

Colin Jensen, Lead Reviewer, Davidson Business Advisory



Davidson Business Advisory was engaged to provide an impartial evaluation of City of Newcastle's current practices, aiming to enhance performance and maintain the highest standards of public service.

The independent review followed a rigorous process, considering more than 800 public submissions and 260 internal documents.

We carried out 30 one-on-one consultations with staff, the Lord Mayor, councillors and independent members of City of Newcastle's Risk and Audit Committee, and an additional seven interviews with community members to further discuss their submissions.

Every document and submission was considered by the reviewers, assessing them against City of Newcastle's adopted policies, processes and procedures to identify where there was evidence of best practice or opportunities for better practice.

Overall, City of Newcastle was found to be a well-managed and high-performing organisation, with numerous examples of best practice highlighted in the report.

No instances of fraud, corruption, breaches of legislation or maladministration were identified as part of the review.

While some community members may disagree with certain council decisions, including how individual councillors vote on matters, this reflects the democratic process rather than governance failures or misconduct.

However, the findings highlight opportunities for improved communication, greater transparency, and enhanced community engagement to support broader awareness and understanding of council decisions.

The review includes 20 actionable recommendations designed to enhance City of Newcastle's processes, ensure the organisation operates with the highest standards of transparency and accountability, and reinforce public trust in its ability to serve the community effectively.