

Community and Culture
Advisory Committee

Annual Report

2023



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City of
Newcastle



Foreword from the Chair

Newcastle continues to create a vibrant and active city for residents and visitors to enjoy through its strategy to attract, develop and host cultural and major events. This year, a 5-year commitment to our New Annual Arts festival was endorsed to deliver a peak platform for arts and culture investment.

Further support and commitment to ongoing Major Events was endorsed to secure new major events in Newcastle, as a central pillar of our visitor economy with a priority of accessible tourism as part of our Destination Management Plan to ensure universally accessible experiences for every person, for every event.

The city has worked closely with Venues NSW to attract signature events to the city which has resulted international acts performing at McDonald Jones Stadium with concerts by Elton John and Paul McCartney in 2023 and Pink in 2024.

Major music events like these have proven their value to Newcastle, with Elton John's visit injecting more than \$14 million into the local economy while Pink's concert being forecast at the time of writing to deliver another \$9 million economic windfall for the city. Ongoing investment in events and tourism is integral to building a thriving, diverse and robust economy.

Civic Theatre also presented *Come from Away* and *The Rocky Horror Show* to audiences of more than 30,000 theatregoers. The successful seasons of both shows demonstrates there is a huge demand in the market for top quality Broadway and West End productions in Newcastle.

A key driver and objective of the Community and Culture Advisory Committee is the ongoing relationships and genuine and meaningful engagement that is occurring within all our diverse communities including Mosaic Multicultural Connections and Newcastle Pride. The diversity of the guests to the committee meetings continues to grow and to result in rich inclusion and engagement opportunities between CN and community.

With major events alongside our New Annual Cultural Festival being such a clear economic driver for our city and the city attracting such high calibre shows, the arts and cultural experiences continue to provide a significant drawcard that delivers considerable benefits for Newcastle's visitor economy.

Special thanks to the Committee's stakeholder members who have provided valuable presentations and insights throughout the year. Stakeholder participation and input is critical to achieving outcomes for the local Newcastle community and wider region and allows for stakeholders to work in collaboration.

A summary of key items of business were discussed of which are detailed in the below report.

I'd like to pass on sincere thanks to all Committee members and guests for their time and effort to ensure a significant contribution to the development of Arts and Culture within the community. It's a privilege and a joy.

Cr Carol Duncan
Chair

Membership



Lord Mayor
Cr Nuatali Nelmes



Cr Carol Duncan
Chair



Cr Margaret Wood
Deputy Chair



Cr Jenny Barrie
Councillor Member

Dr Ann Hardy, University of Newcastle - Stakeholder Member

Dr Shane Bransdon - Community Member

Janice Musumeci - Community Member

Jasmine Fletcher - Community Member

Anna Hombsch - Community Member

Objective of the committee

To provide advice and guidance on the development of strategies, and identification of challenges and opportunities, in relation to cultural planning, arts and cultural opportunities, community pride and local identity, and community involvement which encourages a sense of belonging within the LGA.

Summary of key items of business considered

DATE OF MEETING	BUSINESS ITEM
7 February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Performance - Annual Performance Report - Strategic Focus Areas for 2023 Omega Ensemble Whale Chorus Theatre New Annual Come From Away Newcastle 500 Newcastle Destination Management Plan - Creative Industries Economic Development Event - Show of Pride as Newcastle supports celebration of diversity and inclusion
4 April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report by Committee Facilitator - Council Code of Meeting Practice Prayer Component Newcastle Fringe update Newcastle Creative Fibre Hub - This is Not Art (TiNA) - Potential guest presenters - Newcastle Pride
1 August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count Us In 2023 New Annual Mosaic Cultural Connections NSW Government - Arts, Cultural & Creative Industries Policy Growing the Culture - Hamilton Business Association, Art Thinking installation - James St Plaza - DEAD TONGUE by Christian Thompson AO final weekend of project
6 November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcastle Pride Minecrafting Newcastle Civic Theatre Subscription + Playhouse Programming- Accessible Festivals and Events - Museum Archive Libraries & Learning (MALL) Programming



Dead Tongue (2015) by Dr Christian Thompson AO, Art Thinking, James St Plaza

Summary of key achievements



New Annual

City of Newcastle's flagship arts and culture festival New Annual cemented its place on the events calendar, attracting 95,000 visitors across its first three years and marking a significant milestone in Newcastle's growth and identity, demonstrating commitment to the arts and ability to deliver large-scale, multi event festivals.

During the past three years an investment was made of more than \$3 million into developing and delivering our flagship festival as part of our wider commitment to arts and culture in our city including support through a range of grants and sponsorship programs.

New Annual has become a catalyst for Newcastle's cultural events sector to take centre stage alongside leading national events, cementing Newcastle as a creative city where exciting, ambitious and accessible contemporary art and culture grows and thrives.

With local artists and performers accounting for more than 60 per cent of the most recent festivals programming, New Annual also provides a high-profile platform for Novocastrians to showcase their talents alongside leading national and internationally renowned practitioners. The city is thrilled that locals and visitors have firmly embraced New Annual, which continues to provide an important boost for Newcastle's recovering creative arts and live music sectors.

Up to 1,500 visiting and local artists and performers have been involved in New Annual throughout its first three years, delivering a diverse program of dance, circus, visual art, music, and theatre that has proven incredibly popular with audiences across each festival.

The 2023 event included eight sold-out shows and seasons, including two captivating performances by world-renowned Circa Contemporary Circus within the iconic Christ Church Cathedral. The program celebrated the depth of talent in Newcastle's thriving cultural and arts sector, with City of Newcastle's 'Made New' expression of interest process delivering innovative productions and unexpected performance spaces. This included the stunning new dance production *Rhapsody*, which was performed by Catapult Dance Choreographic Hub on the fifth floor of an inner-city car park, as well as a ground-breaking AI-driven interactive theatre experience by The Parallel Effect and the debut of hilarious Newcastle-based play, *Spewy*, by Novocastrian-born playwright Ang Collins at Earp Distilling Co.

Elton John

The sun may have gone down on Sir Elton John's first and last Newcastle tour, but local tourism and hospitality operators revelled in the wake of the event's success.

Large crowds flocked to McDonald Jones Stadium for two concerts for the first stop on the Australian leg of the mega-star's Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour, injecting more than \$14 million into the local visitor economy.

Of the more than 50,000 tickets sold for two performances, 11,000 tickets were purchased by visitors from outside Newcastle, 2,000 from interstate and more than 120 by international visitors.

The city was buzzing after Sir Elton John's two performances that shone a spotlight on Newcastle and elevated its status as a national events destination. With Sir Elton John performing in our city for the first-time on his Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour attracting headline acts of this calibre is a testament to Newcastle's growth as a world-class event city and indicative of our maturing local economy.

Paul McCartney

Almost 30,000 fans packed McDonald Jones Stadium to watch Paul McCartney's historic first concert outside an Australian capital city in October 2023.

The show, which was secured as part of City of Newcastle's Major Events Partnership with Venues NSW, injected an estimated \$9 million into the local economy with the capacity crowd booking out accommodation across the city.

Accommodation providers were similarly inundated with bookings to coincide with Paul McCartney's concert, reaffirming the essential role major events play in boosting tourism, as well as encouraging repeat visitation in the future.

The former Beatle and Wings frontman also shone a spotlight on the tourism potential of events, asking the crowd during his show who had travelled from outside of Newcastle and surrounding areas. The cheer from visitors from beyond was by far the most rapturous within the stadium. "Well, on behalf of the tourist board we welcome you," McCartney said.



Elton John, McDonald Jones Stadium



Paul McCartney, McDonald Jones Stadium



Supercars Newcastle 500

Major Events

Council's commitment to attracting and hosting major events in line with its Destination Management Plan 2021-2025 was reaffirmed in November 2023 noting the key role the Newcastle 500 played in attracting significantly more major events, including those with international reach, to the city.

The Newcastle 500 was the first major, multi-day, international event hosted by Newcastle and led to the city cementing its reputation as a premier tourism and major events destination. Since the inaugural Newcastle 500 in 2017, Newcastle has played host to a suite of significant events including Van Gogh Alive, the AFC Asian Cup, Oceania Super Moto, Elton John and Paul McCartney concerts and a number of international women's football matches including the record-breaking Matildas clash with Brazil. Together with the Supercars events, these have been attended by almost one million people.

City of Newcastle is now regularly approached by event promoters about potential major and major events, and we look forward to securing new and exciting events for our community and as a key economic and tourism driver for the region.

A full list of the major events attended by hundreds of thousands of locals and intrastate, interstate and international visitors during the last six years, includes:

Supercars Newcastle 500 (2017-2023)	Van Gogh Alive Exhibition (2022)
Australian Matildas fixtures (2017, 2018, 2021, 2023)	Australian Diamonds vs England Netball match (2022)
Oceania Supermoto Championships (2018, 2022, 2023)	Come From Away Musical (2023)
NSW Waratahs Super Rugby match (2019, 2020)	Elton John Concerts (2023)
Australian Wallabies Rugby Union Test match (2020)	Paul McCartney Concert (2023)
Argentina Pumas vs New Zealand All Blacks Rugby Union Test match (2020)	RAAF Air Show (2023)
Mens World Hockey Masters (2021)	The Rocky Horror Show Musical (2024)
New Annual Arts Festival (2021, 2022, 2023)	Pink Concert (2024)
World Surf League Newcastle Cup (2021)	

Foreshore Park was also identified Camp Shortland, as Newcastle's premier major event space in line with the adopted Foreshore Plan of Management with a further commitment to securing new major events in Newcastle, as a central pillar of our visitor economy.

Prioritisation for Major Event accessible tourism as part of our Destination Management Plan has also been a focus to ensure universally accessible experiences for every person, for every event.



Matildas Live Site, Wheeler Place

Come from Away

Come From Away swept audiences to their feet for a standing ovation after all 23 shows. More than 21,500 theatregoers attended from across the Hunter and beyond, who flocked to the Civic Theatre during *Come From Away*'s three-week extended run to share in the incredible real-life story of the 7,000 air passengers from around the world who were grounded in Newfoundland Canada in the wake of 9/11.

Come From Away has impressed theatregoers during its Newcastle debut and whet the city's appetite for more musical theatre already proven on Broadway.

Newcastle waited 30 years to see the return of a professional Broadway production and *Come From Away* was well worth the wait attracting a professional Broadway production of this calibre is a testament to Newcastle's growth as a world-class cultural city and indicative of our thriving live performing arts scene.

Of the more than 21,500 theatregoers, almost 50 per cent of tickets were purchased by visitors outside of Newcastle and the Hunter, from intrastate destinations like Narrabri and Bellingen to interstate destinations like Tasmania, delivering a ripple effect to accommodation providers, local businesses and the wider visitor economy.

The Rocky Horror Show

Newcastle theatregoers rose to their feet to perform one final 'Time Warp' and a standing ovation as the curtains went down on *The Rocky Horror Show*'s record-breaking season at the Civic Theatre.

More than 30,000 theatregoers, hailing from every state in Australia, travelled to Newcastle to experience one of the world's most popular rock and roll musicals, which wrapped up a three-week season in the city yesterday.

Starring Australian superstar Jason Donovan as Frank N Furter and Myf Warhurst as the Narrator, *The Rocky Horror Show* is the most successful production ever staged at the Civic Theatre and the first in a new line-up of world class productions brought to Newcastle by leading British theatre producer Sir Howard Panter of Trafalgar Entertainment.

More than 60 per cent of tickets were purchased by visitors outside of Newcastle, delivering a ripple effect to accommodation providers, local businesses and the wider visitor economy.



Come From Away

Summary of performance and governance

Date of Meeting	Quorum achieved	Members in attendance	Agenda circulated to members and published on CN's website	Declaration of conflicts of interest listed as agenda item	Minutes circulated to members, adopted by the committee and published on CN's website
7 February	Quorate	Cr Carol Duncan - Chairperson Cr Margaret Wood - Deputy Chairperson Cr Jenny Barrie - Councillor Member Dr Shane Bransdon - Community Member Janice Musumeci - Community Member Anna Hombsch - Community Member	Yes	Yes	Yes
4 April	Quorate	Cr Carol Duncan - Chairperson Cr Jenny Barrie - Councillor Member Dr Ann Hardy - Stakeholder Member Dr Shane Bransdon - Community Member	Yes	Yes	Yes
1 August	Quorate	Cr Carol Duncan - Chairperson Cr Margaret Wood - Deputy Chairperson Cr Jenny Barrie - Councillor Member Dr Shane Bransdon - Community Member Janice Musumeci - Community Member Anna Hombsch - Community Member	Yes	Yes	Yes
6 November	Quorate	Cr Carol Duncan - Councillor Member (Chair) Dr Shane Bransdon - Community Member Janice Musumeci - Community Member Anna Hombsch - Community Member Jasmine Fletcher - Community Member	Yes	Yes	Yes



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