the future.

Most importantly, the leaders of Greater Newcastle are united with a common voice providing collaborative governance for our city. In response to COVID-19, a City Taskforce made up of 17 key city leaders from across manufacturing, small business, financial services, tourism, transport and logistics, arts and culture, workers,

- **Arts & Recreation Sector** currently employing 1,100 people. Down from 2,800 people one year earlier.
- **Creative Industries** across the Hunter region are worth almost \$1 billion. [Hunter Creative Industries report.](#)
- **Civic Theatre** – 58 bookings cancelled or postponed (including 45 touring acts).
- **Playhouse Theatre** – 19 bookings cancelled or postponed (including 7 touring acts).
- **City Hall Concert Hall** – 6 bookings cancelled or postponed (including 5 touring acts).

All data represents Newcastle / Lake Macquarie SA4 unless otherwise stated. Source ABS Labour Force Data

education, business and community sectors have been charting a path for our community and economic recovery.

The City Taskforce will be sharing our local stories and experiences to equip you to make decisions on COVID-19 policy responses. These memos, called 'The Newcastle Response', will outline the local community and business impacts, the effectiveness of current government measures, details on how we are mobilising our own resources and identify opportunities to partner with State and Federal Government bodies to accelerate and increase impact.

Each issue of the 'The Newcastle Response' includes a focus topic. The fourth edition examines the challenges faced by the Arts Sector in Newcastle, how we've been responding locally and how State / Federal decision-makers can partner with us to create new opportunities through the COVID-19 economic recovery.

**Nuatali Nelmes**  
**Lord Mayor of Newcastle**  
**Chair of Newcastle Taskforce**



# Arts Sector

The City Taskforce recognises the valuable contribution the arts sector plays in creating vibrancy for our city and sustaining local jobs. We thank the Federal Government for the \$250 million JobMaker program designed to restart Australia's Creative Economy as well as its support for the sector nationally through the Australia Council. We also thank Create NSW for the range of support programs they have provided. The City Taskforce, however, in partnership with the Independent Creative Alliance Newcastle [ICAN], believe that more is required to create new and ongoing opportunities in the Greater Newcastle area. Critical to the recovery of the creative sector in Newcastle is the need to address the glaring inconsistencies for both Federal and State Funding.

**1. We ask that all levels of Government value and prioritise investment in arts and culture programs and infrastructure. Cultural and creative activity contributes in excess of \$110 billion to Australia's economy each year. In Newcastle, we have a higher per 10,000 population number of arts and recreation businesses than anywhere else in NSW. See [Smart Specialisation report](#).**

2. We request the **Federal Government:**

**a.** Establish a cultural infrastructure fund that Gateway Cities like Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong can access. Currently, the Federal Government provides Regional Arts Funding, which Newcastle is ineligible for, in addition to a range of capital city-based funding opportunities. [More equity in access is required.](#)

**b.** The Creative Economy Taskforce establish a consultative partnership with the Independent Creative Alliance Newcastle [ICAN] to ensure that the views of arts and cultural organisations in Gateway Cities like Newcastle, are informing Federal Government policy.

3. We request the **NSW State Government:**

**a.** Establish a cultural infrastructure fund that Gateway Cities like Newcastle and Wollongong can

access. Currently, the NSW Government provides a Regional Cultural Infrastructure fund, which Newcastle is ineligible for, and a range of Sydney-based projects. Newcastle is effectively shut out of all NSW cultural infrastructure grants. [Link](#) to recent submission to NSW Public Accountability Committee Inquiry.

**b.** Establish a Cultural Development Organisation for Greater Newcastle which provides leadership and advocacy for the Arts Sector, fosters region-wide cultural initiatives and works in partnership with the arts and cultural sector. Such an initiative would align to equivalent bodies established by Regional Arts NSW.

**c.** Develop a Greater Newcastle Cultural Strategy.

**d.** Develop a Strategic Business Case for a Newcastle Arts Precinct connecting the Newcastle Art Gallery, City Hall, Civic Theatre, Civic Park, the Victoria Theatre and a range of smaller privately-owned venues.

**e.** Destination NSW to provide an additional \$200,000 in financial support for the City of Newcastle's new arts and cultural festival. This festival is vitally important in creating new economic opportunities for local artists.

4. Partner on local arts and culture infrastructure projects:

**a. Newcastle Art Gallery Expansion project. The City of Newcastle and the Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation have committed to contribute the majority share of the funding. We request the Federal and State Governments contribute towards the project. See further details in the body of The Newcastle Response.**

**b.** Victoria Theatre refurbishment. We request that the Federal and State Governments contribute towards the refurbishment of Victoria Theatre. See further details in the body of The Newcastle Response.

# Local insights

Arts, culture and creativity, and the supporting industries, are essential to community wellbeing, social and cultural connectedness, economic diversification and resilience, and are critical to Newcastle's post COVID-19 recovery. The arts and cultural sector play a key role in the future focused identity and positioning of the city; with these industries' speaking to our diverse human and cultural assets – the foundation of a liveable region and a vibrant visitor economy.

Greater Newcastle has a strong arts and cultural sector which offers professional opportunities, programs and services across all art forms. Catapult Choreographic Hub, Hunter Writers Centre, Newcastle Writers Festival, Octapod, Screen Hunter, Tantrum Youth Arts and The Lock-Up, have formed the Independent Creative Alliance Newcastle (ICAN) to develop a unified approach to lead an integrated arts and cultural vision for the region. COVID-19 however has impacted each of these organisations individually and collectively and many others, and more support is needed to enable the sector to flourish.

The following is a summary of the impacts felt by ICAN organisations, both cancelled events/programming and the people impacts:



*Hunter Writers Centre nurtures a rich, regional and national literary culture by providing inclusive programs for aspiring and accomplished writers of all abilities, ages, backgrounds and locations.*

### Cancellations:

- All monthly live readings and writing groups – 150 people meeting per month at nine locations cancelled.
- Two national writing award programs were severely affected with entries being significantly reduced: the Newcastle Short Story Award and Grieve Writing Project.

### People impact:

- Many members are senior/elderly and some live in single-occupant households and rely heavily on connection with their fellow writers for social networking, mental stimulation and general mental health. Several of our members live with disability from PTSD to physical and sensory disability.
- HWC's volunteers are aged 65+ and were required to self-isolate so were unable to assist in the office for many months.
- Changes to staffing, events and member requirements resulted in an increased workload for the director.



*Newcastle Writers Festival is one of the largest annual regional literary festivals in Australia, championing writing and ideas and connecting people and stories across the Hunter region and beyond.*

### Cancellations:

- The annual Newcastle Writers Festival event was cancelled three weeks out due to the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions and public health orders. This impacted 160 visiting and local artists and resulted in the loss of all revenue from ticket sales.
- While a quick transition to a condensed online program happened, it was provided free of charge. A digital solution presented an opportunity to reach larger audiences, especially those who have traditionally been unable to attend due to barriers such as cost of travel, disability, but also presents challenges such as monetisation.

### People impact:

- Festival contractors let go early. Flow on effect to local businesses/partners who work with festival such as MacLean's Booksellers – loss of \$45K festival sales revenue – and Scion Audio – loss of \$23k sales revenue.
- Not only does the loss of revenue and jobs have a major impact on the individuals, the loss of a significant cultural economy has more far reaching impacts on the community. With cancelled events and constriction of the sector, people lose their drive and passion, and the city as a whole loses vibrancy and creativity.

# OCTAPOD

Octapod is a member-based organisation advocating for and supporting artists and arts organisations of the Lower Hunter region and produces the annual national emerging arts festival This is Not Art (TiNA).

### Cancellations:

- All live programming for Youth Week 2020, including live music, panel discussion, workshop and art events for young people were cancelled and replaced with live-streamed online events.
- All live programming for This Is Not Art (TiNA) festival 2020 was cancelled. Traditionally held over the October long weekend, the four-day festival activates numerous venues in the Newcastle CBD each year. More than 2,000 people attend the event with half the audience being local Novocastrians and half travelling from around the country and overseas.
- Two major revenue-generating live education programs aimed at children/young people, and people with disability or who are deaf were cancelled.

### People impact:

- TiNA employs over 200 artists in paid work across 170 events, and additional staff in technical, venue and production roles. In 2019, the total economic contribution of the festival was \$637,806 with a minimum tourism impact of \$365,144.



*Screen Hunter licences all filming in the Hunter region for both government agencies and private locations and runs various industry development and community programs.*

### Cancellations:

- Screen Hunter have experienced a rapid decline in applications as businesses closed their doors and social distancing regulations were enforced. Between February and August, \$95,000 in revenue was lost based on the same period in 2019. These productions would have contributed an estimated \$900,000 in regional spend through locals employed, accommodation, food, hire and associated services.
- Screen Hunter's industry and audience development programs are currently supported by project funding, tickets sales and volunteers. The major annual program the Real Film Festival is now set to run online only due to COVID-19. There is an estimated revenue loss of \$30,000 due to a heavily reduced fee structure to take the festival online. The estimated loss of local businesses including accommodation, venue hire and catering is \$28,000.

### People impact:

- COVID-19 is having a major impact on Newcastle's cultural life, and the screen industry is no exception. Productions have halted, cinemas have closed, and major festivals have been cancelled or postponed. As the pandemic progresses, the extent of its impact on the present and future of our local screen industry is becoming ever clearer.
- With film and television productions halted, many producers, directors, writers, cinematographers and technical workers are out of work. This has had an immediate impact on the wellbeing and financial security of screen industry professionals across Newcastle, the Hunter and Australia.

### TANTRUM

#### Tantrum Youth Arts

*Tantrum Youth Arts is the Hunter region's leading youth arts company, empowering young people with creativity, confidence and connectiveness to positively shape their lives and the world around them through skills building, residencies, networking and developing bold new performance works.*

#### Cancellations:

- All tours and exhibitions have been cancelled. Where possible, projects have been adapted to smaller scale outcomes in line with health orders.
- Revenue dropped significantly for on-site and off-site workshops in Term 2. 75% of Term 1 participants were retained by providing highly subsidised online offerings.



#### The Lock-Up

*Located in one of Newcastle's most significant heritage buildings, The Lock Up is an award-winning, independent, multi-disciplinary contemporary art space and inner-city creative hub.*

#### Cancellations:

- All exhibitions including International artists 'Collect', Shan Turner-Carroll and Ryato Sato due to flight restrictions.
- All cancelled venue hire income lost due to event postponements and cancellations and unable to host annual fundraiser.
- Annual sponsorship from the University of Newcastle was also withdrawn.

#### People impact:

- One staff member was stood down for three months and was ineligible for JobKeeper due to being a casual employee.



*Catapult Dance Choreographic Hub is a professional dance and choreographic hub for mid-career and emerging choreographers, professional dancers and multi-disciplinary artists with strong programs for young people and the community.*

#### Cancellations:

- Six festivals / collaborations have been cancelled, including a Hong Kong and Swedish tour, plus the regular weekly school workshops and community programs.
- Catapult leases a space in a commercial building, which has provided limited financial flexibility since COVID-19 impacts began.
- Catapult's ability to derive income from workshops, community classes, venue hire, ticket sales to Propel creative development showings and performances have all been severely impacted by COVID-19 with an estimated \$125,000 in revenue being lost

#### People impact:

- A number of people have lost employment opportunities including 28 staff associated with festivals / events and four casual teaching staff. The majority of Catapult staff were ineligible for JobKeeper due to being casual employees.



### **Mitchell Reese, a local Newcastle artist**



Like many arts organisations, when COVID-19 hit, the bulk of our work evaporated. Numerous projects were either cancelled or pushed back. More damaging to our company however, was the disappearance of any prospects of booking upcoming work. September through December of 2020 was shaping up to be a busy festival season, with multiple confirmed and potential bookings. All this disappeared overnight.

Bookings which were cancelled, delayed, or non-existent for 2020 included:

- Melbourne Puppet Festival
- Newcastle Festival
- Newcastle Library Workshops
- Randwick City Council
- The Gum Ball
- Floriade
- Parramatta Lanes
- Nepean REAL Festival
- WTF
- Tilligerry Festival

This is a small selection which demonstrates our missed opportunities due to COVID-19. Fortunately, it hasn't all been doom and gloom. Within 3 weeks of COVID-19 being declared, our company was able to pivot into the online space. Through funding from Create NSW, Newcastle Libraries, Orica, and Port of Newcastle, we were able to run a hugely successful series of online, interactive workshops over a four-month period. Together with financial support from the Australian Government, this has kept our company afloat. In addition, several projects and gigs have been able to take place in a different form – most notably 'The Garbage Project', a \$30,000 commission from the City of Newcastle which is going ahead despite COVID-19.

In addition, COVID-19 has prodded us into the direction of video and online engagement. While this is an area we had been planning on exploring, the urgency of COVID-19 has been a benefit to our company. Already we are exploring other opportunities, including international collaborations with artists in Indonesia and Germany, as well as further afield.

Fingers crossed however a vaccine is discovered quickly, and the Arts industry in Australia quickly recovers!



### **Ewa Grygier, a local writer in Newcastle**

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After close to five years of hard work, my first novel, *The Morbids*, is due for publication on September 1. It's a dream come true, but COVID-19 has made it much more challenging.

Live events are critical for a new writer – giving us opportunities to present our work not only to the public but to booksellers, industry figures and the media – and COVID-19 has put them on hold for the foreseeable future. My first sales conference was scheduled for late March and cancelled just days out, and the cancellations have been constant ever since.

Writers festivals have made exciting pivots to online, but generally on a much smaller scale, with less space for emerging writers, and without opportunities for networking and audience interaction of in-person festivals. Bookstore events are also on hold, even in areas where they are permitted, due to general unease about public gatherings, as well as the ongoing prospect of more restrictions.

Aside from live events, the closure of a number of media outlets has reduced opportunities for publicity and promotion. The end result is a really tough time to promote a book, especially for new writers like me without an existing profile to fall back on. I'm staying positive, but it is definitely an uncertain time.



### **Kerri Shying, a local poet in Newcastle**

*Kerri Shying is a local published poet of Wiradjuri and Chinese heritage. Kerri facilitates a group of writers with a disability in Newcastle.*

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COVID-19 fell right at the point when I was heading into the scheduled launch of my third book – *Knitting Mangrove Roots* – a collection in a new form I'm pioneering called the 'elevensy', and it was like many others, meant to drop at the Newcastle Writers Festival. My disability makes this my biggest opportunity for networking and sales all year. I anticipate my fourth book, due in October, will be similarly hampered. I've held the space online for our Disability writing group *Write Up*, but due to issues regarding lack of technology, (zoom isn't free) and using up phone data for some members, we've struggled to keep ourselves on task and connected.

Our members already struggle with extra burdens of isolation and health issues – financial equity was not achieved during lockdown despite our costs rising due to most of us being highly vulnerable. The pressure on the volunteer leadership has been brutal. The City Library has been helpful. We need a conduit to feed back our experience and also voice what we see as strategies for the months and maybe years ahead. Our mental health community has wisdom – shame nobody can see or hear us.

# Cadi McCarthy, Catapult Director



COVID-19 has had a severe impact on Catapult Dance Choreographic Hub's professional programs including international tours and residencies, youth programs, and community initiatives including drop-in classes, in-school workshops, master-classes and national engagements.

In March Catapult, like many businesses, had to close our doors to all our programs. Our professional programs were dramatically affected, we had to cancel a month-long Swedish tour programmed for March/April, a residency exchange in Hong Kong, our International Double-Bill with Swedish choreographer: Lee Brummer and Israeli choreographer: Rachel Erdos and our residency exchange with Dance Base Scotland. We cancelled our national choreographic residencies with Tasdance, Critical Path & Form Dance Projects: Sydney.

Our youth initiative: The Flipside Project had to postpone two full length performances, our International tour to England & Scotland where Newcastle's young people were creating new work in collaboration with UK based youth companies for the 2022 Commonwealth Games and a Meet-Up youth dance Festival, Canberra. Our community initiatives which include drop-in classes, schools' workshops from Port Macquarie to Gosford, masterclasses, professional development programs for teachers, and choreographic intensive programs were all cancelled.

In 2020 Catapult's professional work That Place In Between is the WA year 11/12 core curriculum, I was set to tour WA providing workshops and teacher professional development in WA, which has been cancelled due to travel restrictions.

Catapult secures finances for our commercial lease and business operations primarily from our community programs which generate the greatest income for the organisation. Due to the complete halt in these, we have been greatly affected financially, with no income for Catapult's outgoings. Expenses required to pay during COVID-19: commercial lease,



rates of \$1800 per quarter, insurances, utilities, Fire Safety compliance, cleaning and operations. These outgoings continue regardless of changes in restrictions due to COVID-19, even if the doors are closed.

Our commercial lease is an incredible burden, even outside of COVID-19, as the majority of funded professional companies like Catapult are based in Council or State run facilities, which have received incredible reductions in rent and rates during this period, and outgoings are primarily absorbed through government enterprises. This is not the case for Catapult.

We are incredibly fortunate in the knowledge that we recently received Create NSW multi-year funding from 2021-2024 for our professional programs, although this does not equate to the necessary funds required to pay administrative staff, or our commercial lease, and subsequent building costs over this period.

Regarding staffing, Job Keeper was secured for Catapult's Director, who has written over 15 grants during this period to Federal, State and Local funding bodies to keep our not for profit arts organisation going. Many of these applications are still pending.

Catapult's large professional artist cohort have been gravely affected financially, as many are casual contractors who are unable to receive Job Keeper. As noted above many of our programs were cancelled – affecting over 30 professional contracts for dancers, teachers, composers and multi-disciplinary artists. Catapult has endeavoured to provide local professional artists with work during this period through zoom classes, film projects and solo residencies in our studios.

Even though Catapult's doors have re-opened and drop-in classes have recommenced, and professional contracts are beginning from August 31st, it is difficult to ascertain the incredible financial consequences that Catapult, like many businesses, will have to carry over the next year or more. It is impossible to re-coup the losses to the organisation both artistically and financially, and our international connections are severed for some time.

# Local Responses

We are part of the solution. Local Government is the driving force of the arts sector across Australia. At the City of Newcastle we operate a number of arts institutions including the Newcastle Art Gallery, Newcastle Museum, Civic Theatre, Playhouse Theatre, Fort Scratchley, as well as our network of Libraries and their programming. Collectively across these arts and culture institutions, the City of Newcastle is investing \$46 million in 2020/21.

Further to operational support, the City of Newcastle has provided a range of targeted support to community-led initiatives including:

### **City of Newcastle Grants - \$1.3 million available, including targeted options for Arts & Cultural organisations**

The City of Newcastle provided a record \$1.3 million in grant funding to enable events, place activations and initiatives to re-energise Newcastle and boost the local economy. Within the funding pool was a Boost Arts and Cultural Grants program worth \$150,000 to stimulate professional artist engagement and the presentation of arts and cultural works.

These grants are in addition to the previously announced City Taskforce Industry Response program, which supported the following arts projects worth almost \$300,000.

#### *Field Frequency - Smart City LIVE Music TV Show*

Field Frequency will produce a live-stream music series, using live-stream broadcast collaborations to maximise the recovery of the local arts and entertainment industry. The show will showcase a diverse range of established musicians and new talent growing the City's identity as a collaborative and inclusive community.

#### *Hunter Writers Centre Inc - Multi-arts activation*

Hunter Writers Centre will lead a multi-arts activation benefiting local arts, cultural, and tourism businesses. The project will include exhibition studio spaces for Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, musicians, visual and digital artists, to develop work for exhibitions of cultural and maritime history and stories of local sites.

### **City of Newcastle Arts and Cultural Festival**

City of Newcastle is currently developing a new arts and cultural festival to be launched in February 2021. The festival will provide a platform for contemporary art, performance and music for local and visiting artists and share our City's stories and creative life with audiences from around the state, and eventually the nation and world. Five major local commissions have been supported by a Create NSW grant, with additional funding dedicated from City of Newcastle.

In spite of disruptions to this planning caused by COVID-19, the City has continued its commitment to the development and roll-out of the festival, which has already seen the direct employment of more than 40 local artists and creatives and will continue to see critical funds and support going to the sector. In this the Council has been a leader and advocate for the local sector and other events.

### **Business Improvement Associations Live Spots**

In August, the Business Improvement Associations of the City of Newcastle launched a project that will establish live spots across the city to provide ambience for business precincts as well as income and promotional opportunity for local performers.

## The Newcastle Art Gallery Opportunity



The City Taskforce requests \$8 million in funding from the NSW State Government and \$8 million in funding from the Federal Government to support the expansion of the Newcastle Art Gallery.

Newcastle Art Gallery was Australia's first purpose-built regional Gallery, opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1977. The Gallery's permanent collection of over 7,000 works is nationally recognised as providing a time capsule of Australian art dating back to the earliest days of Newcastle colonisation more than 200 years ago when Newcastle became Australia's second city to be settled. As a major cultural asset for Australia, the Art Gallery's collection offers the ability to tell local stories of national significance and inspires new ones through the interpretation of its collection of art of local, national and international importance.

Newcastle Art Gallery remains identical in size and design today; yet is custodian to a significantly larger collection and display of works of art of local, national and international importance with only 5% of the collection displayed in any one year. The Gallery's collection has grown by almost 500% since moving into the current building, with no extension works since 1977 to address the increased need for space. Makeshift solutions

have been implemented to deal with the lack of operational space required, including repurposing exhibition space, mezzanine, conservation room, office supply room and the workshop from their original intention. The repurposing of operational space has not only impacted the functionality of Gallery, but art works are put at risk.

City of Newcastle is committed to the Art Gallery continuing to be a symbol of excellence and source of pride in Australia's seventh largest city. The community views the Gallery as a repeat destination for leisure and education, however there is increased demand to see a larger number of works of art from the city's significant collection on permanent display.

Over the past two years, the Gallery has received the highest visitation in over a decade. To appropriately meet the growing expectations of our community, the existing 43-year-old building requires upgrading and expanding to provide modern facilities such as multiple exhibition spaces including one dedicated to permanent display, a café, retail shop, multi-purpose program space, education space and secure international standard loading dock.





An expanded and upgraded Gallery of international standing will enable increased exhibition and community engagement programming for the people of the Hunter, while also offering a valuable cultural tourism opportunity for NSW. Along with increased public and education programs, and employment and enterprise opportunities which meet key economic, social and environmental priorities, the expansion of Newcastle Art Gallery will consolidate the Hunter's reputation as an active and vibrant centre for the arts and culture.

City of Newcastle engaged Oxford Economics to prepare a Preliminary Cost Benefit Analysis for this project. This analysis demonstrated that the benefits of the proposal far outweigh the costs with a BCR of 1.8 and a positive Net Present Value of \$24.1M.

Prosperity Consulting also estimate that the Art Gallery expansion will benefit the Australian economy through the creation of 170 jobs: comprising 152 temporary jobs during the construction phase and 18 ongoing FTE jobs post completion. The 152 jobs comprise 76 direct local jobs in the areas of construction and consultancy from the project plus an 38 jobs from additional production and 38 jobs generated from additional consumption.

The annual effect on regional revenue attributable to the Art Gallery's expansion is estimated at \$1,099,830 with 14,116 additional local and tourist visits. Further additional visitation is estimated at 73,590 in relation to use of the additional Gallery facilities outside of exhibition spaces, generating additional annual revenue of \$2.7 million.

In 2019, the NSW Government recognised the expansion of Newcastle Art Gallery as a region-specific opportunity in their Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+. As a community and smart city, Newcastle's exciting future cannot be realised until its Art Gallery finally receives the expansion it has for so long deserved.

## The Victoria Theatre Opportunity



The importance of theatres as social, economic and cultural infrastructure assets which are essential for liveability and urban renewal has never been better appreciated and quantified than now. There are five major theatre buildings in metropolitan and gateway NSW that are capable of being restored as working heritage theatres. Out of these five, the 1891 Victoria Theatre in Newcastle is the easiest, most immediate and efficient to refurbish – it is the most cost effective.

The people of Newcastle, together with Local, State and Federal Government, have a unique opportunity to partner with Century Venues in the revival of the historic Victoria Theatre. The opportunity is readily achievable because:

The capital investment to refurbish is modest in comparison to acquiring land and building a new 1,000 seat mid-sized theatre in Newcastle's city centre.

Hawkridge Consulting undertook a detailed analysis of economic impact studies of theatres in Australia and overseas and determined that the Victoria Theatre would have an annual operating impact of over \$13M per year

within three years. Within its first three years of restoration, the total impact would be over \$50M inclusive of upgrade.

Century's Development Application has been approved by the City of Newcastle after the NSW Heritage Office recently signed off on the plans. This means that the Victoria Theatre is ready to be revived and returned as a working heritage theatre. It is a shovel-ready project.

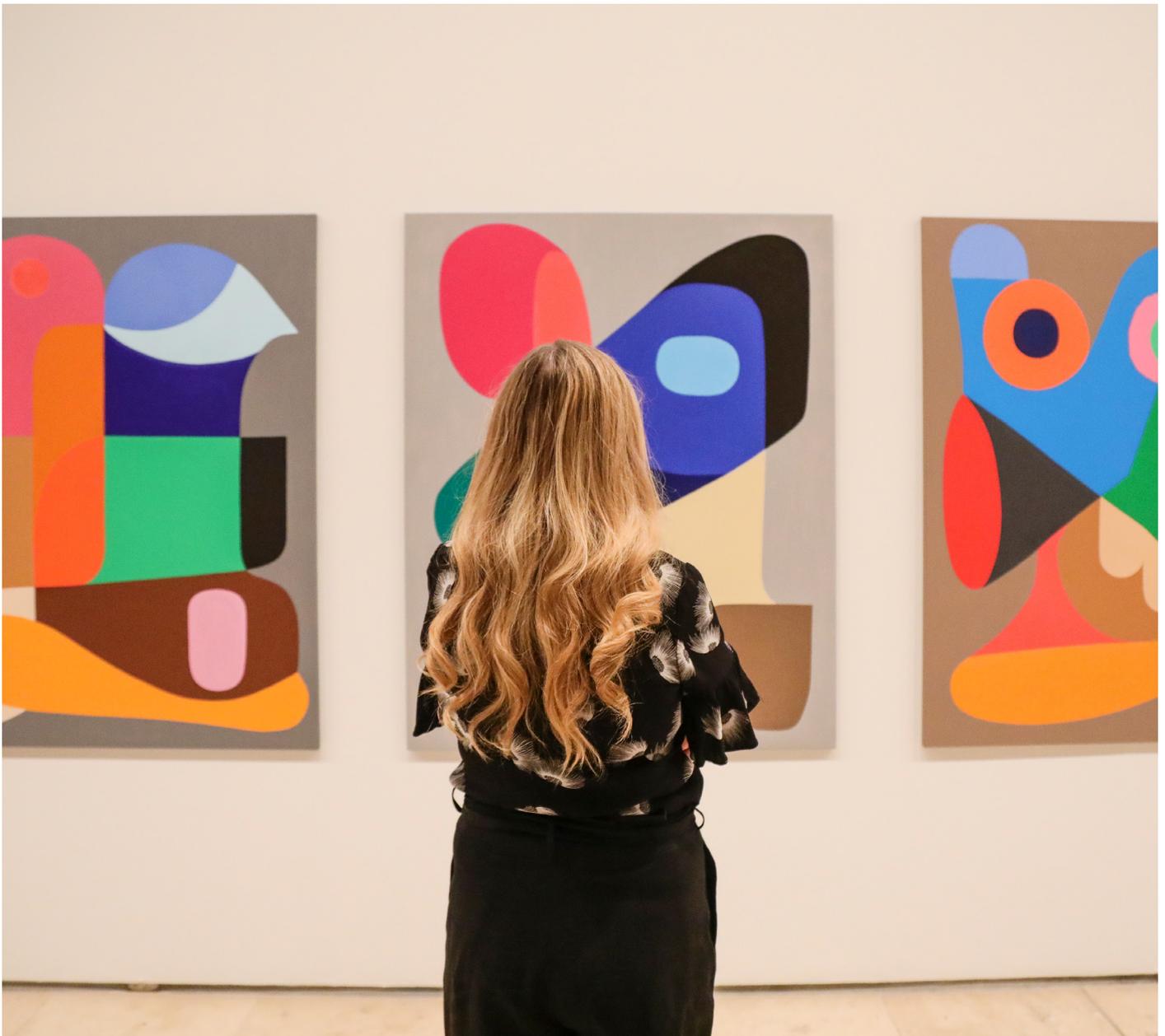
Research demonstrates untapped demand for a commercially viable yet community affordable mid-sized theatre, that will complement existing City facilities such as the Civic Theatre. The restoration of the Victoria Theatre will allow for the opening and growing of a vital market niche within Newcastle.

Century Venues, owner of the Victoria Theatre, is ready to place the building into a not for profit Trust if necessary, to progress government support and investment. The Trust would hold in perpetuity this valuable cultural and historic facility for live performance, entertainment, arts, cultural, education and social enterprise for the people of Newcastle for future generations.

## The opportunity to partner with us

The arts sector plays an important role in strengthening a community's sense of place and showing creativity – this is particularly important during the time of COVID-19. Furthermore, arts and culture provide multiple opportunities for learning, entertainment and improving communication with others. This leads to measurable impacts on our economy, health and wellbeing.

The City Taskforce calls on all Federal and State decision-makers to prioritise support for the Arts and Cultural sector. Mrs Annette Hubber, Chair of the Independent Creative Alliance Newcastle [ICAN] is the Arts Sector representative. Mrs Hubber can provide further local insights and is available to co-design policy solutions. Newcastle is always open to piloting new initiatives. Mrs Hubber can be contacted on [annette@screenhunter.com.au](mailto:annette@screenhunter.com.au)



# City Taskforce Members



Nuatali Nelmes (Sep 4, 2020 10:49 GMT+10)

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Nuatali Nelmes  
Lord Mayor Chair  
**City of Newcastle Newcastle Taskforce**



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Peter Macadam  
Director in Charge  
**Colliers International**



Daniel Wallace (Sep 7, 2020 15:47 GMT+10)

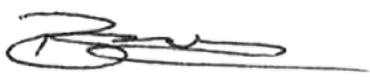
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Daniel Wallace  
Chief Executive – Secretary  
**Hunter Workers**



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Bernadette Inglis  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Newcastle Permanent Building Society**



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Brad Webb  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Samaritans Foundation**



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Tony Cade  
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**Hunternet**



Scott Morgan (Sep 8, 2020 08:24 GMT+10)

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Scott Morgan  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Greater Bank**



Justine Cogan (Sep 8, 2020 16:23 GMT+10)

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Justine Cogan  
Co-Founder  
**Independent Creative Alliance**



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Mark Fitzgibbon  
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Alex Zelinsky  
Vice-Chancellor  
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Will Creedon (Sep 3, 2020 16:08 GMT+10)

Signature

Will Creedon  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Alloggio**



Signature

Bob Hawes  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Hunter Business Chamber**



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Peter Cock  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Newcastle Airport**



Craig Carmody (Sep 7, 2020 17:33 GMT+10)

Signature

Craig Carmody  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Port of Newcastle**



p gardner (Sep 3, 2020 15:46 GMT+10)

Signature

Philip Gardner  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Wests Group**



# 1. Catalyst Areas for Greater Newcastle Projects, as identified in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan

## 2. Large-scale priority infrastructure projects:



Coastal Management Planning and Erosion Management, especially at Stockton Beach



Flood mitigation at Wallsend



Newcastle Airport Expansion



Port of Newcastle Diversification



Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct



Newcastle Light Rail Expansion



Lower Hunter Freight Corridor



Affordable housing initiatives



Metropolitan wide active transport (walking & cycling) improvements



John Hunter Hospital campus upgrades



Newcastle Art Gallery Expansion



Local Sporting Amenity Upgrades



Local Playground upgrades, particularly for disability inclusion



Ferry Terminal at Wickham



Pensioner Rate Rebates



University of Newcastle STEM Regional Transformation Hub

## 3. Local priority infrastructure projects:



Summerhill Waste Management Centre – Organics Processing Facility



Richmond Vale Rail Trail



Newcastle Beach Community Facility (Stage 2, Newcastle Beach – Bathers Way)



Junction to Merewether Cycleway



Newcastle West Bi-directional Cycleway – West End Stage 2, Phase 1



Newcastle East End Streetscape Upgrades and Cycleway



Foreshore Park All Abilities Playground



Western Corridor Active Hub



Local Centres Program