

7.1 LMM 27/08/2024 - EMPOWERING NEWCASTLE EVENT SERIES

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes the success of City of Newcastle's *Empowering Newcastle* event series.
2. Acknowledges that the event series attracted approximately 1,500 participants, both from Newcastle and across the region, to engage on the Hunter's renewable energy transformation, and the electrification of our buildings and transport for a net zero future.
3. Thanks NSW Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Heritage, the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, Dr. Saul Griffith and representatives from a host of stakeholders, including Transport for NSW, the University of Newcastle, Business Hunter, Port of Newcastle, EnergyCo and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, for participating in the event series, along with our dedicated City of Newcastle staff.
4. Welcomes the launch of the Empowering Newcastle community climate action program, which will support residents, businesses, and community groups to switch to renewable energy, electrify and create a net zero future, and which will begin with a community information session at City Hall on Thursday, 19 September 2024.
5. Acknowledges that our Newcastle Environment Strategy (NES) has placed City of Newcastle as a regional leader in taking action to transition our city to net zero emissions by 2040, following our declaration of a climate emergency, our formal commitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement, and City of Newcastle being the first Council in NSW to transition to 100% renewable electricity for its operations.
6. Notes that City of Newcastle will continue to engage with all levels of government, industry, business, the community and households on climate change action, nature-based solutions and the circular economy, as we deliver our road map to achieving a sustainable Newcastle through the NES.

BACKGROUND

More than 1,500 Novocastrians have plugged into the Hunter's renewable energy future after being given front-row access by City of Newcastle to key thinkers, stakeholders and decision-makers.

The three-part Empowering Newcastle event series, which wrapped up on Saturday with a keynote address by NSW Climate Change and Environment Minister Penny Sharpe, has been a lightning rod for ideas and dialogue about renewables, electrification and the road to net zero.

Earlier events included an Electrify Everything presentation by world renowned entrepreneur Saul Griffith and a stakeholder roundtable discussing a transition to electric vehicles and low emissions transport in Newcastle.



Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes and NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe at City Hall for the Empowering Newcastle series

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the series has been a hit with Novocastrians seeking to take an active part in a more sustainable future for their city.

"There's been a buzz around Empowering Newcastle from the opening event with Dr Griffith. It was fantastic to be in a room engaging in practical electrification solutions that align perfectly with our city's climate goals," Cr Nelmes said.

"When you add the invaluable engagement with Minister Sharpe in a wide-ranging energy discussion I was proud to take part in, City of Newcastle has delivered a fantastic series that's put the community into the policy and delivery conversation with all levels of government.

"I was also thrilled to launch City of Newcastle's Empowering Newcastle community climate action program, which will support more residents, businesses, and community groups to create a net zero future."

The first phase of this new community climate action program will offer a range of online resources to help participants become more energy efficient, switch to renewable energy and electrify.

This will be followed by a free Climate Champions training program to run early next year, which will equip emerging local climate leaders with the knowledge and skills to deliver community-led electrification campaigns and projects.

Applications for this training program will open soon, with a community information session to be held at City Hall on 19 September.

Empowering Newcastle is a key action of City of Newcastle's Environment Strategy, which sets out a 10-year environmental roadmap around the priority areas of climate change, nature-based solutions and the circular economy.

