

**Newcastle Harbour Foreshore**

**Frequently Asked Questions**



The Newcastle Harbour Foreshore Masterplan includes the Foreshore Park precinct and the Wharf Road precinct as shown below.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

**Draft Masterplan for Foreshore Park precinct**

**What is included in the draft Masterplan for Foreshore Park?**

The draft Masterplan for Foreshore Park features a regional inclusive playspace and integrated waterplay area, picnic and BBQ lawn areas, landscaping, trees and shade, a number of event spaces and a cultural walk to Foreshore Park.

**What's changed in this draft Masterplan compared to the preliminary concept released in February 2021?**

In direct response to community feedback, revisions to the concept for Foreshore Park include the relocation of the inclusive 'Variety Livvi's Place' playspace with adjoining amenities and incorporated kiosk/cafe, provision for a multi-purpose roller-skating, scooting and performing arts area, and improved connections to Enterprise Park and Customs House forecourt.

**Will the Sandhills Community Garden be retained?**

Yes, the Sandhills Community Garden will be retained in its existing location.

**What are the features of the inclusive playspace?**

City of Newcastle and Variety - the Children’s Charity have been working on the design of Newcastle’s first Livvi’s Place inclusive playspace which now spans over 8,500m². The playspace will cater for a variety of ages and abilities. It will feature shaded play areas, favourites such as swings, climbing structures and a flying fox, along with a water play area, quiet spaces, and a tree top walk. Like most inclusive playspaces, the facility will be fully enclosed to reduce the risk of children wandering out of the site, away from parents and guardians. The playspace will also have accessible toilets and changerooms.

**Why is the new proposed location of the inclusive playspace different to the one on the initial concept?**

The revised playspace location provides an improved connection to the harbour and is closer to parking which is an important factor for those with limited mobility. The new location for the playspace is also further from residences than what was proposed in the preliminary concept (released in February 2021). The new location provides an additional 4,000m² of playspace incorporating more picnic spaces and gardens compared to the February 2021 concept.

The new location takes advantage of the existing topography and established trees which have been used for shade, the creation of quite places and the provision of boardwalks through the canopy allowing users to transition up into the major climbing structure. The playspace elements are consistent with the preliminary concept and remain within the design. The separation from the Cultural Heritage Walk allows both elements to function independently from each other, improving circulation throughout the park.

**What is happening with Tug Berth Lane?**

The concept shows Tug Berth Lane as an extension of the Foreshore parkland with a shared pathway dissecting the space, retaining connections to Nobbys Beach and Bathers Way. The new parkland area will be adjacent to the harbour and provide unique opportunities to picnic on shaded lawn or terraces with uninterrupted views of the harbour, with pedestrians and cyclists passing behind.

**What changes will there be to the event spaces?**

Foreshore Park is Newcastle’s premier event space and currently hosts a range of large and small scale events. The draft Masterplan seeks to create highly versatile spaces that are easily linked to one another through generous shaded paths. The existing fragmented spaces have been consolidated on the north-east side of the park which will allow easy access for event organisers from Wharf Road.

Tree planting within Shortland Lawn is defined in the Foreshore Plan of Management 2015 (PoM), which will ensure this space retains its unique character. The desire for a shaded events lawn area is realised in the proposed “Commons”.

This generous open lawn is proposed to be tree lined with uninterrupted access to the historic rail shed and views to the harbour. The two event spaces will be linked through an informal tree grove. The band of trees to the lawn area are symbolic of the 1973 Green Bans that preserved the Newcastle foreshore and East End from development, allowing it to become public park.

**Why has the frog pond been reduced?**

The current Plan of Management required investigation into the retention, reduction or removal of the Frog Pond. During Phase 1 community engagement, City of Newcastle (CN) asked for feedback about the future use of the frog pond. Community feedback was mixed between keeping the frog pond, removing it or repurposing it for other uses including skating. While it is a significant feature within the foreshore, the reduction of the Frog Pond will greatly increase connectivity throughout the park, increase tree canopy, and provide a flexible shaded open lawn adjacent to the Rail Shed. CN has proposed a reduction to the south eastern edge and naturalisation of the Frog Pond, near the original site of the freshwater source along the Cultural Walk, enabling an accurate interpretation within the park. CN has also explored Awabakal life on the harbour through the waterplay space within the playspace.

CN has engaged with stakeholders to accommodate the needs of the roller-skating community within a versatile hardstand space at the base of Shortland Lawn amphitheatre.

**What has happened to the Resilience sculpture?**

The Resilience sculpture has been relocated to the passive open lawn on the southern side of the Rail shed. Through consultation with the artist Roger McFarlane, the sculpture will remain near a body of water in open lawn.

**How has accessibility been considered in the development of the draft Masterplan?**

Variety - the Children’s Charity has partnered with City of Newcastle to deliver the designs for the playspace. Their unique perspective on accessible and inclusive playspaces is invaluable in developing the concepts. Key stakeholders and accessibility advisory groups have been involved in preparation of the concept plan. Connectivity and wayfinding from public transport and carparks have been a key consideration in the placement of different elements. The park and playspace will be designed for people of all ages and abilities, and adequately cater for parents and carers alike.

**Is a kiosk being considered for Foreshore Park?**

Phase 1 consultation identified the desire for a kiosk or café within the park. The draft Masterplan includes a café/kiosk incorporated into the new amenities adjacent to the railway shed and the playspace. This central location will become a pivotal hub of the park, be able to service many different sections of the park and remain accessible during major events.

**Will there be changes to the existing buildings?**

The draft Masterplan proposes several changes to buildings within the park. It proposes amalgamating the two amenities buildings into a new purpose built building in a central location adjacent to the inclusive playspace and the railway way shed. The new amenities will contain a changing places, unisex toilets, parents room and a café/kiosk. The central location will service the whole park and is equally distanced between neighboring public amenities at The Station and Nobbys Beach.

The staged removal of the two existing amenities will provide extra space for the inclusive playspace and Cultural Heritage Walk.

There are no changes planned for the historic railway carriage shed.

**Will the number of toilets available within the park change?**

There will be a staged reduction in toilets to the park as the various stages of the masterplan get implemented and the two existing amenities are removed. Unisex toilets will be provided as a part of the Playspace development will ultimately service the whole park. The numbers provided in this facility have been benchmarked against high profile facilities within the region and across Australia. Access to sewer points will be provided throughout the park allowing temporary toilet blocks onsite for the duration of major events.

**Will carparking around Foreshore Park change?**

The draft Masterplan aims to retain parking in and around Foreshore Park. CN’s project team will work with stakeholders to establish how to best use the available spaces ensuring the provision for accessible and E-charging spots and alike meets future demands.

**Wharf Road Precinct**

**What’s happening with Wharf Road and Foreshore Reserve?**

Wharf Road and Foreshore Park are important links from the city centre to harbour and the coast.

The draft Masterplan aims to integrate improved cycling infrastructure, improved landscaping to key nodes and celebrate the harbour, transforming the harbour into a world class foreshore. The draft Masterplan shows the activation of and improved pedestrian access to Lynch's Hub and Scratchleys, improvements to Joy Cummings Promenade, an improved link to Darby Plaza, an additional shared path and consolidated parking at Queens Wharf.

The draft Masterplan has been developed in accordance with the Cycling Plan - On our Bikes, and Parking Plan - On the street, which were adopted by Council in February 2021.

**Will carparking around Foreshore Park change?**

The realignment of travel lanes and consolidation of off-street parking has allowed the inclusion of street trees to the parking lanes while maintaining 99% of existing on street parking to Wharf Road. Accessible parking spaces will be provided closer to the entry of playspace within the Foreshore Park carpark. Timing within the Foreshore Park carpark will be reviewed to suit park users requirements.

**What active transport provisions are provided?**

A separated cycleway will be provided on the northern side of Wharf Road and Tug Berth Lane with connections to neighboring cycle routes including the R1, R6 and Bathers Way. This will reduce congestion and conflicts along Joy Cummings Prominade.

**What is a masterplan and why do we need one?**

**What is a masterplan?**

A masterplan is a document that guides the management and future development of an area. It is a process that defines what is important about a place and how its character and quality can be conserved, improved and enhanced. In the case of the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore, the masterplan will include key information such as historical context, background information, values, principles and objectives, and concept designs that will be used as a blueprint to progress the revitalisation of the site.

**Why is the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore Masterplan being developed?**

City of Newcastle adopted the Foreshore Plan of Management (PoM) in October 2015. The PoM provided guidance on key management objectives for the space, including maintaining visual amenity and views, providing appropriate facilities and services and creating flexible spaces to meet community needs. It also identified improvements to pedestrian and cycleway access and better activation of dormant spaces. The PoM identified the need to develop a masterplan to guide the future development of the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore including the development of a regional-level inclusive playspace. Recognition of the establishment of the parkland and historical uses will form a crucial part of the plan.

**Why is it important to revitalise Newcastle Harbour Foreshore?**

The Harbour Foreshore is an important recreation and cultural space for the inner city and the wider Newcastle community. Given its soaring popularity, consideration must be given as to how it can be enhanced to help complement the City’s ongoing revitalisation and meet the growing needs of the community. There are significant opportunities to improve the use and functionality of the Foreshore through;

* the provision of an inclusive playscape with potential of a water-themed playspace at Foreshore Park.
* providing better cycleway and pedestrian linkages between the Bathers Way to the Honeysuckle and Civic precincts;
* improving the layout and integration of event spaces throughout the foreshore
* greater recognition to the historical influences and cultural elements celebrated along the foreshore;
* exploring opportunities to increase night-time activation;
* investigating opportunities to conserve and protect significant trees, which contribute to the foreshore’s significant visual amenity.
* improving the pedestrian and cycle amenity.
* Revitalising the streetscape and public domain along Wharf Road and Argyle St.

**Who is designing the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan?**

The City of Newcastle has partnered with Variety – the Children's Charity to deliver the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan. Together we have engaged Landscape Architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean Pty Ltd (TCL) who have partnered with local firm Bosque Studio Landscape Architects. TCL are a multi award winning firm responsible for several iconic landscape and playspaces throughout Australia and around the world including Geelong Waterfront, Auckland Waterfront and Cairns Waterfront. TCL has set the standard other firms benchmark themselves against and they provide a tailored design approach to each project. TCL and Bosque Studio will will work with the community to provide high quality and unique landscape design for Newcastle foreshore.

**How has the community been involved?**

**How has the community been involved in developing the draft masterplan?**

Through all major stages of the design process, City of Newcastle has sought community feedback to ensure the masterplan meets the needs of the community.

City of Newcastle has provided multiple options for the community to provide feedback including online tools, information sessions and workshops. A Community Reference Group

and Inclusive Playspace Design Reference Group were also formed.

* Phase 1 – Initial consultation open from 9 June to 12 July 2020
* Phase 2 – Preliminary concepts presented to the community from 16 February to 5 March 2021
* Phase 3 – The draft Masterplan will be placed on public exhibition – 28 September to 26 October 2022.

The creation of the masterplan is the first phase in the planning process for the Harbour Foreshore. It will continue to develop and evolve as the City sets out to achieve an agreed vision that involves a high level of community and stakeholder involvement and support.

The project team will continue to update the community as the project progresses.

**What is the Harbour Foreshore Community Reference Group?**

The Community Reference Group (CRG) was formed to facilitate community and stakeholder input into the development of the masterplan. It consisted of a mix of community members and stakeholders.

The purpose of the CRG was to enable two-way communication and engagement between City of Newcastle and representatives of the Newcastle community as we develop a masterplan for the Harbour Foreshore. Members have contributed to the masterplan planning process by providing valuable input on the current and future needs and expectations of the community.

Members were selected by a panel consisting of project members from City of Newcastle tasked with developing the masterplan. Throughout the development of the Masterplan, the CRG met three times as agreed to in the [CRG Terms of Reference](https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/projects/harbour-foreshore-community-reference-group).

**Inclusive play**

**What is an inclusive playspace?**

An inclusive playspace invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures to come together to socialise and play. Inclusive playspaces are easy to access, navigate, provide a range of play types and challenges, and are equipped with appropriate facilities in a comfortable environment – allowing people to stay and play as long as they choose.

More information on inclusive playspaces can be found at <https://everyonecanplay.nsw.gov.au/>.

**What is Variety’s Livvi’s Place?**

The Touched by Olivia Foundation (TBO) was founded by Justine and John Perkins in 2007 after the death of their daughter Olivia. Since then, TBO has built over 30 inclusive playspaces across Australia. In 2018, Touched By Olivia Foundation partnered with [Variety – the Children’s Charity](https://www.variety.org.au/nsw/?variety_state=nsw) to ensure more inclusive playspaces will continue to be built nationally. Variety Livvi’s Place at Foreshore Park is a collaboration between Variety – the Children’s Charity NSW/ACT, City of Newcastle and the Newcastle community.

Variety Livvi’s Place is an inclusive playspace for kids of all ages and all abilities to play side by side. Variety believes all kids deserve a fair go, including the ability to play. Kids of all abilities should be able to experience the joy and benefits of playing together and Variety are proud to partner with communities on these very important projects.

**Has Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage been considered?**

**Has the Aboriginal community been consulted on the proposal?**

Yes, the traditional owners of the land have been consulted as part of the preliminary investigations and will continue to have input into the City’s plans for the area.

**Have any historical or traditional heritage elements been considered in the masterplan process?**

Newcastle's Heritas Architecture form part of the design consultant team. They have carried out a comprehensive assessment of the site’s heritage that has helped inform the direction of the design. The designers have looked for every opportunity to enhance the heritage of the site and incorporate it into the masterplan.

**How has Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage been reflected in the draft Masterplan?**

Foreshore Park is a complex site with many historic layers that contribute to the unique cultural of Newcastle.

The draft Masterplan has looked for opportunities to explore indigenous and non-indigenous themes throughout the park. Several preliminary ideas have been identified including the cultural heritage walk that will be symbolic of the original coastline. This path allows us to explore the indigenous connection with harbour and highlights how much has changed since European settlement.

The waterplay space aims to explore Awabakal and Worimi life on the water through three significant items:

1. A sea fern maze and splash zone - designed to reflect the indigenous sea ferns that the area is known for, Mulubinba, place of the sea ferns. The maze provides the opportunity to embed other important items that would have been gathered in close proximity to the ferns as well.
2. Awabakal canoes and waterplay provides multiple canoes on the water hunting fish. The fish would spray water and interact with boats. Kids would be able to re-enact the hunt.
3. Incidental play creates the opportunity to show other aspect of life on the Foreshore in the little nodes created along the path. These will be quieter, intimate places for people to retreat to away from the larger playspaces.

The project team has received preliminary support for the concepts from Newcastle’s Guraki Committee and will continue to work closely with the group to develop ideas further.

Other non-indigenous themes within the playspace are iconically Novocastrian:

* 1. The tugboat flying fox and nautical themed swings acknowledges the city as a working harbour.
  2. The major climbing structure is representative of Newcastle’s history in industry through a series of gigantic cogs, screws and slides.

**What else is in/out of scope?**

**Why isn’t Camp Shortland included in the design?**

The design of Camp Shortland is currently under contract with Local Firm Terras Landscape Architects. The design of the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan will be coordinated with tthose works to ensure a harmonious landscape between the two spaces.

**Is Joy Cumming’s Promenade included in the work?**

Yes. A review of Joy Cummings Promenade will be carried out as a part of masterplan. The Promenade will be retained and enhanced to meet the needs of the community.