

# End of Term Report

2017 - 2021



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City of  
Newcastle

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# Welcome



## Acknowledgment

City of Newcastle acknowledges that we operate on the grounds of the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession.

City of Newcastle reiterates its commitment to address disadvantages and attain justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

Smoking ceremony held at the new City Administration Centre building at 12 Stewart Avenue. The ceremony also included; Wakakulang Dance Troupe, Aboriginal catering and a special guest talk by local artist Saretta Fielding.





### A message from our Lord Mayor

The 2017-21 term of Council has seen achievements that City of Newcastle (CN) and the broader community can take pride in along with some of the most significant challenges we've faced in recent history.

By doubling our infrastructure investment, we've built significantly more footpaths, improved roads, and enhanced many of our facilities including parks and sporting facilities, pools and playgrounds. We've completed stage one of the Wallsend flood mitigation program by replacing the Tyrrell Street Bridge, and supported our community through the COVID-19 pandemic. We've also accelerated our investment in open spaces, such as new fenced off-leash dogs parks, and became the first council in NSW to use 100% renewable energy in our operations. We've built 15 new playgrounds, and upgraded local sporting facilities. We've delivered new cycleways, and secured funding for the Newcastle Art Gallery expansion.

As a key local institution, the financial health and sustainability of CN is critical to the City's continued economic growth and provision of essential services to the community. Ensuring our council is financially sustainable has provided the foundation for us to support our community and local businesses throughout the economic and social effects of COVID-19.

This included implementing two phases of our award winning targeted Community and Economic Resilience Program, along with bringing forward infrastructure works to provide local stimulus, creating our largest 12-month investment in the City's history, and generating hundreds of local jobs.

We were able to deliver infrastructure works valued at \$337 million during the four years, with the annual investment increasing from just \$49 million in 2015 to \$102 million last financial year. The true value of these numbers lies in the benefits the projects funded are now delivering for the community.

In 2016, we commenced the popular Local Centres Program, to provide liveable and sustainable local

centres that meet community needs. To date investing \$17 million in the completed upgrades to Beresfield, Carrington, Wallsend (Stages 1 and 2), Llewellyn Street Merewether and Joslin Street Kotara and James Street Plaza Hamilton. Currently underway is Mitchell Street Stockton, and Shortland with future projects at Orchardtown Road New Lambton, Waratah and Georgetown, and additional stages of Wallsend Town Centre in the pipeline.

We have also been able to spend time improving the way we service our community, from opening our \$6 million Resource Recovery Centre at Summerhill Waste Management Centre to our new Customer Service Centre, City Administration Centre and Digital Library changing the way our staff work and our community interacts with us, resulting in considerable efficiencies and improved productivity.

From landmark infrastructure projects to local centre upgrades and progress towards flood mitigation in Wallsend, we are improving the amenity, safety, and sense of community across the city. The \$20 million refurbishment of our cherished City Hall was completed in 2021 and officially re-opened by the Governor General.

We have continued to lead the City's advocacy to renew the CBD, upgrade Newcastle Airport, fix Stockton erosion, attract major events, extend the light rail network and support the freight rail bypass, invest in renewable energy, create more affordable housing and advocate for the diversification of the Port to create more jobs in our City.

These are just a few highlights from this term of Council. It has been a privilege serving as Lord Mayor for a second term and on behalf of my fellow councillors, I thank CN's hard-working and dedicated staff and volunteers who are delivering on a shared vision for Newcastle and the region.

**Councillor Nuatali Nelmes**  
Lord Mayor of Newcastle



### A message from our Chief Executive Officer

The End of Term Report provides the opportunity to reflect on the performance of Council, in terms of meeting the expectations of our community and its ratepayers.

During this four year term, it is difficult to not focus on the final year due to the impact caused by the unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic. I could not be more proud of City of Newcastle (CN)'s swift response, via the rollout of a Community and Economic Resilience Package and emergency actions such as working with NSW Police to monitor social distancing and promote safety in public spaces.

We have put people at the centre of driving the city's economic opportunities and recovery from COVID-19 in our new Economic Development Strategy. We aim to strengthen existing and create new economic opportunities for all by investing in people, their skills, networks and investments.

CN's employees have delivered in record ways over the past four years. We have increased our infrastructure spend to an all time high, reduced our complaints to an all time low, improved community satisfaction to a level not previously seen, and rebuilt a level of respect with the elected Council.

We have also continued our leadership in sustainability, and in January 2020, became the first local government in NSW and one of only a handful across the country, to move to 100% renewable energy. Our transformation to a sustainable city will continue under our new Climate Action Plan 2025 and no doubt will be a highlight of our End of year Term report.

The decision to move our Council Administration Centre to Newcastle West included the delivery of our award-winning Digital Library and flexible Council Chamber, along with a fit for purpose Emergency Operations Centre for the city's emergency services to respond to critical incidents like bushfires. It

received an early test during the initial weeks of the lockdown of the city required to control the spread of COVID-19; and passed with flying colours according to local emergency chiefs.

We have maintained our commitment to supporting global change by working towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and through our roles as a United Nations City we will continue to work at the local level to influence global outcomes.

I thank our Councillors, staff and stakeholders for their efforts to ensure Newcastle's growth and development continues in a way that benefits our entire community. Our city's success is the sum of many parts, and CN's result this term is testament to the performance of everyone involved.

**Jeremy Bath**  
Chief Executive Officer



# About this report

This report provides the community with an update on the achievements of the City of Newcastle (CN) from 2017 to 2021.

It outlines progress towards achieving the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) by showcasing key projects delivered and reporting against community indicators.

CN is required under section 428(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (Cth) to provide an End of Term Report (EoTR) as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

## Elected Council



**Cr Nuatali Nelmes**  
Lord Mayor (Labor)



**Cr Emma White**  
(Labor)



**Cr John Mackenzie**  
(Greens)



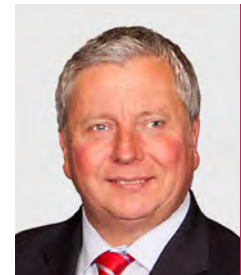
**Cr John Church**  
(Newcastle Independents)



**Cr Carol Duncan**  
(Labor)



**Cr Kath Elliott**  
(Newcastle Independents)



**Cr Brad Luke**  
(Liberal)



**Cr Declan Clausen**  
Deputy Lord Mayor (Labor)



**Cr Andrea Rufo**  
(Newcastle Independents)



**Cr Peta Winney-Baartz**  
(Labor)



**Cr Jason Dunn**  
(Labor)



**Cr Matthew Byrne**  
(Labor)  
(resigned August 2021)



**Cr Allan Robinson**  
(Independent)

# Our community's vision

*We will celebrate our cultural heritage and history, protect our natural environment and support our people to thrive and prosper. As an inclusive community, we will strive for equal rights and access for all. We will face challenges with integrity, innovation and creativity. Support business growth, education and employment opportunities. We will be a leading lifestyle city with vibrant public places and spaces, connected transport networks and responsive built form. This will be achieved within a framework of open and collaborative leadership.*

## Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan Strategic Directions

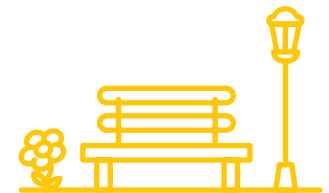
**Integrated and Accessible Transport**



**Protected Environment**



**Vibrant, Safe and Active Public Places**



**Inclusive Community**



**Liveable Built Environment**



**Smart and Innovative**



**Open and Collaborative Leadership**







# Delivering our vision

In delivering the strategic directions and objectives in the CSP, CN plays several roles. For some objectives, we are the direct service provider (for example, library services), and for others we are collaborators or advocates (for example, health, education and public transport).

## Our roles



**Provider** - We provide a range of infrastructure, services, facilities and programs that meet the needs of the community.



**Leader** - We identify key community issues and mobilise both local and external stakeholders to respond where appropriate. We plan and provide direction through policy and practices.



**Collaborator** - We support and partner with community, private and government organisations to deliver tangible benefits to the community.



**Planner** - We use our professional expertise to undertake research, provide information, and in consultation with community stakeholders, develop and evaluate ways to resolve identified issues. We will undertake this work from a whole of community perspective.



**Capacity Builder** - We work with community groups and agencies to meet local needs. We mentor and/or assist community groups to obtain the necessary resources through partnerships with other agencies.



**Advocate** - We give a voice to the community by advocating to achieve benefits and best possible outcomes for Newcastle.



# Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global framework towards a better and more sustainable future for all. They were adopted by Australia along with 193 signatory countries in 2015. CN was officially declared a UN City in 2015 and the SDGs were incorporated into our CSP in 2018.

To ensure we continue to support our community's vision for a smart, liveable and sustainable global city, it is important that we apply this global framework.

These global goals are significant and will take time to achieve, however it is important to recognise the steps we are taking to progress these goals.

Throughout the document CN demonstrates its commitment to the SDGs and highlights some key achievements under each of our strategic directions.





# Our SDGs journey so far

**November 2015**

Newcastle becomes a United Nations City

**November 2018**

New Urban Agenda Conference hosted at City Hall

**August 2019**

Lord Mayor is a panelist at the UN High-level Political Forum in New York

**May 2020**

Hunter Region SDG Task Force is launched, which CN is a key contributor

**July 2020**

CN joins 11 other national and international cities in the SDG Cities Challenge run by University of Melbourne

**March 2021**

CN was awarded the national Banksia Sustainability Award (Banksia Foundation) for participation in the SDGs City Challenge

**July-June 2021**

SDG Working Groups continue local progress towards SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities



# Newcastle at a glance

This report along with the Annual Report, six-monthly performance report and the quarterly report are the key points of accountability between CN and our community.

The EoTR provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of CN during the term of Council.

**Population** has increased by **6,600** people since 2016



**160,707**  
in 2016

↑

**167,363**  
in 2021

**Local jobs**



**102,800**  
in 2016

↑

**103,045**  
in 2021

REMPPLAN COVID-19 trend data

**Value of all DAs submitted**



**\$1.08 billion**  
in 2017-18

↑

**\$1.14 billion**  
in 2020-21

The total value of all DAs submitted includes: refused, rejected, withdrawn and surrendered applications.

**Local businesses**



**12,475**  
in 2015

↑

**14,312**  
in 2019

Economic Development Strategy

**Number of residential houses**



**62,909**  
in 2016

↑

**69,019**  
in 2020

**Median weekly household income**



**\$1,366**  
in 2015

↑

**\$1,398**  
in 2020

**Median house price**



**\$631,500**  
in 2017

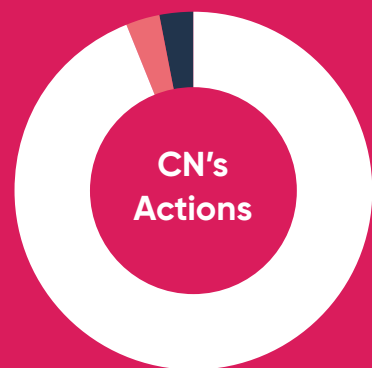
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**\$818,000**  
in 2021

Source data 2016-17 Annual Report, PRD Research Hub, CoreLogic data



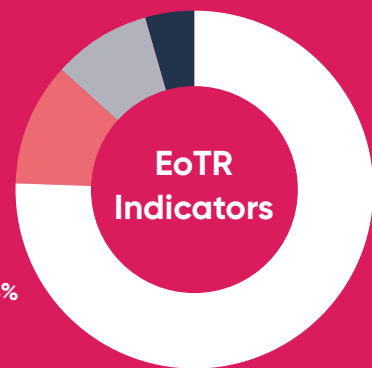
# Reporting on performance



Overall action achievement

Overall indicator achievement

- Towards | 34
  - Stable | 5
  - No data | 2
  - Away | 4
- Towards or stable 85%



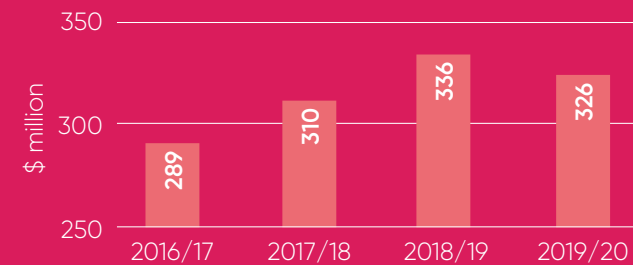
## 5 local centres renewed



- Beresfield
- Merewether, Llewellyn Street
- Carrington, Young Street
- Wallsend (Stages 1 and 2)
- Kotara, Joslin Street
- Hamilton, James Street Plaza

- Others underway:
- Stockton, Mitchell Street
  - Shortland, Sandgate Road
  - New Lambton, Orchardtown Road

## Total income

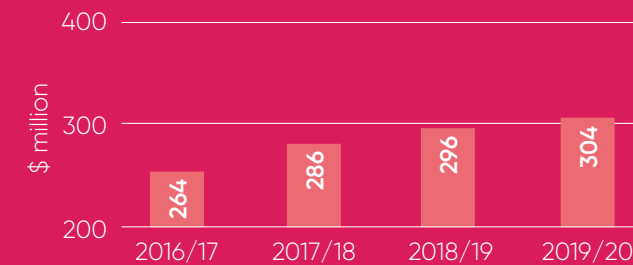


## \$64.4 million on environment



- CN sets 5-year climate action plan
- Resource Recovery Centre diverts over 3,100 tonnes of waste in first year
- 100% renewable energy commenced 1 Jan 2020
- Greater Bank gifts CN more than 20,000 trees
- Trialled first ever driverless vehicle
- Cell 9 development
- 4,500 trees planted
- Stockton Beach Coastal Management Plan adopted

## Total expenditure

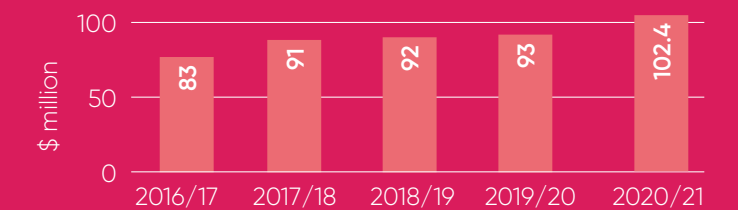


## \$81.4 million on roads and transport



- Tyrrell St Bridge \$3.3 million upgrade complete
- Council Street \$6 million upgrade complete
- Stockton's Mitchell Street \$3.3 million facelift underway
- Elermore Vale footpath upgrades complete
- Parking and cycling 10-year vision gets the green light
- Light rail \$2 million+ trips since opening in 2019

## Total works program expenditure



## Events and celebrations



- 20th Anniversary of Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- 90th Anniversary of City Hall and unveiling of Joy Cummings statue
- Supercars Newcastle 500 - Newcastle's biggest sporting event was held November 2017, 2018 and 2019
- 30th Anniversary of Newcastle earthquake
- Count Us In disability inclusion festival

## Key strategies and plans we have developed



- Economic Development Strategy
- Destination Management Plan
- Cycling Plan
- Parking Plan
- Heritage Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Stockton Coastal Management Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Strategic Sports Plan
- Library Strategy
- Dogs in Open Space Plan

## Sports and recreation



- New \$1.2m inclusive playground completed at Stevenson Park, Mayfield West
- Brickworks Park, Wallsend playground completed
- Rankin Park playground completed \$150,000
- 10-year Strategic Sports Plan adopted
- New community basketball courts in Newcastle West
- Stockton Active Hub

## Major projects



- The City Administration Centre moved to 12 Stewart Avenue, Newcastle West, which includes:
  - New Digital Library
  - New local emergency operations centre
  - New Customer Service Centre
- Dixon Park Surf Club upgrades completed
- Bathers Way upgrade, South Newcastle Beach
- Completion of Newcastle City Hall sandstone restoration
- National Park redevelopment
- Merewether to city centre cycleway
- Street lighting upgrades

# How our community was impacted by COVID-19

## During this term of Council, we've experienced the unprecedented and significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19.

Since a global pandemic was declared in March 2020 by the World Health Organisation, we have responded swiftly to reduce the spread of the virus, by supporting a mobile workforce, moving some activities online, and installing signage at our facilities and open spaces across the city about COVID-19 safety measures. Throughout this time we have continued to deliver essential services to our community.

### Our response to COVID-19

During this term of Council, we've experienced the unprecedented and significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19.

Since the global pandemic was declared in March 2020, we have responded swiftly to help reduce the spread of the virus, by supporting a mobile workforce, moving some activities online, and installing signage at our facilities and open spaces about COVID-19 safety measures. Throughout this time we have continued to deliver essential services to our community.

### How did we respond

In March 2020, a further \$5.5 million investment in our city was adopted by Council. This investment included economic incentives and community support measures. Subsequently, in the 20/21 budget, the capital works program was expanded by \$30 million to create an additional 250 local jobs.

In August 2021, in response to the Delta outbreak, CN extended its Community and Economic Package, through a range of community and economy measures. This included providing \$110,000 in grants to community organisations to improve access to community services, address impacts of social isolation, and increase access to affordable internet, digital technology, and equipment to improve participation in education and access to essential services.

Economic incentives to maximise cashflow for small business and vulnerable residents included:



**Financial hardship interest-free deferred rates**



**Improve payment terms 21 Days to seven**

which provided a \$4.5 million liquidity spike during April



**Rent relief (50%) for CN premises**

we halved the rent paid by tenants in CN owned buildings



**Local procurement**

weighting increased where possible to provide opportunities for local suppliers

The Resilience Package with direct investment in our community included:



**\$800,000**  
Community Grant Program



**\$100,000**  
E-Library expansion  
e-books/e-audio (+70%)  
media streaming (+20%)  
e-paper/magazines (+67%)  
Library App downloads (+233%)



**Online learning (Lynda)**



**Online Training Program**

We engaged three local training providers/tertiary institutions to provide online accreditation to small business owners and their staff



**Lean in Newy launched**

**3,850** downloads and 7,556 challenge participations



**Free parking permits**

for front-line workers to help them respond to emergencies

**City Taskforce** established to provide local leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Made up of **17 key city leaders** from across key sectors. The Taskforce delivered an Industry Response Program providing **\$500,000 in funding**, targeted advocacy actions and a Youth Employment Charter.



## How were our services impacted

Following Public Health Orders from the NSW Government, many of CN services and facilities closed during March and started reopening in July with restrictions in place.



# Measuring progress

A range of community indicators were developed to measure progress towards delivering the CSP. These indicators are measured and compared over time to show trends. Each indicator has a data set that is collected by CN, other government bodies and community-based agencies.

Since the establishment of the community indicators, CN has reviewed service levels and program delivery resulting in some data sources no longer being collected. Other indicators rely on data that is only collected every five years; for example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census collection night was held on 10 August 2021, therefore Census data was not available for this reporting period.

The following sections of this report provide an overview of our progress towards the seven strategic directions outlined in the CSP.

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Progressing towards community outcome



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Progressing towards community outcome (before COVID-19) adjusted result



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Stable



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Moving away from community outcome



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No data for this report period



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**MEAN SCORE:** For several community indicators in the Measuring Progress tables, a score from 1 to 5 is used. This has been converted to an overall average (mean) score. This scale is calculated only for those who responded using the 1 to 5 scale, it does not include non-scale responses.

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The higher the score, the higher the level of agreed satisfaction.

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A satisfaction score of greater than 3 indicates that, on balance, residents were satisfied.

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# Integrated and Accessible Transport

In 2030 our transport networks and services will be well connected and convenient. Walking, cycling and public transport will be viable options for getting around the city.

## Where do we want to be?

Effective and integrated public transport

Linked networks of cycle and pedestrian paths

Safe, reliable and efficient road and parking networks



## Measuring progress

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Improve access to active transport options	How people traveled <b>12%</b> Cycling and walking 2011–12 and 2015–16 average data	
Source: Transport NSW	<b>17%</b> Cycling and walking 2016–17 and 2018–19 average data	
Satisfaction with provision of cycleways	The level of community satisfaction with cycleways <b>3</b> in 2018	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey	<b>3.4</b> in 2021	
Use of public transport in Newcastle (train, bus and ferry)	How people traveled <b>3%</b> in 2017	
Source: Transport NSW	<b>7%</b> in 2019 Public transport usage continues to increase across all three modes.	
Data Source: Household Travel Survey (HTS) – Data by LGA		
Roads in Newcastle LGA are in a good condition	The level of community satisfaction with roads <b>72.9%</b> Good/average in 2017	
Source: CN Financial Statements	<b>71.9%</b> Good/satisfactory in 2020	
Data Source: CN Financial Statements, Special Schedules 2016–2017 and 2019–2020		
Footpaths in Newcastle LGA are in good condition	The level of community satisfaction with footpaths <b>2.6</b> in 2019	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey	<b>3.3</b> in 2021	
Reduce emissions due to use of electric vehicles in Newcastle	The number of registered electric vehicles has increased. <b>625</b> in 2017	
Source: Transport NSW	<b>1,756</b> in 2020	
Data is based on registered vehicles classed as 'other fuel type'		

Parking which enables people to shop, work and access recreation activities

CBD (Honeysuckle, The Foreshore, City West, Civic, City East and Newcastle East).



Source: CN

On-street utilisation showed limited change from 2018 to 2019.

**60%** average

Off-street utilisation

**65–70%** in 2018

More than **80%** in 2019

Higher occupancies were noted in parts of Cooks Hill, Wickham and The Hill.

We aim to maintain occupancy levels between 50% and 75%. Identified issues are to be addressed through implementation of the recently adopted Parking Plan – On the street.

Improved road safety

Numbers of road accidents resulting in death or serious injury have reduced.



Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR)

**109** in 2017

**102** in 2019

## Making progress

### Effective and integrated public transport

#### Newcastle light rail

More than 1.2 million light rail passenger trips were completed since light rail launched in 2019. This exceeded expectations, based on the State Government's projection of 657,000, and saw the number of parking transactions decline by 7% to 916,704 in the second half of 2019, down from 983,392 in the final six months of 2018.

The light rail is a core part of the city's transport network. Almost half of all passengers are using the light rail to connect with bus, ferry or train services.

Opal card data shows an average of 100,000 light rail trips are occurring each month, which translates into fewer cars in the city and 11,000 fewer parking transactions however since COVID-19 we have seen a decline in passenger numbers.



### Linked networks of cycle and pedestrian paths

#### Cycling Plan

Adopted in February 2021, the Cycling Plan – On our bikes, was informed by latest best practice guides, workshops, and the outcomes of a 2020 survey which generated over 2,300 responses.

The Cycling Plan has a strong focus on safety and achieving cycling routes that are physically separated from motorised traffic or achieve a low speed, low volume environment.



#### Cycling education campaign

We continued education and promotion of cycleways. The second phase of the promotion campaign, focusing on the benefits of cycling, was released in 2018. The video, released through social media and television advertising, highlighted health, environmental, economic and social benefits of getting on our bikes. Other activities included Ride2Work Day event, NSW Bike Week breakfast, bike skills classes, photo competition and reprint of our popular Newcastle Cycleways map.



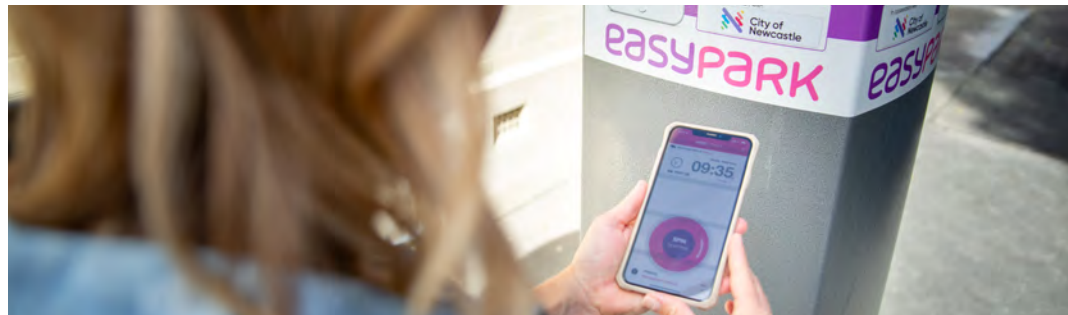
### Safe, reliable and efficient road and parking networks

#### Parking Plan

Adopted in February 2021, the Parking Plan – On the street, recognises the need for better engagement and for transparent, evidence-based decision-making. These were key themes that ran through a series of stakeholder workshops undertaken to inform the new plan. Actions over the short to medium term focus on more efficient utilisation of existing spaces and improving the knowledge base and policy framework for parking decisions.







#### EasyPark parking app

The EasyPark mobile app has been in use for three years, allowing a convenient option for payment of parking.

From its introduction in early 2018, uptake grew steadily month by month. Use of the app accounts for 57% of all paid parking transactions (as at October 2021).

**2,042,221 EasyPark transactions since February 2018**



#### Tyrrell Street Bridge

Construction of Tyrrell Street Bridge marked an important milestone in flood mitigation in Wallsend. This project is part of a multi-million-dollar program of work.

This project saw the demolition of the former smaller and lower structure which was built in 1930. In its place is a 26.6-metre-long, two-span, two-lane concrete plank road bridge, allowing more water to flow to assist drainage.



#### Our roads



**6.2km**  
regional road resurfacing

**1.2km**  
regional road reconstruction



**1.3km**  
laneways reconstructed  
(5 street blocks)



**26.8km**  
local resurfacing (128 street blocks)

**82.7km**  
local road resurfacing  
rejuvenation (539 street blocks)

**8.9km**  
local road resealing (69 street blocks)

**5.1km**  
local roads reconstructed  
(25 street blocks)

(Data from 2016–2017 to 2020–2021)





# Protected Environment

Our unique environment will be understood, maintained and protected.

## Where do we want to be?

Greater efficiency in the use of resources

Our unique natural environment is maintained, enhanced and connected

Environment and climate change risks and impacts are understood and managed



## Measuring progress

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Greenhouse gas emissions  Source: snapshotclimate.com.au	Total municipal emissions  July 2017 to June 2018: <b>3,183,000 t CO<sup>2</sup>e</b>  January 2019 to December 2019: <b>2,988,000 t CO<sup>2</sup>e</b>	
Annual tonnes of carbon equivalent emissions are trending downwards.		
Domestic waste diverted from landfill  Source: CN	On average <b>39%</b> of domestic kerbside waste was diverted from landfill, we commenced the term with <b>40%</b> diversion.	
This measure includes domestic kerbside waste only. Data includes forecast data from 1 October 2017 to 31 August 2021. There have been several contributing factors to the decline in diversion, including introduction of China Sword Policy which saw a significant tightening of what materials could be exported to China for recycling, introduction of Return and Earn which diverts recyclable items out of the kerbside stream and COVID-19 which saw a significant increase in waste generation and waste that could not be recycled.		
Recycling and green waste diverted from landfill  Source: CN	A total of <b>100,660</b> tonnes of recycling and green organics were diverted from landfill since October 2017.	
This measure includes domestic kerbside waste only. Data includes forecast data from 1 October 2017 to 31 August 2021. This is the first year we have collected this data.		
Household water usage  Source: Hunter Water	<b>182kL</b> in 2017 <b>164kL</b> in 2020	
The average household water consumption (kL) has decreased.		
Household electricity usage  Source: Ausgrid	<b>14.3 kWh</b> in 2017 <b>13.7 kWh</b> in 2020	
Daily average household (kWh per customer per day) electricity consumption usage across the LGA has generally trended down.		

Air Quality	<b>70.8 AQI</b> in 2019 <b>53.8 AQI</b> in 2020	
Source: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage		
Air Quality Index (AQI): Since 2017, particulate matter increased on average with a notable spike in 2019, due to the 'Black Summer bushfires'.		
Coastal water quality	Beachwatch continues to rate the water quality at all seven ocean beaches in the Newcastle area as <b>very good</b> .	
Source: NSW Beachwatch		
Area of community natural assets rehabilitation.	The extent of natural area rehabilitation investment annually remains stable within <b>90%</b> of the environmental budget performance.	
Source: CN		
The environment budget includes coast and estuary, bushland and watercourse, and street and park trees.		
Migratory shorebirds	Between 2017 and 2021, 15 migratory and 8 non-migratory shorebirds were regularly recorded.	
Source: Hunter Bird Observers Club		
Of the 15 migratory shorebirds <b>12</b> are in decline <b>3</b> show increasing numbers		
Of the 8 non-migratory shorebirds many have trends for increasing numbers, while others have fluctuating populations. One species is decreasing.		



## Making progress

### Greater efficiency in the use of resources

#### Summerhill Waste Management Centre – Landfill Cell Construction: Cell 9, Stage 2

The Cell 9 project involved significant civil works including 700,000m<sup>3</sup> of bulk excavation of earth and rock and the installation of a 64,000m<sup>3</sup> geosynthetic lining system.

The project commenced in December 2018 and comprised of two stages.

#### Solar farm

As one of only two local governments in Australia to build and operate a solar farm, CN has developed a 5MW solar farm on one of the closed landfills at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre.

The project site was formerly a coal mine and then later used for landfill before construction of the solar farm, demonstrating reuse and transition and opportunities for urban solar farms on reclaimed land. The Summerhill Solar Farm produces over 7 gigawatt hours (GWh) a year of renewable energy.

Continuing this leadership in renewable energy, on 1 January 2020, CN became the first local government in the state and one of only a handful across the country to move to 100% renewable electricity.



### Our unique natural environment is maintained, enhanced and connected

#### Creek restorations

Over the last four years we have continued our award-winning creek naturalisation program, rehabilitating 1,029 metres of urban watercourse using 'natural channel' design and construction approaches. Multiple benefits include:

- reinstatement of aquatic and riparian ecosystems
- erosion control
- water quality improvements
- greater stability during flood events
- protection of private and public asset, and
- the creation of beautiful natural spaces for the community.

Projects include Ironbark Creek, Wallsend, Waterdragon Creek, Kotara and Mary Street, Jesmond.

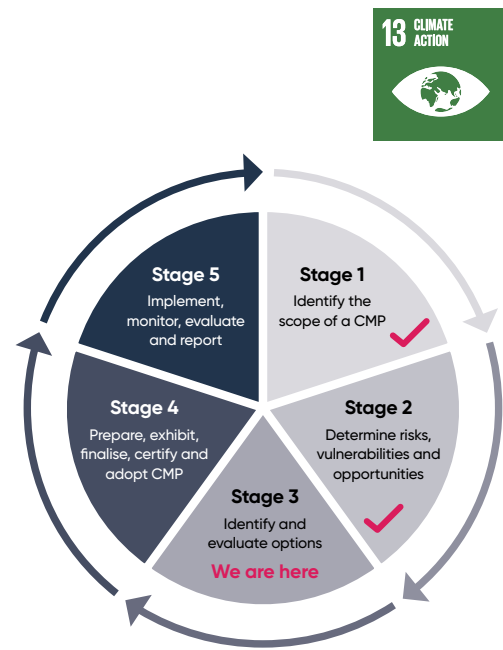




### Stockton Coastal Management Program

The Stockton Coastal Management Program (CMP) 2020 was developed in close consultation with the Stockton Community Liaison Group, government agencies, coastal experts and members of our community. It includes actions to ensure we can help manage, maintain, and preserve the coast between the northern breakwater of the Hunter River and Meredith Street, Stockton.

Developing the Stockton CMP 2020 is a five-stage process directed under the Coastal Management Act 2016. We have completed stages 1 and 2 with scoping, sand movement and hazard studies carried out. We are now in the early phases of stage 3, which involves identifying and evaluating options to preserve the Stockton coastline for future generations.



### Environment and climate change risks and impacts are understood and managed

#### Climate Action Plan

In January 2020, we delivered on the commitments of our 2011 Carbon and Water Management Action Plan and became the first NSW council to be powered by 100% renewable electricity. Our transformation to a sustainable city will continue under the new Climate Action Plan.



#### Stormwater systems

The past four years has seen significant investment in our stormwater systems, with approximately 9,300m of drainage constructed, 3,700m of pip re-lining and 2,200m of channel/swales construction, totalling approximately 15,200m of general drainage works completed.



Large-scale projects were delivered at Frederick Street, Patrick Street and Kilgour Avenue, Merewether and Swan Street and Council Street, Cooks Hill. Complex drainage issues were also addressed at Maitland Road and Power Street, Islington.

Stormwater improvements were achieved across the entire capital works program, including channel and basin works at Stevenson Park, Mayfield West and implementation of industry leading stormwater management principles at Young Street, Carrington.



**14,500**  
solar panels have been installed at Summerhill Solar Farm



**97,000m<sup>2</sup>**  
of urban revegetation delivered

**6,000,000m<sup>2</sup>**  
of bushland regeneration



Est **4,500**  
replacement trees planted

**500,000**  
native plants installed

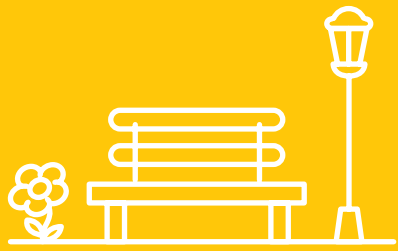


**190,000**  
tree maintenance requests actioned

**1,100**  
Natural Connection newsletter recipients

(Data from 2017-2021)





# Vibrant, Safe and Active Public Places

A city of great public places and neighbourhoods promoting people's health and wellbeing.

## Where do we want to be?

Public places that provide a diverse activity and strengthen our social connections

Culture, heritage and place are valued, shared and celebrated

Safe and activated places that are used by people day and night



## Measuring progress

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Satisfaction with parks and recreational areas	The level of community satisfaction with maintenance and cleanliness of parks	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey	<b>3.7</b> in 2018 <b>4.1</b> in 2019	
	Shade provided in parks and playgrounds	
	<b>3.1</b> in 2018 <b>3.4</b> in 2019	
Level of community satisfaction continues to increase.		
All residents have access to a park/recreation area within 400m of home	In 2020, <b>93%</b> of residents have access to recreation spaces within 400m of their home.	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey		
This is the first year we have been able to collect this data.		
Satisfaction with maintenance of beaches and beach facilities	The level of community satisfaction with cleanliness of beaches and beach facilities, including sand grooming	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey	<b>3.8</b> in 2016 <b>3.7</b> in 2018	
Level of community satisfaction continues to increase.		
Satisfaction with local arts, entertainment and culture	The level of community satisfaction with arts, entertainment and culture	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey	<b>3.6</b> in 2016 <b>3.7</b> in 2021	
Overall satisfaction with our local arts, entertainment and culture continues to increase.		

Cultural participation

Total number of attendees from 2016–17 to 2019–20



Source: CN

**538,237** Museum

**418,366** Civic Theatre and Playhouse

**269,450** Art Gallery

**2,727,186** Libraries

Attendance numbers were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions during 2020–21.

Growth in the creative sector

**\$44m** in 2017

**\$49m** in 2020



Source: REMPLAN

Under the Heritage, Creative and Performing Arts category, there has been a steady increase in economic output in the cultural and heritage sector, with a slight dip in 2020 due to COVID-19.

Crime rates

**3,488** in 2017

**2,422** in 2020



Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR)

The crime rate in Newcastle has decreased since 2017 based on 13 crime categories for outdoor space locations.



Making progress

Public places that provide a diverse activity and strengthen our social connections

Fort Scratchley raising of the flags

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags flew at Fort Scratchley for the first time on Remembrance Day, 11 November 2020.

Young Isla Johnson was visiting the Fort with her father and asked why the Aboriginal Flag was not flying. Isla is a member of an Aboriginal family with a tradition of military service. Fort Scratchley Historical Society took the opportunity to raise the flag during the only time that NAIDOC Week and Remembrance Day have ever coincided. The two flags now proudly fly with the Australian Flag.



New Annual

Our inaugural New Annual festival attracted over 30,000 people to more than 50 events and activities across the city in a showcase of Newcastle's arts and cultural sectors.

More than 30 ticketed COVID-19 Safe events and workshops were sold out during New Annual, which ran from 12–21 February 2021.

New Annual gave Newcastle's visitor economy a timely boost, with an increase in hotel occupancy rates of 12% and accommodation revenue of 33% compared to the corresponding period last year, which was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. A REMPLAN economic analysis based on direct employment from the festival returned a result of \$14.1 million in total economic impact, with a further \$5.8 million in total economic impact for the rest of the year 2021 based on employment contributions.

Events like New Annual bring Novocastrians together and provide a platform to celebrate our strengths.



Off Leash Dog Parks

The city's first fenced dog park for large and small dogs was opened at Acacia Avenue, North Lambton. Around six football fields in area, the new park offers separate spaces for pooches of different sizes, noting there's 44,300 registered dogs in our city.



Paws on patrol

Two-year-old golden retriever Bella joined the Rangers for patrols along Bathers Way between Merewether and Bar beaches.

Bella also accompanies her colleagues around Lambton Park and visits the popular fenced off-leash dog park at Acacia Avenue Reserve, North Lambton. Bella's presence has been well received by both the four-legged friends she meets and their non-canine companions, giving her fellow rangers more opportunities to engage with the pet owners.







**Culture, heritage and place are valued, shared and celebrated**

**Newcastle City Hall**

A \$20 million dollar restoration of City Hall was completed in April 2021. The project commenced in 2014 and was delivered in stages while the facility remained operational.

The preservation of this iconic, heritage listed asset involved conservation works of the exterior sandstone and other architectural elements. The works have been completed in accordance with the Newcastle City Hall Conservation Management Plan and include:

- sandstone façade repair and replacement
- repairs and repainting to all windows and doors
- replacement of lead weathering
- installation of new exterior lighting.



**Celebrating 90 magical years of Civic jewels**

The celebration of the 90th anniversary of the opening of the Civic Theatre and City Hall, was held in March 2020 with a first ever ‘access-all-areas’ tour offered to the public. The Civic Theatre tour showcased the stage and backstage areas, normally off limits to the public.

City Hall’s guided tours took guests through all three levels of the building – including the Lord Mayor’s office and Council Chambers – giving visitors an insight into the many uses of the building over the past 90 years and major events that have taken place there. The program was presented in collaboration with the CN Drama Association.



**Committee drives reconciliation for 20 years**

In November 2019, CN’s Guraki Aboriginal Committee celebrated two decades of strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members.

Guraki was officially launched as a committee of Council on 1 June 1999 with a mandate to give life to Council’s Reconciliation Commitment Statement.

Guraki’s milestone was marked at an event held at Newcastle Museum. The past and future came together in a unique augmented reality Acknowledgment of Country ceremony, which highlighted the heritage and culture of local Aboriginal peoples, followed by a video presentation of Guraki and CN’s journey over 20 years.





**Safe and activated places that are used by people day and night**

**New playgrounds**

Stockton's Active Hub skatepark and playground in Griffith Park was completed in 2019. The \$1.9 million hub features a range of equipment including a flying fox, double swing, climbing structure and accessible carousel spinner, as well as a barbecue, picnic table and shelter.

Mayfield's Stevenson Park was completed in 2020. The new \$1.2 million inclusive playground features a variety of equipment such as swings and birds nest basket, climbing apparatus, inground trampoline, slide, basketball hoop and handball court; while the upgrade also included the installation of shade shelters, seating, a drinking fountain and barbecue.

Newcastle has 116 playgrounds across the LGA and has an ongoing program of upgrading and renewing facilities.



**Digital Library**

The Digital Library creates opportunities to experience emerging technologies and spark innovation, while still being a flexible place for people to learn, relax and collaborate.

The Digital Library services the recent population boom in Newcastle West, Wickham and Honeysuckle, and addresses the critical demand in this area. It is also an accessible facility, located opposite the Newcastle Interchange, which means it is convenient to train, light rail, bus and bicycle transport modes. Another innovative aspect of the Digital Library is that it has been designed so that it can be quickly placed into onsite storage to allow the space to also act as the council chamber when meetings occur several times each month.



**3,408** Primary Food Premises Inspections undertaken plus **372** COVID-19 compliance inspections in 2020.



Civic Theatre and Playhouse hosted **over 300 performances** each year including comedy, music, theatre, circus and dance.



The One City, One Book reading promotion saw 250 people enjoy **Newcastle's biggest ever book club.**



Partnered to delivered CN's largest event, **Supercars Newcastle 500** in 2017, 2018 and 2019.



Supported more than **40 events per year** with event sponsorship program to create an active and vibrant city.



Successfully delivered a **major events program** for the city including New Year's Eve and Australia Day for more than 50,000 participants a year.



Secured and partnered in delivery of the **International World Surf League** Newcastle Cup 2021



**Attracted international events** to the city through a strategic partnership with Venues NSW including:

- Tri Nations Rugby – Australia, New Zealand and Argentina
- Waratahs v Sunwolves (Rugby)
- NSW Waratahs v Auckland (Rugby)
- A-League Double Header
- Matildas v Vietnam (Football)
- Matildas v Chile (Football)
- Matildas v Brazil (Football)



Attracted new national and international events to the city through our **events development program** including:

- Sailfest and Sailing League Championships
- Beach 5's Rugby
- Oceania Para Triathlon
- Trans-Tasman Touch Football
- Newcastle International Half Marathon
- Australian Boardriders Battle Finals



# Inclusive Community

A thriving community where diversity is embraced, everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute and belong.

## Where do we want to be?

A welcoming community that cares and looks after each other

Active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing



## Measuring progress

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Volunteer participation rates	<b>350</b> volunteers worked <b>26,700</b> hours during 2018–19	
Source: CN	<b>350</b> volunteers worked <b>18,850</b> hours during 2019–20	
Trends were on target before COVID-19. The reduction in hours is due to reduced opportunities to participate during COVID-19.		
Wellbeing Index	The Hunter Region (including Newcastle LGA) community wellbeing index was:	
Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey and the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index	<b>5.2</b> in 2017 <b>5.5</b> in 2018	
This data includes the whole Hunter Region, not just Newcastle LGA.		
Equitable access to health, education, aged care and childcare	The Hunter Region (including Newcastle LGA) ranked on the access to health and education scale as:	
Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey	<b>4.7</b> in 2017 <b>4.2</b> in 2018	
The NSW average was 4.9 in 2017 and 5.0 in 2018.		
Equitable access to education and lifelong learning is supported.	The number of children in Newcastle who were estimated to be vulnerable on two or more developmental domains increased:	
Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)	<b>7.2%</b> in 2015 <b>8.4%</b> in 2018	
The AEDC is held every 3 years. Data was recently collected and will be available in March 2022.		



Growth in post-school qualifications Percentage of the population aged 20 years or above with non-school qualifications increased from **47.5%** in 2011 and **53.1%** in 2016.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

No data is available since 2016 census.

Equitable access for all members of the community to our local places and spaces There is increased awareness of the need to undertake access audits, resulting in **5** access audits being undertaken for Changing Places locations and **2** being constructed.



Source: CN

Audits of Civic Theatre, City Hall and other sites have also been conducted. Projects such as the Foreshore Accessible Playground, Ocean Baths Upgrade planning and the Newcastle South Skate Park have all engaged with people with disabilities to help inform project design. Park upgrades and Local Centres upgrade projects have all utilised access audit principles.

## Making progress

### A welcoming community that cares and looks after each other

#### Dual Naming Signage

Following the naming gazettal in June 2016 of eight Aboriginal dual-named landforms in the Newcastle LGA, Smart City technology was utilised to bring the language and heritage of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples to a broader audience as part of a reconciliation project in 2018.

Interactive signs were developed to increase the visibility and usage of dual names in everyday language, events and tourism opportunities.

The eight dual-named landform features are:

- Whibayganba – Nobbys Headland
- Tahlbihn – Flagstaff Hill
- Burrabihngarn – Pirate Point
- Yohaaba – Port Hunter
- Coquun – Hunter River (South Channel)
- Khanterin – Shepherds Hill
- Toohrnbing – Ironbark Creek
- Burraghinhbihng – Hexham Swamp



#### Count Us In Festival

Newcastle's inaugural disability inclusion festival was held from September to October 2019. This festival provided opportunities to break down disability barriers and stigmas and engage community in new ways. The Count Us In Festival was initiated by our Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee. The festival was held for a second time in March 2021.



#### Accessible website

We have improved our website to include accessibility features that meet internationally agreed Web Accessibility Content Guidelines.

Our corporate style guide and graphic design team work to accessibility guidelines set by Vision Australia, and we have also developed and rolled out a written style guide to ensure language is accessible for the community.





## Active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing

### Improving access to our beaches/aquatics

In 2019, new inclusive beach amenities were opened. The new change rooms at Nobbys Beach include a specialised hoist and bench to cater for mobility-impaired beach goers as well as a ramp to the beach. The project includes a dual-purpose room containing an accessible toilet and baby change facility. A second room provides an assisted change room with accessible toilet, shower, basin, bench and hoist.

The opening event also incorporated the launch of the Access in the City (AiTC) app, an initiative funded by CN, aimed to improve the city experience for people utilising mobility devices.



## Diversity and inclusion celebrated at Storytime

In June 2021, Newcastle Library was alive with dancing, music and reading at the second Rainbow Families Storytime. A great time was had by more than 220 children, parents, grandparents and friends who packed the library's main floor to listen to Timberlina read a range of inclusive stories. Rainbow Families Storytime aims to promote diversity and inclusion within our community. These events are part of a series of glitter-filled storybook readings, an innovative twist on traditional story times and the library's popular Rock and Rhyme sessions.





# Liveable Built Environment

An attractive city that is built around people and reflects our sense of identity.

## Where do we want to be?

A built environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity

Mixed-use urban villages supported by integrated transport networks

Greater diversity of quality housing for current and future needs

Sustainable infrastructure to support a liveable environment



## Measuring progress

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Listed heritage items	<p>In 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>16</b> archaeological sites</li> <li><b>6</b> heritage conservation areas</li> <li><b>684</b> local heritage items</li> <li><b>46</b> items on the State Heritage Register</li> </ul> <p>In 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>23</b> archaeological sites</li> <li><b>8</b> heritage conservation areas</li> <li><b>700</b> local heritage items</li> <li><b>54</b> items on the State Heritage Register</li> </ul>	
Source: Newcastle Local Environmental Plan and State Heritage Register		
The number of heritage items listed is increasing.		
Satisfaction with heritage conservation	<p>The level of community satisfaction with heritage conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2.8</b> in 2018</li> <li><b>3.6</b> in 2021</li> </ul>	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey		
Development Applications (DAs) Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1,502</b> DAs from July 2017 to June 2018</li> <li><b>1,645</b> DAs from July 2020 to June 2021</li> </ul>	
Source: CN		
The total quantity of all DAs submitted has increased which includes refused, rejected, withdrawn and surrendered applications.		
Greater diversity of dwelling type	<p>Across all four categories of dwelling type defined in the ABS, there was significant increase in the number of dwellings from 2011 to 2016. For example, separate houses increased from 42,634 to 69,020, and semi-detached increased from 9,216 to 10,779.</p>	
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)		
No data is available since 2016 census.		



## Making progress

### A built environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity

#### Creation of two new heritage conservation areas

##### Glebe Road Federation Cottages

Established as a heritage conservation area in November 2018, the area is important at the local level in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the Federation period and the nature of residential building construction in Newcastle between 1909 and 1915. 55 Glebe Road has associative significance with a prominent individual, being the home of RJ Kilgour, a past Mayor of Merewether, and whose son was the first to enlist locally in 1915 for the First World War.



##### Hamilton Residential Precinct

Established as a heritage conservation area in June 2019, the area is a low scale, residential precinct typified by small lot housing of generally one or two storeys. The character of the area and its streetscapes are representative of the late Victorian, Federation and Inter-war periods of Australian urban development, with the gradual urban infill of the Newcastle coal field as mining moved out to the Hunter Valley from the 1880s until the turn of the 20th century.

#### Highlighting heritage

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has been reviewing council planning proposals (PP) since 2016. We are unique in that we have a high number of PPs relating to heritage. This is due to CN implementing all recommendations of the Heritage Conservation Area Review Report, updating heritage schedules and creating new heritage conservation areas and items.



#### Repurposing significant buildings

In June 2020, we opened our new Visitor Information Centre (VIC), offering hands-on interactive experiences, tourist information and unique souvenirs for those welcoming friends and family to the city.

Housed in the repurposed Civic railway station, the VIC is located in the heart of Newcastle's emerging tourist hub, nearby the five-star Kingsley Hotel and a stone's throw from the Civic Theatre, Civic Park, City Hall and Museum. The VIC is conveniently located at the Civic light rail stop with 300 parking spaces within a five-minute walk.



#### Mixed-use urban villages supported by integrated transport networks

##### Blackbutt Village upgrade

In September 2020, Council adopted Blackbutt Village Orchardtown Road Local Centre Public Domain and Traffic Plan.

The plan responds to community need for improved safety, access, and connectivity, through the integration of a new 40km/h high pedestrian activity area with new active transport connections.

Upgrades to landscaping, bus stops and street furniture are proposed, along with new seating areas for socialising.

Blackbutt Village will become an accessible, attractive and comfortable place to visit and spend time, with resilient infrastructure designed to meet 21st century needs.



##### West End Stage 2 Public Domain Plan

The West End Stage 2 Public Domain plan will create a safe, accessible precinct around the Newcastle Interchange where vibrant streetscapes will facilitate greater use of active transport.

Features include traffic upgrades, separated cycleways, new green spaces and public plazas, installation of 'rain gardens' to protect our rivers and creeks, and an extensive tree and groundcover planting plan to reduce the 'urban heat island' effect.

Sections of this plan have commenced the detailed design phase, including the separated trial cycleway along Hunter Street, between Worth Place and National Park Street.







**Greater diversity of quality housing for current and future needs**

**Wickham Master Plan**

Adopted by Council in November 2017, the Wickham Master Plan outlines the vision of how the area is to evolve over a 25-year horizon from a semi-industrial suburb into a mixed-use urban area reinforcing the Newcastle City Centre core within adjoining Newcastle West. The master plan also identifies strategies and actions for implementation based on extensive background investigation and consultation with key stakeholders.



**Local Housing Strategy**

Adopted by Council in 2020, the Local Housing Strategy sets a vision for the provision of housing across the Newcastle LGA over the next 20 years.

The Local Housing Strategy considers housing in the context of affordability, accessibility and sustainability and will inform a future review of the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012 and Newcastle Development Control Plan 2012.

The Local Housing Strategy:

- provides a history of housing supply and the different eras of housing development in Newcastle
- identifies the key drivers for housing supply and demand
- outlines the 20-year population projections and housing needs for Newcastle
- sets the priorities for the provision of housing for the next 20 years.



**Sustainable infrastructure to support a liveable environment**

**Local Centres Program**

In 2016, we commenced the Local Centres Public Domain Infrastructure Renewal Program. Our aim is to provide liveable and sustainable local centres that meet community needs. We followed a multidisciplinary approach to develop unique and holistic design solutions for each local centre. To date we have successfully completed upgrades to Beresfield, Carrington, Wallsend (stages 1 and 2), Llewellyn Street, Merewether and Joslin Street, Kotara. We are upgrading James Street Plaza, Hamilton, Mitchell Street, Stockton and Shortland in 2021, with future projects at Blackbutt Village Orchardtown Road and additional stages of Wallsend Town Centre in the pipeline.





## We provide



Waste management and recycling



Lifeguard patrols at our beaches and ocean baths



Pet registration and animal control



Parking strategy and enforcement



Strategic planning



Regulatory services



Tourism and economic development



Childcare



Deliver major events program and assessing event licence applications



Community and cultural facilities + programs



Assessing development applications



Community engagement about plans, services and facilities

## We manage



**850km**  
of roads



**79km**  
of creeks



**88**  
bushland parcels



**98,221**  
street and park trees



**116**  
playgrounds



**972km**  
of pathways



**6**  
main beaches



**7**  
ocean baths and aquatic centres



**147**  
sporting grounds



**15**  
grandstands



**9**  
skate facilities



# Smart and Innovative

A leader in smart innovations with a prosperous, diverse and resilient economy.

## Where do we want to be?




A vibrant, diverse and resilient economy built on educational excellence and research

A culture that supports and encourages innovation and creativity at all levels

A thriving city that attracts people to live, work, invest and visit



## Measuring progress


Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Growth in business tourism	The annual value spend in business tourism pre COVID-19 remained stable.  Source: Destination NSW <b>\$220m</b> in 2017 <b>\$219m</b> in 2019	
	Of all the visitor economy sub sectors, business events have been the most impacted by COVID-19.	
Individual LGA Visitor Profiles are no longer available through Tourism Research Australia (TRA), consequently Newcastle data is incorporated into Hunter Region data.		
Growth in tourism and visitation	The number of visitors pre COVID-19 shows year-on-year growth across all sub sectors.  Source: Destination NSW <b>10,749</b> in 2017 <b>11,088</b> in 2018 <b>13,251</b> in 2019	
	Due to COVID-19 the visitor economy experienced a sharp decline as domestic and international borders closed.	
As recovery continues, Newcastle is experiencing healthy growth in domestic travel particularly in the leisure market as CN pivoted destination campaigns to focus on the NSW intrastate market.		
Individual LGA Visitor Profiles are no longer available through Tourism Research Australia (TRA), consequently Newcastle data is incorporated into Hunter Region data.		
Financial support provided by CN through the Events Sponsorship Program (ESP)	The economic value of grants provided by the Events Sponsorship Program has increased from 2017 to 2020.  Source: CN <b>\$114,318</b> in 2017 <b>\$260,500</b> in 2020	
	The ESP for 2019-20 was severely affected by COVID-19 with many events cancelling in the last quarter of the financial year and therefore returning sponsorship funds.	



Commercial investment      The estimated value of approved commercial development is increasing. 

Source: CN      **\$512m** July 2013 to June 2017  
**\$600m** July 2017 to June 2021

This data includes Development Applications and change of use commercial developments.

Unemployment rate      **4.85%** June 2019  
**6.01%** June 2020  
**6.81%** June 2021 

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The impact of COVID-19 has had a significant and disproportionate impact on youth (18 to 24 years old) employment, particularly young women. More than 25% of people under the age of 25 are unemployed in Newcastle.

Growth in small business      **13,435** in 2018  
**14,311** in 2020  
**3.2%** growth 

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The effects of the economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic are not entirely captured by this dataset as the 2020 count of active businesses was as at 30 June 2020.

## Making progress

### A vibrant, diverse and resilient economy built on educational excellence and research

#### Mentoring Program

We funded the development and deployment of a Tourism Product Development Mentoring Program aimed at increasing the number and quality of bookable experiences on offer in Newcastle aligned to the experience pillars in our Destination Management Plan including aquatic and coastal, active and outdoor, arts, heritage and culture, culinary and after dark.



#### Economic Development Strategy

We have put people at the centre of driving the city's economic opportunities and recovery from COVID-19 in our new Economic Development Strategy.

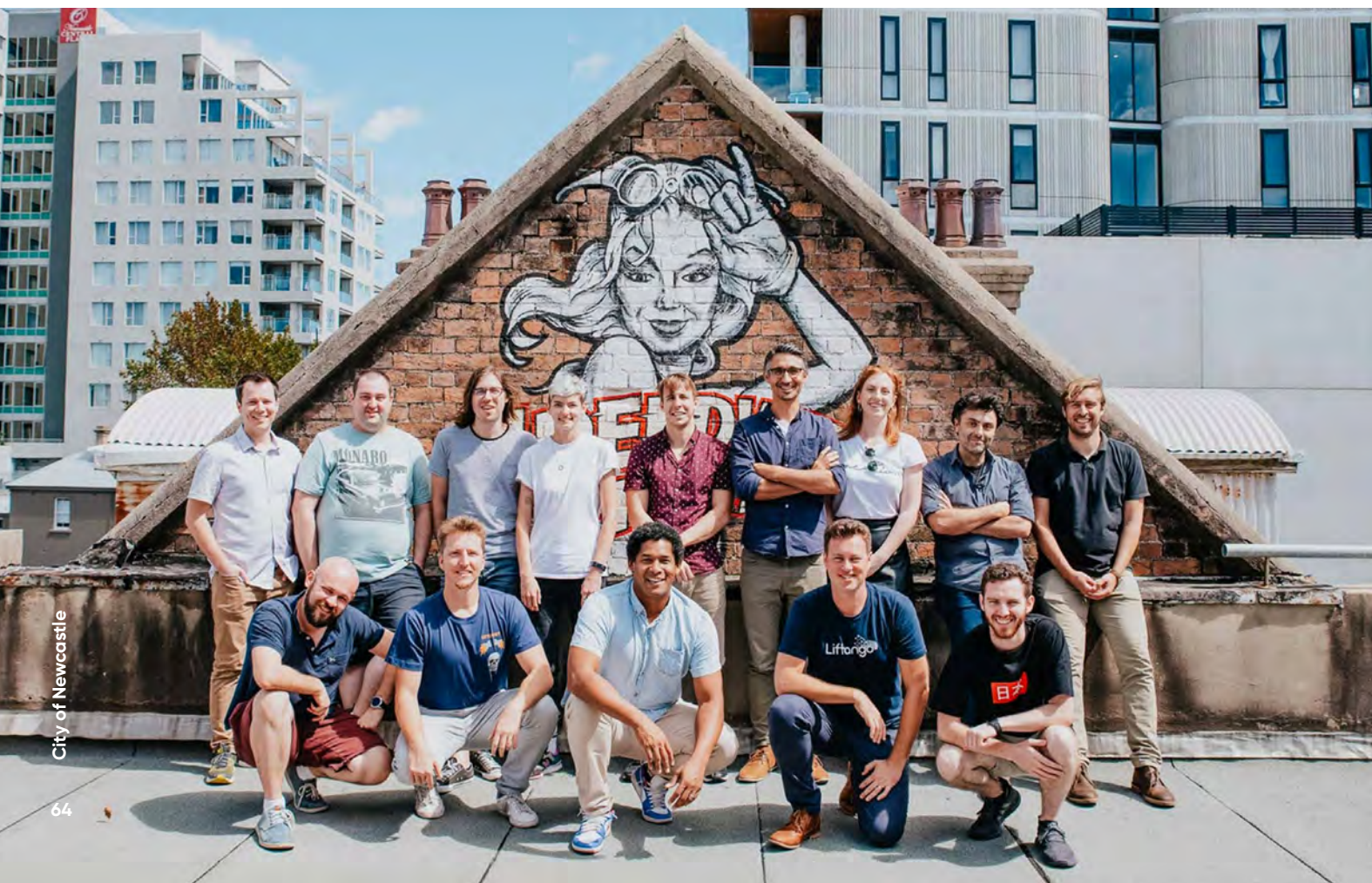
As outlined in the strategy, the vision for Newcastle is to strengthen existing and create new economic opportunities for all by investing in people, their skills, networks and investments. The strategy's delivery program highlights four priority areas including 'Skilled People', 'Innovative People', 'City Shaping' and 'Vibrant City' to make the vision a reality. The delivery program is inclusive and aims to provide a range of opportunities for locals, as well as attract new talent to the city where there are current or emerging skills gaps.



#### Resilience package to help Newcastle during COVID-19

In March 2020, Council adopted a \$5.5 million Community and Economic Resilience Package (CERP), it included:

- almost \$1 million in household and commercial rate payments being deferred
- substantial rent relief extended to small businesses and community organisations
- interest-free rate deferrals for up to 15 months and halved rents to provide relief for small businesses in CN-owned buildings
- a grant program to support the community sector to the value of \$800,000
- promotion of the existing financial hardship policies
- support for a taskforce of city leaders to map out the local economic recovery
- help for small business owners and staff to undertake professional development training and accreditation as part of a \$500,000 education package.







**A culture that supports and encourages innovation and creativity at all levels**

**1x4**

In late 2020, the Museum developed an exhibition which encourages visitors to explore its stories and themes in their own way. Rather than interpretive panels featuring large amounts of text, visitors use their phones to explore the exhibition at their own pace, either onsite or at their own leisure. Each object is accompanied by a song, an audio tour and detailed photographs. The result has been a popular collection-based exhibition providing innovative, creative, and engaging interpretations.

The innovative exhibition, was named the overall winner at the 2021 Museums and Galleries National Awards (MAGNA).



**What's On**

Launched in March 2021, the What's On website is a dedicated events platform for all events in Newcastle and includes a curated blog to provide inspiration of all that is happening in and around the city.

The target was for 20,000 visitors per month and over 5,000 e-newsletter subscribers in the first year.

We have well and truly hit this target with 65,468 visitors in May 2021.



**Remote workforce continues to provide services during COVID-19**

The mobilisation of all office-based staff to remote working arrangements and the implementation of field-based devices for our outdoor workforce to stay connected was a major IT project during the term.

The transition to laptops and other mobile devices, set the organisation up for success for our staff to work remotely during the COVID-19 restrictions including lockdowns. There was minimal disruption to servicing the community with even Council meetings able to be held virtually.

Additional benefits included improvements to customer service through the ability to take direct debit and pensioner concession applications forms over the phone and the ability for Waste Self Haul vouchers to be issued by email rather than hard copy.





# A thriving city that attracts people to live, work, invest and visit

## LIVE

### 'House We Build' game helps develop Local Housing Strategy

A smart and innovative city thrives on collaboration. We partner regularly with local stakeholder including the University of Newcastle to ensure research excellence and creativity underpin our projects. The House We Build project partnered with Fastlab at the School of Creative Industries to deliver an interactive online game that was part of the engagement process for our Local Housing Strategy. Community members were challenged to fill the shoes of an urban planner and manage a constantly growing population while maintaining community happiness. The game provided a unique and accessible way to educate the community about the complexities of managing urban density and seek feedback on the draft strategy.

## WORK

### Youth employment for the city

We are investing in our future workforce in a bid to attract and retain high-quality graduates, aspiring trainees and ambitious apprentices. More than \$2.5 million was invested in 2019–20 which saw the number of university undergraduates and graduates more than double from five to 12, while the number of young apprentices and trainees increased from 25 to 32.

We are committed to attracting and retaining high-quality staff by providing them with the skills and training necessary to progress and advance them through their career.

In the past three years CN has retained employment of approximately 35% of staff who have come through one of our Undergraduate, Traineeship, Apprenticeship and Graduate programs.

## INVEST

### Newcastle Art Gallery

CN welcomed an extraordinary \$10 million bequest to the Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation from the late gallery supporter, Valerie Ryan. The bequest will be held in trust by the Foundation and dedicated to Newcastle Art Gallery's collection or building expansion project.

The Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation and the community have raised more than \$1.2 million for the gallery's planned expansion.

## VISIT

### Supercars Newcastle 500

We welcomed Supercars with the delivery of three Newcastle 500 events, seeing over 500,000 attendees visit Newcastle over the three years of the race. The Newcastle 500 has put the city on millions of TV screens with spectacular images of the coastline, the harbour, our parks and our city during the three-day event.

### Newcastle Destination Management Plan

Adopted in April 2021, the Destination Management Plan ensures an all-of-industry approach to our visitor economy's sustainability and growth. Key stakeholders include Destination Sydney Surrounds North, Newcastle Airport, University of Newcastle, Tourism Accommodation Australia, Australian Hotel Association, Hunter Business Chamber and Newcastle Tourism Industry Group.



Significantly **increased Newcastle's tourism presence** online. Visit Newcastle's Facebook following is currently 56,833 and Instagram has 29,800 followers.



Developed a **new tourism website** which integrates accommodation and better promotes our city. The new website has been welcomed by both visitors and industry.



Developed **new visitor information collateral** for the city in 2019 including maps and the Newcastle City Guide.



Developed the **City of Newcastle App** to increase digital communication with residents and visitors.



# Open and Collaborative Leadership

A strong local democracy with an actively engaged community and effective partnerships.

## Where do we want to be?

Integrated, sustainable long-term planning for Newcastle and the Region

Considered decision-making based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership

Active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals



A local government organisation of excellence



## Measuring progress

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Additional support to achieve community outcomes by seeking targeted grant funding	<b>\$45m</b> in 2016–17 <b>\$41.6m</b> in 2017–18 <b>\$47m</b> in 2018–19 Source: CN (Audited financial statements) <b>\$42m</b> in 2019–20	
Amount received into CN as Grants and Contributions.		
Informing residents about CN's activities	<b>City News stats</b> <b>90,885</b> distributions quarterly Source: Quarterly Community Survey <b>17</b> issues since 2017 <b>3,657</b> page views (from November 2019 to June 2021)	
	<b>CN's website stats</b> <b>81%</b> of residents in 2021 reported accessing CN's website and the majority were able to find what they were looking for.	
Opportunities for genuine community engagement	The level of community satisfaction with involvement in decision-making <b>3</b> in 2016 Source: Quarterly Community Survey <b>3.2</b> in 2021	
Quality of service provided to ratepayers	The level of community satisfaction with standards of services provided to ratepayers Source: Quarterly Community Survey Summer 2020 Report <b>3.2</b> in 2016 <b>3.7</b> in 2021	



Effective and efficient IT services	The total number of completed IT service incidents and requests has continued to rise.	
Source: CN	A spike in 2020 of over 10,000 service requests is due to changing work practices due to COVID-19 and improved record management.	
Overall performance	The level of community satisfaction with CN's overall performance.	
Source: Quarterly Community Survey Summer 2020 Report	<b>3.0</b> in 2019 <b>3.4</b> in 2020 <b>3.7</b> in 2021	



## Making progress

### Integrated, sustainable long-term planning for Newcastle and the Region

#### Local Strategic Planning Statement

Council adopted its key urban planning document, the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), in May 2020. It guides CN's land use decisions over the next 20 years and builds on the strategic directions of our CSP.

The LSPS is accompanied by an Implementation Plan that identifies a program for the delivery of each of the planning priorities and actions. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed every 12 months as actions are completed and to reflect changes in Federal, State or Local priorities as well as resources and budgets.



#### Financial Planning

Achieving financial sustainability remained a key objective of CN over this term of Council. CN is committed to the principles of sound financial management as outlined in the Local Government Act 1993, section 8B. CN has put processes in place to ensure that every financial decision is prudent and responsible to safeguard the financial legacy of CN.

Ongoing operating surpluses from 2013–14 provided the foundation for CN to support our community and local business through the effects of COVID-19, with two rounds of a targeted Community Economic Resilience Program as well as a boosted works program, the largest investment in maintaining existing and delivery of new infrastructure to date. The \$116.3 million works program budgeted for 2020–21 was estimated to create 570 to 700 local jobs and increase total economic output in the LGA by approximately \$225 to \$275 million.

Financial sustainability is demonstrated over this term of Council with CN meeting all the OLG's (Office of Local Government) financial performance indicators each year while delivering increasing record works programs annually and boosting our cash holdings by \$20 million. CN has also been audited by the NSW Audit Office each year with unqualified audits result each time. CN has budgeted to return to surplus in 2021–22 as the city recovers from COVID-19 and the long-term financial plan predicts CN to remain in surplus over the next 10 years.



### Considered decision-making based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership

#### Open diaries

We are leading the way in local government through the publication of the Lord Mayor and CEO's open diary summaries on a quarterly basis on our website and from 2019 also included the Executive Leadership Teams' open diary summaries.





### On Stillness

Initiated by Newcastle Art Gallery and the National Art School, this collaborative project highlighted works of art from the collections of participating institutions that embodied the idea of stillness as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic through an online exhibition presented across the social media accounts of NSW regional and public galleries. The project provided content and connection to audiences during lockdown, forging partnerships between geographically distant organisations and celebrated the public collections of galleries across NSW including Armidale, Lake Macquarie, Orange, Sydney, Tweed River and Wollongong.



### Active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals

#### Advisory committees

A collaborative effort between staff and councillors transformed the advisory committee framework to provide guidance to the elected Council on initiatives arising from the CSP. The committees are formed in alignment with the CSP themes – Liveable Cities, Strategy and Innovation, Community and Culture, Access Inclusion, Infrastructure, Youth Council and Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee.



#### Expanded Engagement Program

We expanded community engagement activities to integrate engagement into project planning. We engaged with more than 30,000 people across 70+ projects since 2017. Coupled with improved targeting and promotion, we have seen an increase in the number of people seeing our engagement projects online, up from 9,700 webpage views in 2018 to almost 85,000 in the past year.



### A local government organisation of excellence

#### Enabling a collaborative and flexible workforce

We underwent the largest IT transformation in recent history in preparation for our relocation to 12 Stewart Avenue, Newcastle. Changing from a traditional paper-based organisation to 'paperlite' site was a major change that improved organisational efficiencies and aligned with our sustainability goals. All office-based staff were transitioned from desktop computers to laptops and on-premise servers and software migrated to the cloud. This reduced our technology footprint and improved productivity and collaboration, ultimately resulting in better service for our community.





### Unified corporate brand

Seventeen different logos being used by our facilities and services were consolidated under a single unified logo as part of the Corporate Brand Project. This initiative, and the establishment of a centralised marketing function, has led to a marked increase in the community's understanding of the facilities operated by CN, which was demonstrated by the results of the Summer 2020 Quarterly Community Survey. The survey showed a 20% increase in respondents recognising Fort Scratchley as a CN facility (to 63%), a 19% increase for Newcastle Art Gallery (78%), and a 16% rise for Newcastle Museum (80%), while the Civic Theatre (82%) and Blackbutt Reserve (83%) both rose by 6%.



### Digitisation of manual service requests

The IT service unit launched a Customer Service Management system for broken and missing bins to better service our customers and to improve productivity and response times. Our frontline Customer Service and Waste teams have seen a dramatic decline in manual administration of these processes. Customers get real-time updates, improving the customer experience and transparency on service requests. This is the beginning of the digitisation of CN's service catalogue requests for greater efficiencies and to better serve our customers.



### Web chat

The Customer Contact Centre commenced a pilot program introducing web chat to CN's website. The community can now chat with a Customer Service Officer during operating hours. All conversation transcripts are recorded in CN's corporate record management system and appropriate requests logged for action. Customers have been providing very positive feedback on their experience.



### Unified corporate brand



City of Newcastle



Blackbutt Reserve



Civic Theatre



Fort Scratchley



Newcastle Art Gallery



Newcastle Libraries



Newcastle Museum



City of Newcastle



Blackbutt Reserve



Civic Theatre



Fort Scratchley



Newcastle Art Gallery



Newcastle Libraries



Newcastle Museum



In December 2017, Council adopted the Open and Transparent Governance Strategy.

During this term, we have implemented **78 actions.**



Established a **'Capital Works Near You'**

interactive map improving communications with our community throughout the delivery of a record-sized works program.



Established **'Have Your Say'**

and expanded engagement program increasing community involvement in and understanding of CN's decision-making.



Changed the way we communicate by increasing online presence.

Our corporate **social media following**

has grown from 10,000 to **over 80,000.**

# Where are we headed

## Next steps

This EoTR will inform the review and development of the next suite of documents required under the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, including the revised CSP, Workforce Management Plan, four-year Delivery Program and one-year Operational Plan.

During the development of this report, CN recognised the need to review current community indicators to better monitor and report on progress towards community goals. These indicators will be reviewed in the next version of the CSP to be delivered in early 2022.

This Report will be attached to CN's 2020–21 Annual Report.



The 'Newcastle, it's your future' engagement update to the Community Strategic Plan Newcastle 2030 commenced in February 2021 and will continue through to early 2022. In 2018 you told us that in 2030, your vision was for Newcastle to be a smart, liveable and sustainable global city. We have been working towards this vision and celebrating our cultural heritage, protecting our natural environment and supporting our people to thrive and prosper. Our updated plan, Newcastle 2040, will guide the work we do until 2040. It will define our vision for Newcastle and highlight our key themes and priorities, flowing into our strategies and aligned throughout our planning and our deliverable actions.



# Appendix A

## End of Term Review

### Councillor Productivity Report

[Agenda Report](#)

**SUBJECT: NOM 23/11/21 - END OF TERM REVIEW - COUNCILLOR PRODUCTIVITY**

**RESOLVED:** (Councillors Clausen/Winney-Baartz)

That Council:

- 1 Acknowledges that the 23 November 2021 meeting is the final of the 2017-2021 term of Council.
- 2 Acknowledges that at this meeting, Council will receive the End of Term Report, summarizing its performance over the last 4 years.
- 3 Notes that under the Local Government Act, a Councillor's role is to set the direction and strategy of the Council, provide governance oversight of the organisation in its operations, and advocate on behalf of their communities.
- 4 Notes that Councillor initiated motions are one of the key mechanisms for Councillors to undertaking this role; and
- 5 Notes that during the 2017-2021 term of Council, there have been:
  - a 51 meetings of the council (ordinary and extraordinary meetings) where Councillor initiated motions have been considered
  - b Across these meetings 287 motions have been considered and debated
  - c 97% of these motions have been Carried. 68% of all motions were Carried Unanimously
  - d Labor Councillors developed and presented 74% of all Councillor initiated motions (206 motions), the Greens Councillor developed and presented 17% (47 motions), the 'Independent' block developed and presented 9% (25 motions), and the Liberal Councillor 0% (0 motions)
  - e These covered topics as important as:
    - Establishing an Apprenticeship Scheme (24/10/17)
    - Extending Beresfield Pool's Hours (24/10/17)
    - Developing a proactive Footpath Plan (27/03/18)
    - Advocating for Our Fair Share of the Snowy Sale (Councillor Elliott against) (24/7/18)
    - Supporting refugee community support programs (Councillor Luke against) (28/8/18)
    - Supporting the expansion of the Newcastle Art Gallery (25/09/18)
    - Developing a Verge Garden Policy (23/10/18)
    - Committing to a 'Buy Local' policy in procurement (11/12/18) and an Indigenous procurement policy (28/11/17)
    - Developing an Affordable Housing Policy (Councillor Church left the Chamber) (26/03/19)

- Becoming the first Council to shift to 100% renewable energy, with a PPA that is now saving ratepayers money (opposed by Councillors Church, Elliott and Luke) (16/04/19)
  - Advocating to ensure that elected local councillors retain responsibility for local planning decisions (opposed by Councillor Church) (16/04/19)
  - Declaring a climate emergency (Councillors Church and Elliott left the Chamber) (28/05/19)
  - Addressing Urban Heat Island effect (Councillor Luke against) (23/7/19)
  - Declaring Sexism and Homophobia inappropriate in the council workplace (Councillors Church, Elliott and Rufo left the Chamber) (24/09/19)
  - Developing a Live Music Strategy (10/12/19)
  - Responding to COVID through the development of the award-winning Community and Economic Resilience Package (24/03/20)
  - Funding hardship support for ratepayers (opposed by Councillors Church, Elliott, Luke and Robinson) (26/05/20)
  - New Annual Festival (Councillors Church and Elliott against) (23/3/21)
  - Housing Affordability Crisis in Newcastle (Councillors Church and Luke against) (27/04/21)
  - Best practice employment conditions for staff engaged on council projects (opposed by Councillors Church and Luke) (27/07/21)
- 6 That this Notice of Motion be included as an Appendix to Item 115 - End of Term Report 2017-2021.