

Newcastle Ocean Baths Survey

Preliminary Report

BACKGROUND

Following Council's resolution to seek expressions of interest for redevelopment of the Newcastle Ocean Baths site, a survey was undertaken to gauge community preferences for proposed use of the site.

WHAT DID WE ASK?

A short questionnaire was compiled with closed and open ended questions exploring:

- current usage of the site
- recommended improvements
- preferred commercial opportunities.

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

A total of 1,166 Newcastle Voice members from across the Newcastle local government area (LGA) were invited to take part in the online survey. A further 150 Newcastle Voice members not residing in the LGA were also invited. Members of the broad community were able to participate via intercept surveys conducted at the baths and also via a survey link on Councils website.

HOW MANY COMPLETED THE SURVEY?

In total, 506 Newcastle Voice members and 44 members of the broad community completed the survey. Response rates for Newcastle Voice members by location are shown below:

Sample	Invited to survey	Completed survey	Response Rate
Ward 1	300	149	49.7%
Ward 2	300	134	44.7%
Ward 3	300	118	39.3%
Ward 4	266	80	30.1%
Out of area	150	25	16.7%

WHEN WAS THE SURVEY?

The survey was open from Friday 29 August to Sunday 7 September 2014.

KEY FINDINGS

Top 5 recommended improvements

Rank	Newcastle Voice	Broad community
1	More shade / shelter (66%)	Toilets (58%)
2	Toilets (61%)	More shade / shelter (53%)
3	Bubblers / taps (57%)	Seating (53%)
4	Seating (53%)	Vehicle access and movement (47%)
5	Showers (51%)	Showers (47%)

Top 5 commercial operations

Rank	Newcastle Voice	Broad community
1	Café (74%)	Café (77%)
2	Kiosk (59%)	Kiosk (55%)
3	Restaurant (32%)	Restaurant (41%)
4	Small bar (23%)	Small bar (36%)
5	Health & wellbeing (19%)	Function centre (27%)

20% of Newcastle Voice members and 9% of the broad community members surveyed indicated they would like to retain the area as community space only.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Proposals should aim to improve shade/shelter and seating for community use, as well as improved amenities and the availability of bubblers.
- The community are receptive to having a café, kiosk or restaurant in this location.
- Ensure the community are informed and consulted throughout the development process.

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TOP 5 THEMES IN RESPONDENT COMMENTS

At the end of the survey respondents were able to leave additional comments about the Newcastle Ocean Baths expressions of interest in an open ended question. The top five themes noted by respondents were:

1 Public access and use should not be compromised

Noted by 32.2% of respondents who left a comment

"The area needs to remain accessible by the community. A restaurant or café in part of the area makes commercial sense but the use of the baths and the forecourt must remain open to the public... A balance approach is required."

"When planning, don't lose sight of the fact that its main function is that of a community facility and that no commercial operation should restrict access."

2 Ensure adequate parking / parking concerns

Noted by 17.3% of respondents who left a comment

"More car spaces are needed."

"Adequate parking for whatever development is proposed."

3 Café / kiosk

Noted by 13.9% of respondents who left a comment

"A good cafe where friends can socialise after swimming."

"A decent cafe that can serve take away as well as suitable light meals in a sit down space is all that is needed."

=4 Support development / revitalisation

Noted by 10.6% of respondents who left a comment

"A wonderful community asset that is under utilised, but a refurbishment would certainly increase community participation."

"Improvement projects is what Newcastle requires."

=4 Do not support development / revitalisation

Noted by 10.6% of respondents who left a comment

"I like this as a community area. Only things which would enhance everyday functionality would be of interest to me. NOT function centres etc. It is a lovely site which doesn't really need any thing else."

"I do not support any commercial use or redevelopment of the facilities. It's a community swimming baths and that needs to remain as the focus for any use of the infrastructure and broader site."