

**ITEM-6 LMM 22/03/2022 - Federal Election Priorities**

**MOTION**

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that a Federal Election is to take place by 21 May 2022.
2. Prepares an election priorities document, in order to enable high level advocacy for funding and delivery of projects and policies including, but not limited to:
  - a. Newcastle Airport Terminal expansion
  - b. Richmond Vale Rail Trail
  - c. National Park No. 1 Sportsground redevelopment
  - d. Hunter Park (Broadmeadow Sports and Entertainment Precinct)
  - e. Sporting Facility Fund
  - f. Surf Lifesaving Club redevelopment funding
  - g. Stockton Coastal Erosion mitigation and sand replenishment
  - h. John Hunter Hospital Health & Innovation Precinct
  - i. Expansion of Newcastle Light Rail
  - j. Lower Hunter Freight Corridor
  - k. Affordable Housing initiatives
  - l. Improved mobile telecommunications coverage
  - m. Flood mitigation at Wallsend
  - n. Diversification of Port of Newcastle
  - o. Waste management and circular economy innovation investment
  - p. Newcastle Interchange Ferry Terminal
  - q. Indexation of Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue
  - r. Minmi Road upgrade
  - s. University of Newcastle STEMM Regional Transformation Hub
  - t. Cottage Creek Bridge
  - u. Commitment to the establish a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and a Makarrata Commission
  - v. Newcastle to Sydney very fast rail
  - w. Offshore Wind Project
  - x. Rebuild Australia's Strategic Fleet
  - y. GP Access Funding
  - z. Arts & Cultural Package (including Newcastle After Dark, Live & Local expansion)
  - aa. Local Government Natural Disaster Mitigation Fund
  - bb. Adaptation and mitigation initiatives to address climate change
  - cc. Active Hub Program
    - i. Beresfield
    - ii. Adamstown/Kotara
    - iii. Bar Beach
    - iv. Mayfield
    - v. Wallsend Active Hub & Swimming Centre
  - dd. Local Centres Program
    - i. Orchardtown Road
    - ii. Wallsend Stage 3A & 3B
    - iii. Mayfield Local Centre
    - iv. Georgetown Local Centre

- v. Waratah Local Centre
- vi. East End Public Domain Stage 1 & 2
- vii. Wood Street Centre
- ee. Parks, Playgrounds, Pathways Program:
  - i. Bathers Way
  - ii. City Centre to Merewether Cycleway, Stage 2
  - iii. Newcastle West Bi-directional Cycleway – West End Stage 2, Phase 1
  - iv. Newcastle East End Streetscapes Upgrades and Cycleway
  - v. Signalisation of Cycleway Intersections
  - vi. Cycleway connections with Link Road upgrade
  - vii. Maitland Road Rail Crossings Cycleway upgrades
  - viii. Active Transport Infrastructure Program
  - ix. National Park Cycleway
  - x. Gregson Park Masterplan implementation
  - xi. Creek Road Masterplan implementation
  - xii. Local playground disability inclusion & accessibility
  - xiii. Variety Livvi's Place, Newcastle Foreshore regional inclusive playspace

3. Notes that our funding priorities have remained consistent, with the City of Newcastle advocating for funding to deliver these projects across multiple election and budget cycles, and their identification in various external stakeholder strategies including Infrastructure Australia *Priority List 2022*, Hunter & Central Coast Development Corporation strategic planning, Hunter Joint Organisation, Committee for the Hunter, NSW Government Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **a. Newcastle Airport Terminal expansion**

Newcastle Airport has unveiled a 20-year blueprint and 60-year vision for their operations.

As a part of that masterplan, Newcastle Airport revealed that the NSW and Commonwealth Governments are seeking to grow the defence and aerospace related industries in and around RAAF Base at Williamtown and that the NSW Government sees Williamtown as the regional hub of Australian industry participation supporting the Joint Strike Fighter fleets in the Asia Pacific region.

With the joint announcement with Port Stephens Council, and the Newcastle Airport regarding the expansion of Newcastle Airport, and the Airport's Dr Peter Cock advising that construction could begin within five years, both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments have an opportunity to assist the expansion of the Newcastle Airport with concrete support in upcoming Budgets.

### **b. Richmond Vale Rail Trail**

The Richmond Vale Rail Trail is part of an overall regional proposal between City of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock City Councils for a 32-kilometre cycling and walking track along the former Richmond Vale rail line between Kurri Kurri and Hexham, along the former Chichester to Newcastle water pipeline between Shortland and Tarro, and through the Hunter Wetlands National Park.

The shared pathway would provide a link for cyclists between Kurri Kurri, Tarro, Minmi and Shortland without having to ride on the Pacific Motorway, Hunter Expressway or New England Highway.

The project offers a great active transport choice for locals and visitors, passing through old railway tunnels and over bridges, amongst wildlife habitats and linking to Hunter Wetlands Centre.

It would also open up the Western section of the Hunter Wetlands National Park to the public and provide opportunities in the key growth areas of transport, tourism, recreation, heritage, and economic and social development.

The proposal is being put forward by City of Newcastle, Cessnock and Lake Macquarie councils, with funding contributions from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Donaldson Conservation Trust.

The project has been divided into two sections across three local government areas with Section 1 to be undertaken by City of Newcastle in the following stages:

**Section 1: Shortland to Minmi and Pambalong Reserve (City of Newcastle)**

- Stage 1: Prepare concept design (completed).
- Stage 2: Prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) supported by the required environmental investigations (completed)
- Stage 3: Submit DA with design and EIS (completed). The DA was publicly notified on our website throughout August 2020. To view application details and documentation visit Application Tracking and search using ID Number DA2020/00641. The DA will be determined by the Hunter and Central Coast Joint Regional Planning Panel (completed, with the project receiving approval in part).
- Stage 4: As per a condition of approval from the Hunter and Central Coast Joint Regional Planning Panel, we will prepare an assessment for the section of the trail through the Hunter Wetlands National Park. National Parks and Wildlife Service will determine this assessment.
- Stage 5: Detailed design phase.
- Stage 6: Construction.

**c. National Park No. 1 Sportsground Redevelopment**

Continued development of No 1 Sportground as a premier sporting venue includes media spaces, adoptive use of the existing scoreboard, grandstand improvements and embellishments to meet current AFL and cricket infrastructure guidelines to cater for higher level and elite content. The inclusion of a high level cricket training facility which provides a warm up area during high level matches and upgrade of public amenities to cater for large crowds.

The installation of six new 40 metre light poles has already upgraded the lighting to 750 lux, with increased electricity conduit to allow for a further increase, pending funding, in lux level if required for televised night-time fixtures. New sight-screens, player dug-out benches and oval fencing will also improve the playing experience.

The project will position the region to attract sporting fixtures such as trial Big Bash League and trial AFL fixtures.

**d. Hunter Park (Broadmeadow Sports and Entertainment Precinct)**

Expressions of interest for the Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct closed on 30 November 2017.

While renders for potential development are welcome, the NSW Government must now ensure the precinct can both be activated daily, include the first stage of light rail extension and adequately plan to attract large scale events like the Commonwealth Games.

In 2017, Venues NSW CEO Paul Doorn stated that the Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct Concept is a detailed plan that turns the precinct into a place for people to visit whether there's an event on or not; day and night. Options include a new 10,000 seat multi-purpose entertainment and convention centre, an event plaza and a consolidated sports facility.

It also proposes a 150-room 3.5-star hotel, safe landscaped pedestrian links between the stadium and Broadmeadow train station, multi-purpose fields, family-friendly parks, restaurants and a multi-storey carpark.

With a strong vision in place, and much interest around the delivery of the Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct, it's time for the New South Wales government provide funding towards the implementation of the plan for the precinct.

It is noted that the Newcastle Herald reported on 12 January 2019 that the strategic business case for the Broadmeadow Sports and Entertainment Precinct was 'in its final stages'.

Given that discussion has centred around ensure that the Precinct reaches the potential to host a Commonwealth Games, City of Newcastle believes the Federal Government has a role to play in funding the delivery of this important project.

**e. Sporting Facility Fund**

Newcastle is in a particularly unique position when it comes to accessing funding to improve our local sporting infrastructure.

An emerging issue is the provision of adequate facilities for women, women's football, rugby league, rugby and AFL are increasing in popularity across the City of Newcastle. The Local Sport Grant Program, the Community Building Partnership Program and Liquor and Gaming NSW Infrastructure Grants, are simply not large enough funding streams to fund the work required to bring our local sporting facilities up to scratch.

City of Newcastle has been widely consulting with local sporting club's and stakeholders to develop the City of Newcastle Strategic Sports Plan.

Ageing infrastructure and a lack of inclusive amenities has been consistently identified as an opportunity for City of Newcastle to improve our local sporting facilities.

Funding from the Commonwealth Government to overhaul our existing facilities and provide for future growth would be very welcome.

#### **f. Surf Lifesaving Club redevelopment funding**

While the City of Newcastle has invested more than \$11 million into upgrades and maintenance of our Surf Lifesaving Clubs since 2013, significant upgrades have been identified by local clubs that are beyond the budgets of local government.

Since 2013, City of Newcastle has provided \$420,000 in cash to Hunter Surf Lifesaving.

Our almost \$11.5 million of direct investment into our local surf clubs has delivered projects including:

- \$1.2 million heritage refurbishment of Nobby's Surf Lifesaving Club
- \$640,000 refurbishment of Dixon Park Surf Lifesaving Club
- Stockton's \$200,000 refurbishment in 2020
- More than \$700,000 for Cooks Hill Surf Lifesaving Club

The City is also proud to have delivered significant coastal revitalisation, including \$46 million over the last 10 years, including the delivery of our iconic Bathers Way.

It is noted that the NSW Liberal Government has rejected grant funding applications for the Bathers Way Stage 2: Newcastle Beach Community Facility (incorporating Newcastle Surf Lifesaving Club upgrades) on four separate occasions (Resources for Regions – 2016; Building Better Regions 2 – 2017; Building Better Regions 3 – 2018; Regional Growth Fund – 2018).

#### **An example of a project requiring funding is Bathers Way, Newcastle Beach Stage 2, with applications for grant funding rejected by the NSW Government.**

Bathers Way, Newcastle Beach Stage 2 is part of the Newcastle Beach Community Infrastructure Renewal Project and pertains to the short section of Bathers Way on Shortland Esplanade opposite Ocean Street and includes the Newcastle Community Hub.

The project includes a proposal for demolishing the existing Newcastle Beach pavilion and constructing a new community building, subject to additional funding. Design for this project is yet to commence. This stage includes:

- Construction of the final section of the Bathers Way shared path along Shortland Esplanade at Newcastle Beach
- Construction of a new community building including a new Surf Life Saving Pavilion
- New café/kiosk, accessible amenities and showers
- New landscaping, shade and seating
- Improved access between Newcastle Beach and CBD.

#### **g. Stockton Coastal Erosion mitigation and sand replenishment**

Action and funding are desperately needed for a long-term solution to Stockton's ongoing erosion issues.

There is no quick fix to this longstanding threat, but it's now more urgent than ever.

City of Newcastle has been calling for action at Stockton for more than a decade.

The NSW Government has approved City of Newcastle's Coastal Zone Management Plan and declared Stockton as a 'Significant Open Coast Location' – or a coastal erosion 'hotspot', and we have welcomed the NSW Government's recent approval of grant funding for emergency works.

City of Newcastle also welcomes news that the NSW Government is open to expediting approval of the Coastal Management Program, as well as their active consideration of offshore sand dredging for renourishment and replenishment of Stockton Beach.

City of Newcastle notes that to date, the Commonwealth Government has not provided any assistance to address coastal erosion at Stockton Beach.

With erosion incidents increasing rapidly over recent years, and coastal erosion exacerbated more acutely over the past weeks and months at Stockton, the City of Newcastle believes it is imperative that both the NSW and Federal Government's provide urgent assistance towards a long-term solution for coastal erosion at Stockton Beach.

#### **h. John Hunter Health and Innovation Project**

The John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct is listed on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List. The precinct was identified as an opportunity to better integrate health, education, research, community services and infrastructure. The NSW Government committed to Stage 1 funding worth \$780 million in the 2019/20 State Budget. CN advocates for the State Government to commit to the full funding envelope of Stage 2 in the 2022/23 budget worth approximately \$800 million.

The following vision has been developed for the precinct:

*"We are building on our history of innovation, tenacity and community strength to create an environmentally sustainable, world class health, research and education precinct in one of the greatest regions in the world. John Hunter Health & Innovation Precinct will be the heart of an ecosystem that brings together partners who share our vision of wellbeing for our communities and prosperity for our region."*

The precinct will enable opportunities to partner to solve challenges and develop solutions in all health relevant domains including therapeutics, med-tech, digital health, built environment & sustainability, operations, logistics and processes.

Commitment of the full funding requirement for the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct will ensure optimal health outcomes for community in services quality and capacity. It will also ensure realisation of the vision in leveraging opportunity for both industry and parallel health provider co-location and collaboration, in turn driving innovation and regional economic growth.

In addition, the development of this precinct will stimulate investment in the surrounding local centres and neighbourhoods, where investment in key worker housing will be required.

#### **i. Expansion of Newcastle Light Rail**

Delivery of the 2.7km Newcastle light rail system is the starting point of a broader network connecting the Greater Newcastle region.

The City of Newcastle believes this should be the first step towards creating an expanded and integrated light rail network linking the city centre with suburban hubs and key infrastructure.

Park and ride, and end of trip facilities should be incorporated into each node, to better deliver this integrated transport solution.

We continue to believe that NSW Government should work with City of Newcastle to ensure that zoning corridors for the expansion of Newcastle Light Rail is undertaken.

The City of Newcastle wants the expanded corridors to augment the initial Wickham to east end route, by including these Greater Newcastle destinations:

- Broadmeadow
- McDonald Jones Stadium
- Adamstown
- Mayfield
- John Hunter Hospital
- University of Newcastle
- Glendale o Bathers Way
- Newcastle Airport

#### **j. Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

Transport for NSW continue to assess options for the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor which will enable a future dedicated freight rail line to be constructed between Fassifern and Hexham; bypassing Newcastle while improving regional and interstate links.

City of Newcastle has previously called for the feasibility study to be expedited to reduce the delivery time of the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor, which is one of the only viable ways to take freight trains off main arterials, including at Adamstown and Hamilton North.

We continue to call on the NSW Government to prioritise this project.

We have recently asked Infrastructure Australia to consider this project for the 2020 Infrastructure Australia Priority List and would also welcome Commonwealth Government support for this important project.

It is noted that Transport for NSW's website advise that the government is currently undertaking preliminary investigations to assess options for the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor rail line.

#### **k. Affordable Housing initiatives**

Previously, former Premier Gladys Berejiklian said that housing affordability was "the biggest issue people have across the state".

The shortage and rising costs of rental properties and affordable home ownership are having significant social and economic impacts in cities and towns across Australia, including rural and regional communities. This is due to a range of factors including changes to recent

migration patterns, cheap finance and labour and material shortages in the construction sector. The impacts on local governments and communities includes housing stress for individuals and families, difficulty in attracting and housing key workers and an increase in homelessness. Whilst the provision of affordable housing is not a local government responsibility, councils often facilitate affordable housing within their communities, operating within state/territory planning, financial and other legislation requirements. For councils looking to drive a locally led economic recovery and create new jobs in their communities, an appropriate supply and mix of housing to suit diverse community needs is crucial. The housing challenge is different in every community, and the council response is dependent on its financial resources and priorities. Local government also supports a national housing summit as a precursor to the development of a national housing strategy, which includes local government in the national dialogue.

City of Newcastle continues to hold the view that a 25% Affordable Housing Mandate on Government Owned Land should be supported, with Land owned by the Government that is fast-tracked for development having a 25% mandate of Affordable Housing.

Likewise, the City of Newcastle supports the introduction of a 15% Affordable Housing Mandate on privately developed land. 15% of dwellings designated as Affordable Housing will be available for rental or sale to low to moderate income households.

#### **I. Improved mobile telecommunications coverage**

All communities, whether they are in our major capitals or in regional towns, need to be future-ready. COVID-19 has seen a much greater dependence on telecommunications as many people have worked from home and some have moved from our cities to our regions to work remotely. Reliable, high-speed broadband is essential for community resilience as Australians continue the trend of working from home and migrating away from cities. Our agriculture industry also needs fast, affordable, and reliable broadband services and suitable access to digital infrastructure to remain competitive internationally. Access to telehealth and online education has also been critically important during COVID-19 to enable communities to access services while in isolation or when borders have closed. Removing remaining mobile blackspots is vital to allowing remote working arrangements to develop so communities remain sustainable and resilient. Connectivity is also a big part of encouraging people to live, work and invest in regional areas, and it is important that residents and businesses have access to the same level of telecommunications services available in urban areas. ALGA welcomed the announcement of the \$220 million Regional Connectivity Program announced in the 2019 Federal Budget in response to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review, and we are calling for a four-year \$55 million extension of this program.

#### **m. Flood mitigation at Wallsend**

Substantial funding is required to address flood mitigation in Wallsend.

While City of Newcastle is progressing flood upgrades including the recent beginning of the reconstruction of the Tyrrell Street bridge, assistance from the NSW and Commonwealth Government's would expedite the works and deliver a safer Wallsend CBD for the community.

An increase in the Office of Environment and Heritage's Floodplain management grants is required to adequately address flooding risks in Wallsend.

At the Commonwealth level, City of Newcastle is currently ineligible to apply for funding through the Bridges Renewal Program.

City of Newcastle would welcome the opportunity for grant funding to be made available to address flooding in Wallsend.

City of Newcastle would also welcome initiatives to support channel widening throughout the Wallsend CBD, which falls to the responsibility of Hunter Water Corporation.

**n. Diversification of Port of Newcastle**

The NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy and the Draft NSW Freight and Ports Plan identified congestion issues with Port Botany.

Substantial government infrastructure projects are proposed to alleviate this congestion.

However, both documents ignore the underutilised freight capacity that already exists at the Port of Newcastle.

A container terminal at the Port of Newcastle would provide substantial savings to the NSW taxpayer and businesses.

Its inclusion in the NSW Freight and Ports Plan as a complementary option to Port Botany would improve NSW competitiveness compared with other Eastern Australian states.

A Newcastle container terminal would be a complementary option to Port Botany, create genuine competition between the two port operators and allow NSW importers and exporters to choose the most efficient and cost-effective supply chain for their cargo.

Increased competition is beneficial to NSW importers and exporters, consumers and the broader NSW economy.

**o. Waste management and circular economy innovation investment**

**p. Newcastle Interchange Ferry Terminal**

The NSW government's Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan lists new ferry stops in Newcastle as an "initiative for investigation in 10 to 20 years, subject to business case development".

This new Ferry terminal will facilitate interchange with other transport services, particularly at the emerging multi-modal Newcastle Interchange.

The NSW Government recognises that creating new ferry connections will improve the sustainability of our transport system by attracting more customers to using public transport and should be commended for this.

**q. Indexation of Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue**

ALGA budget submission calls for partnership pledge  
Inside Local Government, 8 February 2022

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has used its 2022-23 Federal Pre-Budget Submission to outline a series of partnership opportunities it claims will help drive a strong and inclusive national recovery.

ALGA President, Linda Scott said Australia's 537 local government have the capacity for growing partnerships with the Commonwealth Government – as well as state and territory governments – to support economic and community recovery in every community, improve Australia's transport and community infrastructure, increase local resilience to emergency events and the impacts of climate change, and help build a new circular economy.

"Only local governments can deliver a locally led recovery in every corner of our nation," President Scott said.

"Our local government priorities for the Federal Budget have been independently assessed, and if funded and implemented they would contribute at least \$6.65 billion per year to Australia's Gross Domestic Product and create 44,905 new jobs.

"Councils are offering solutions to achieve a tailored, community-focussed post-COVID economic recovery – from creating jobs to supporting local business to building new community facilities like libraries, community centres, roads, recreation trails and playgrounds."

She said councils had an excellent track record of partnering with the Commonwealth on projects and programs to improve communities and build better lives for all Australians.

"Working together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable Australia on the other side of COVID-19 and ensure that no community is left behind," said President Scott.

The key funding requests in ALGA's 2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission are an initial injection of Financial Assistance Grants worth \$1.3 billion to drive economic recovery across the country, and for the total value of these untied grants to be gradually restored to at least one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

#### **r. Minmi Road upgrade**

An effective road transport network makes possible the rapid movement of goods and people is, self-evidently, an essential requirement of Newcastle's modern economy and the growth the city is experiencing.

The widening of Minmi Road from Wallsend to Fletcher and Minmi is a crucial piece of city infrastructure aimed at alleviating heavy traffic along the main arterial road in the City's growing Western Corridor.

Large housing estates have been approved in this area by previous councils or the NSW Planning Department, without adequate early investment in infrastructure noting the Lord Mayor and Council has worked to fix these historic failings and deliver the infrastructure the community needs.

The upgrades aim to improve connectivity, responding to local growth priorities, and unlocking new housing opportunities as well as economic potential.

Residents have long identified the need to widen Minmi Road and provide two dedicated lanes of traffic to and from our western suburbs to ease the morning and afternoon commute for residents living in Wallsend, Maryland, Fletcher and Minmi.

**s. University of Newcastle STEMM Regional Transformation Hub**

STEMM hub critical to region's transition  
Newcastle Herald, 16 March 2022

The University of Newcastle's proposed STEMM transformation hub continues to be a project in search of funding three years after the project was launched.

Hunter Region schools have some of the fastest growth rates for STEMM subjects – those incorporating the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine. But this needs to be complemented with a specialized regional facility.

The project, which would be the largest capital investment undertaken at the institution and is predicted to create up to 2100 jobs during construction.

Newcastle Labor MP Sharon Claydon said the hub would be an obvious asset to the region's transition to a clean energy economy.

**t. Cottage Creek Upgrades**

**u. Commitment to the establish a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and a Makarrata Commission**

**v. Newcastle to Sydney fast rail**

Labor leader Anthony Albanese pledges \$500m for Sydney-Newcastle fast rail  
ABC Newcastle, 2 January 2022

Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese has used a speech in Newcastle to dangle the prospect of fast rail to voters ahead of the upcoming federal election.

Mr Albanese addressed a gathering of around 100 Labor Party members at Cooks Hill Surf Club on Sunday.

He said a Labor government would "prioritise" fast rail between Sydney and Newcastle as a first step towards high-speed rail.

"If I'm elected prime minister, I want ours to be the first government that actually gets work underway on high-speed rail," he said.

"My vision is for high-speed rail that runs from Brisbane to Melbourne.

"Under a Labor government I lead, the High-Speed Rail Authority will make the corridor from Newcastle to Sydney, which includes stops at the Central Coast, its first priority.

"We'll start with a fast-rail corridor but we'll plan and build for the move to high-speed rail.

"Faster rail would see travel times from Newcastle to Sydney cut to just two hours, and once high-speed rail is up and running, this journey would only take 45 minutes."

Mr Albanese promised that Labor would set aside \$500 million in its first budget to begin corridor acquisition, planning and early works for fast rail.

Business Hunter chief executive Bob Hawes welcomed the announcement, saying it brought the focus on the need for such infrastructure.

"I think COVID has shone a light on this regionalisation of people moving away from capital cities to regional areas," he said.

"There's been enough studies done now to emphasise how important fast rail is for better connectivity.

"I don't think there's any doubt about the benefits, the issue now is that it's a very costly project no matter which way we look at it.

"To get some federal government focus on it and put it higher up the ranking of importance would be welcome from both sides of government."

Mr Hawes was more philosophical about the likelihood of getting high-speed rail in the Hunter region.

"To go to high-speed rail, that's another orbit again," he said.

"The difficulty that the region faces in getting that to stack up against other priorities across the nation is always going to be an interesting exercise.

"But it's one that generally has support from this region so that connectivity between these big markets on the east coast of Australia can be improved."

#### **w. Creation of large-scale Offshore Wind Project**

A renewable energy industry built on large-scale offshore wind farms could unlock billions of dollars in investment and create thousands of jobs in Newcastle, offering a sustainable future for the city.

Speaking at an online event hosted by Friends of the Earth and Climate Council exploring Australia's opportunity in offshore wind, Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said Newcastle was perfectly positioned to embrace this new industry.

"Features that make us one of the largest coal regions also position us perfectly to become a major national and international clean energy player," Cr Nelmes said.

"This includes a highly skilled workforce, our accessibility to the National Energy Grid and the untapped potential of the Port of Newcastle to become an export hub for 'green' manufactured resources and materials such as green steel and hydrogen.

"This industry offers many benefits, but its development must be done with guarantees in place that it would preference the employment of local workers and use of local materials for the benefit of our communities."

The forum heard from representatives from the energy industry and the Maritime Union of Australia to explore broader issues and long-term actions around the development of offshore wind as submissions are received on the Australian Parliament's Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Bill.

Offshore wind farms have been developed globally for almost 30 years as a viable source of renewable energy.

A number of sites around Australia have been identified for possible offshore wind farms, including two potential projects off the coast of Newcastle.

Cr Nelmes said this industry has the potential to deliver a host of benefits for the state and our region, but was mindful of the need for measures to be put in place to protect and deliver local jobs.

"City of Newcastle has a long history of supporting and implementing renewable energy projects, including becoming the first local government in NSW to move to 100 per cent renewable electricity," Cr Nelmes said.

"With the correct legislative and regulatory framework, offshore wind along the coast of Newcastle has the potential to play a significant role in sustaining our state's future energy needs, could unlock billions in new investment in renewable energy infrastructure and provide a significant boost to the local economy."

#### **x. Rebuild Australia's Strategic Fleet**

Labor's plan for a Strategic Fleet ([anthonyalbanese.com.au](http://anthonyalbanese.com.au))

An Albanese Labor Government will enhance Australia's economic sovereignty and national security by creating a Maritime Strategic Fleet to secure our access to fuel supplies and other critical resources, even in times of global instability.

These vessels will be Australian flagged and Australian crewed.

We expect the vessels will be privately owned and operate on a commercial basis, they will be available for requisition by the Defence Forces in times of national need, whether that be natural disaster or times of conflict.

As a first step towards establishing a strategic fleet, an incoming Albanese Labor Government will appoint a Taskforce to guide it on the establishment of the Fleet as quickly as possible. The Fleet is likely to include up to a dozen vessels including tankers, cargo, container and roll-on-roll-off vessels.

This Taskforce will include representatives from the shipping industry, major charterers, unions, Australian business representatives and the Department of Defence.

An Albanese Labor government will act immediately to close loopholes in the existing regulatory framework to help rebuild Australian shipping. The Taskforce will also advise on how best to enforce existing coastal shipping laws and what legislative or regulatory reforms are necessary to reinvigorate Australian shipping.

## **y. Restore GP Access After Hours Funding**

Federal government passes buck on GP Access funding  
Newcastle Herald, 24 November 2021

The federal government has refused to commit extra funding to save GP Access After Hours from the closure of its Mater Hospital clinic and reduced hours of others in response to a request from Newcastle MP Sharon Claydon.

In a letter to Ms Claydon, Health Minister Greg's Hunt's Chief of Staff said Hunter Primary Care, which runs GP Access After Hours, should write to the NSW government on the matter as it had reduced its funding contribution to the clinics since 2020-21.

Hunter Primary Care recently confirmed the GP Access clinic at the Calvary Mater will shut from December 24, while clinics at Belmont, Maitland and John Hunter hospitals and Westlakes Community Health Centre will have hours reduced.

The letter said there had been a "reported drop in demand for services at the GP Access clinics" and patients could access other GP Access clinics, Newcastle After Hours Medical Service and the mobile medic service.

"Additional telehealth appointments will also be available under a model implemented in 2020 by Hunter Primary Care, with funding from the PHN (Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network), which has been well received by the community," it said.

Ms Claydon said these weren't adequate solutions and the letter was "an exercise in pointing fingers".

"This Liberal Government is so clearly caught up in their Canberra bubble that they think the solution to the closure of the GPAAH clinic at the Calvary Mater Hospital is as easy as telling the tens of thousands of people who use the service annually, to just move-on to the next available clinic," she said.

"As another 'quick-fix', the letter also directs families to use telehealth services or attend private practices... with no regard for the constraints and up-front costs of using these services.

"Local GPs are already warning us about the inadequacy of the Medicare rebates to cover the cost of Telehealth. They don't have any certainty that telehealth is going to continue and that it's viable in the long-term.

"This pathetic response is nothing more than a slap in the face to the 11,100 people who have signed my petition to say hands-off our GPAAH service."

## **z. Arts & Cultural Package (including Newcastle After Dark, Live & Local expansion)**

### **aa. Local Government Natural Disaster Mitigation Fund**

Australia has been profoundly impacted by natural disasters in the past few years, and the impacts of climate change will result in more frequent and more severe disasters in the future. Communities need support to take preventative mitigation measures to limit the severity of disasters, as well as appropriate and adequate support to recover from these events. Natural

disasters have claimed many lives and impacted hundreds of thousands of people. Less than five percent of disaster funding in Australia goes towards mitigation and community resilience measures. This figure needs to rise to ensure that communities – particularly those where exposure to fires and floods is greatest – are better prepared for climate change. Protecting communities from the impacts of bushfires, floods, and sea-level rise – and helping them adapt to climate change – are priorities for local government, but we could do more with additional mitigation funding from the Commonwealth. Not only does effective disaster mitigation reduce Commonwealth and state and territory expenditure on recovery after an event, but it is also important in reducing the risks faced by communities and preparing for increased future risks.

#### **bb. Adaptation and mitigation to address climate change**

City of Newcastle has developed the Newcastle Climate Action Plan (2021-2025) which outlines our plan for meeting our commitment to, by no later than 2030, reach net zero emissions for our operations.

It is critical that communities are prepared for the impacts of climate change and adopt complementary strategies for reducing (mitigation) and managing (adaptation) these impacts.

Local governments and their communities are on the frontline when dealing with the risks and impacts of climate change. Councils need to prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change (through adaptation) and play a significant role in reducing Australia's carbon footprint by mitigating the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from their assets and supporting emission reduction efforts by their local communities. They need to work with their communities to transition them to a low carbon future.

To achieve City of Newcastle's goals, our Climate Action Plan is structured around four key themes for reducing emissions:

- 100% renewable energy supply
- Zero emissions transport
- Best practice energy, water and waste
- Reduce emissions supply chains

To achieve our ambitious targets, funding from the Federal Government would assist the City of Newcastle reduce our electricity and liquid fuel consumption as well as fast tracking initiatives to further reduce our carbon emissions.

#### **cc. Active Hub Program**

- i. Beresfield
- ii. Adamstown/Kotara
- iii. Bar Beach
- iv. Mayfield
- v. Wallsend Active Hub & Swimming Centre

#### **dd. Local Centres Program**

The Local Centres Public Domain Program guides upgrades of local and neighbourhood centres throughout the Newcastle Local Government Area. We aim to improve the quality of these centres, which play an important role in the community and local economy.

Local centres are zoned B2, and neighbourhood centres are zoned B1 under the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012. To avoid confusion, we refer to both local and neighbourhood centres as "local centres" in our communications with the community.

Our Public Domain Plan for each centre aims to improve the streetscape and access, and also improve traffic and safety. Our upgrades often include improvements to footpaths, planting trees and installing new street furniture.

- i. Orchardtown Road
- ii. Wallsend Stage 3A & 3B
- iii. Mayfield Local Centre
- iv. Georgetown Local Centre
- v. Waratah Local Centre
- vi. East End Public Domain Stage 1 & 2
- vii. Wood Street Centre

**ee. Parks, Playgrounds, Pathways:**

i. Bathers Way

The Bathers Way is a continuous path which links our iconic beaches of Merewether, Dixon Park, Bar Beach, Newcastle and Nobbys and is a flagship project of our Coastal Revitalisation program. The next phase includes constructions and renewal along Newcastle Beach, as well as designing its extension through King Edward Park.

ii. City Centre to Merewether Cycleway, Stage 2

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

iv. Newcastle East End Streetscapes Upgrades and Cycleway

The vision is for the East End Village to reinstate Hunter Street as a traditional high street and an attractive destination for locals and visitors, with outdoor dining and boutique retail opportunities. It also complements Iris Capital's current redevelopment of the David Jones building and other nearby projects.

Future phases of the project could include upgrades on Thorn Street, Laing Street, Keightley Street and Market Street, as well as more changes along Hunter Street. We are also investigating a Melbourne laneway-style development closing Keightley Street to through traffic. Plans for the development of the Harbour to Cathedral View Corridor linking the Christ Church Cathedral to Newcastle Harbour, may also inform future works.

v. Cycleway connections with Link Road upgrade

vi. Maitland Road rail line cycleway crossing upgrades

vii. Active Transport Infrastructure Program

At present, the overwhelming majority of trips in Newcastle are made by private vehicles, yet the average trip distances, for vehicle driver and vehicle passenger, are seven kilometres and five kilometres respectively.

More than 80% of trips in the Newcastle local government area are less than 10km and approximately 40% less than 2 kilometres.

Newcastle's gentle topography and pleasant climate mean that with the right infrastructure, many of these trips could readily be substituted by walking and cycling.

Implementation of a safe, connected active transport network throughout Newcastle, that links key attractors and nodes, will make active transport a convenient, if not preferred choice for short trips, thereby realising significant health benefits and ameliorating the economic costs of physical inactivity.

viii. National Park Cycleway

ix. Gregson Park Masterplan implementation

Implementation of the recently adopted Gregson Park Masterplan includes a larger inclusive playspace in its existing location with nature play, water play and small yarning circle, a new community shelter on the former bowling club site, improved connective footpaths, trees and shaded seating areas.

x. Creek Road Masterplan implementation

The proposed facility is aimed at providing infrastructure for higher quality activities and experiences for people living within the Western Corridor precinct. Both active and passive open spaces will be considered to meet the relevant needs of the population and best practice requirements.

xi. Local Playground Disability Inclusion & Accessibility

While City of Newcastle welcomes the NSW Government's Everyone Can Play guidelines, which aims to assist designers to create inclusive play spaces, a funding commitment from the NSW and Commonwealth Governments is essential to assist in upgrading existing playgrounds and ensuring that future playgrounds are inclusive for all Novocastrians.

xii. Variety Livvi's Place, Newcastle Foreshore

A new regional level inclusive playspace and integrated waterplay area, picnic and BBQ lawn areas, landscaping, trees and shade, and new amenities (including 'changing places') and kiosk.