

7.3 LMM 27/08/2024 - COUNCIL TERM WRAP UP

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that this meeting of 27 August 2024 is the last Ordinary Council Meeting of a shortened term with our first meeting on 18 January 2022 and congratulates dedicated staff and Councillors for their contribution throughout the Council term.
2. Notes that the term began amid the Coronavirus pandemic recovery, and that Council's bold leadership guided the City's economic response through the \$15.5 million Community and Economic Resilience Program and boosted capital works program, these efforts worked to mitigate the economic damage and support our local economy.
3. Recognises that during this shorter term covering three budgets, Council has invested a record \$375 million in infrastructure works across the City. This recording breaking investment has marked a significant milestone for the city, with over \$1 billion of infrastructure works delivered via our annual budgets over the last decade creating a livable, equitable and sustainable city including. Just some highlights include:
 - a) Completion of coastal revitalisation such as stage one of the Newcastle Ocean Baths and Bathers Way South Newcastle Beach
 - b) Delivery of mass sand nourishment to mitigate coastal erosion at Stockton.
 - c) City-wide upgrades to the road, footpath, stormwater and cycleway network.
 - d) Securing the long awaited expansion of Newcastle Art Gallery to reinstate the Hunter's reputation as an active and vibrant center for the arts.
 - e) Sportsground upgrades such as National Park basketball courts, transforming Adamstown's Myers Park into a multi-use sporting hub, transformation of Kotara sportsground into an inclusive and fully accessible football facility, new accessible grandstand at Darling Street Oval, and facilities upgrade at Wickham's Passmore Oval.
 - f) New playgrounds such as Wallsend Active Hub, Bernborough Avenue Maryland, Kotara Park, McCauley Park Tarro, McInnes Reserve Minmi, Avon Street Reserve Mayfield, Harold Myers Park Birmingham Gardens, Lock Ness Drive Park Fletcher, Vera Wilson Park Beresfield, and Rawson Park Stockton.
 - g) Delivering our Sustainable Waste Strategy.
 - h) Delivering the environmental assets renewal program, to improve the health and condition of our waterways, coastline, bushland and street and park trees.
 - i) Over \$3 million in support for local business and community groups through the Grants and Sponsorship Program.
4. Celebrates our city's leadership on climate change action and protecting the local environment. Over this past term we have:
 - a) Adopted and delivered the Newcastle Environment Strategy.
 - b) Signed the Blackhill Conservation Agreement securing a key biodiversity corridor.
 - c) Maintained 100% renewable electricity for our operations.
 - d) As a first of its kind, worked in partnership with the NSW Government to deliver 130,000m³ of amenity sand nourishment to Stockton Beach through rainbowing.

- e) Advocated to the Federal Government for Australia's commitment to the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) at COP28.
 - f) Converted 13,400 main road streetlights to LEDs.
 - g) Provided 16 electric vehicle charging ports in the CBD and hosted Australia's first power pole mounted EV charger.
 - h) Commenced the roll out of 32 new electric vehicle charging ports, increasing CN's public EV charging infrastructure network to 48 across 15 locations in the Newcastle LGA.
 - i) Planted 5,900 trees as part of our street tree and park tree replacement program, and 226,300 native plants as part of our urban forest program.
 - j) Adopted the Throsby, Styx and Cottage Creek Flood Study, to update our knowledge of flood behavior.
5. Acknowledges our local government leadership in supporting the delivery of more affordable housing by:
- a) Adopting the Affordable Housing Contributions Scheme Planning Proposal.
 - b) Secured a \$12 million social housing funding agreement with Homes NSW.
 - c) Saw the completion of 2674 new homes.
6. Recognises the unanimous adoption of the City's Community Engagement Strategy in 2023 and notes the **43,200** community interactions on a range of projects including the Newcastle Ocean Baths upgrade, Western Corridor traffic improvements including widening Minmi Road, and the Inland Pools Strategy 2043.
7. Celebrates the City's attraction and delivery of major events which drive economic output and vibrancy including the RAAF Airshow, Elton John, Paul McCartney and Pink concerts, Van Gogh Alive, and the New Annual festival, combining to attract hundreds of thousands of people to Newcastle.
8. Celebrates that during the current term of Council, City of Newcastle was recognised with many awards including:
- a) Customer Experience and Innovative Leadership awards presented at the 2022 Local Government Excellence Awards.
 - b) 2022 Museums and Galleries National Award for Newcastle Art Gallery's '*WARWAR: The Art of Torres Strait*' exhibition.
 - c) Gold Excellence in Reporting Award at the 2022 and at the 2023 Australasian Reporting Awards.
 - d) NSW Top Tourism Town Award at the 2023 Tourism Awards.
 - e) The prestigious 2023 Planning Institute of Australia Commendation Award for digital innovation for the accelerated development application eligibility checker.
 - f) 2023 Economic Development Rising Star Leadership Award for outstanding achievements as a young, emerging leader in the economic development profession for Emily Acton.
 - g) An impressive seven projects as finalists in the 2024 Local Government Excellence Awards, including Ironbark Creek rehabilitation and Newcastle Ocean Baths revitalisation.

- h) The 2024 Local Government NSW Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Award for the New Annual.
 - i) 2024 Minister's award for women in local government to apprentice Jazmin Webber and CIO Alicia Lopez.
 - j) Finalists in the 2024 NSW Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence Newcastle City Hall team.
9. Acknowledge and welcomes the impressive work and collaboration this council has delivered throughout the past 3-year term and invites retiring Councillors to give a valedictory address and thank them for their service.

ATTACHMENTS:

Record Budget to deliver widespread community benefits

20 June 2024

City of Newcastle will support local communities, jobs, businesses and the economy as part of a record Budget designed to deliver everyday benefits alongside major infrastructure projects.

Councillors will vote on the 2024/25 Budget and Delivery Program next week, which will see over \$415 million invested across 60 services and more than 280 projects during the next financial year.

This includes a record infrastructure program of almost \$140 million, which is forecast to support 735 local jobs and increase Newcastle's economic output by up to \$305 million.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said City of Newcastle is committed to delivering the community's vision of Newcastle as a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city.

"From city-shaping projects that will create a legacy for future generations, to essential services that make an everyday difference in the lives of Novocastrians, this Budget will set a new benchmark for our investment in the Newcastle community," Cr Nelmes said.

"We're investing in the things that matter to our residents and delivering a record infrastructure program that will cater for the needs of our growing community while stimulating Newcastle's economy and supporting new jobs.

"Our infrastructure projects will make an everyday difference in people's lives, with \$38.1 million for upgrades to local roads, bridges, footpaths and community buildings, \$7.7 million on stormwater upgrades to address flooding to property and businesses and \$6 million for improving Newcastle's cycleway network and transport options.

"We're also giving back through programs such as our Community Grants, which for the fourth consecutive year will provide more than half a million dollars to support initiatives that deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable members of our community and contribute to the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city."

CEO Jeremy Bath said City of Newcastle continues to work hard to balance the needs and expectations of our growing community with our commitment to making sure we are financially sustainable.

"City of Newcastle is forecasting an operating surplus of \$4.1 million in 2024-2025, which is an indicator of the underlying financial strength of our organisation," Mr Bath said.

"This is despite ongoing increases in inflation and construction costs, and our position as the only council in NSW to pay the NSW Government more in taxes and levies than we receive in grants.

"We also recognise that many people and small businesses in our community are facing an extremely challenging time as they experience cost of living pressures.

"That is why City of Newcastle is offering support to residents and business owners experiencing financial hardship.

"During the past three years, we have assisted around 2,200 ratepayers to enter into payment arrangements, while an additional 141 people were supported through our rates voucher scheme.

"We encourage home owners experiencing difficulties to contact City of Newcastle to discuss a payment plan before the next rates instalment. Doing this means interest will be waived on their outstanding balance."

