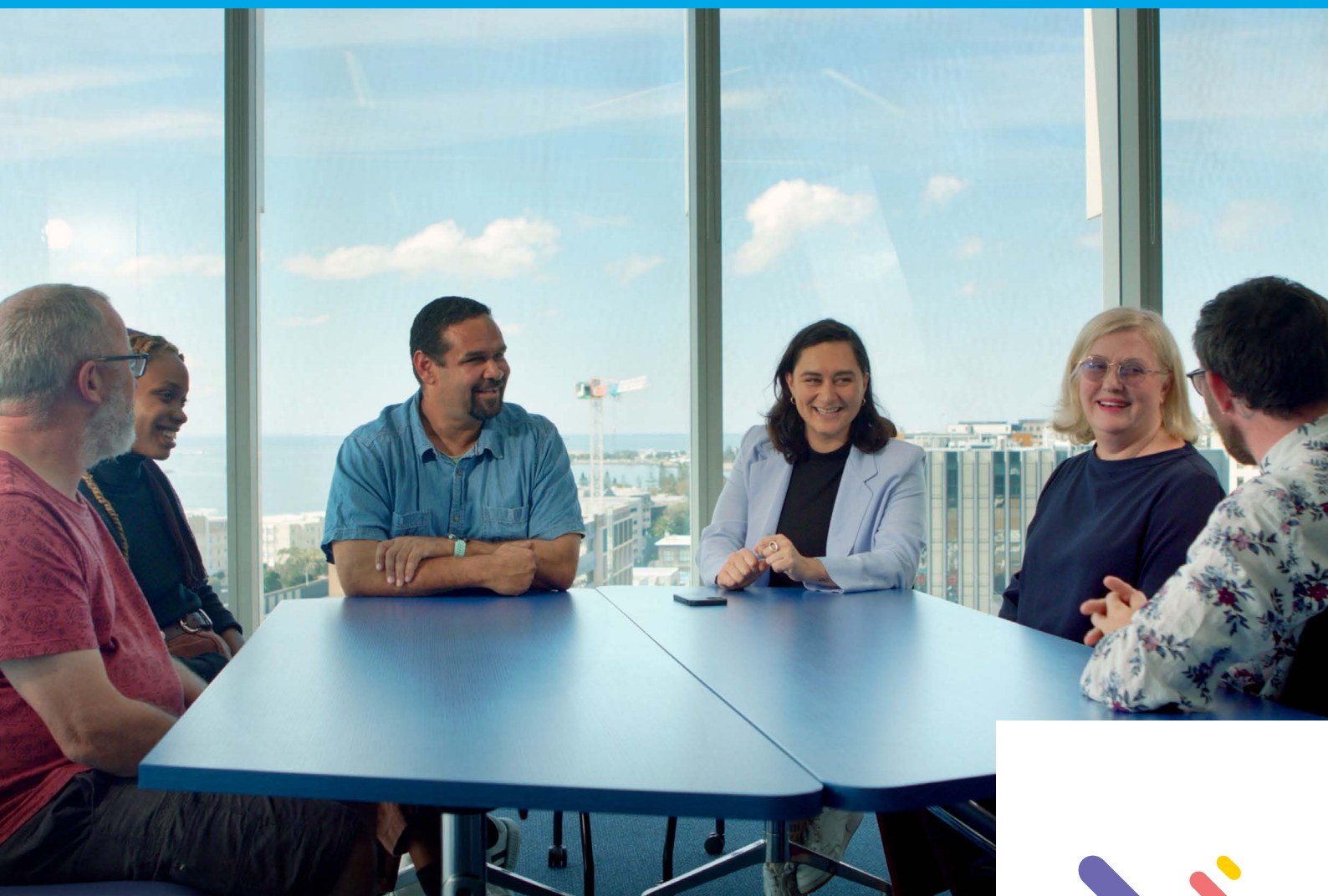


# Social Strategy

2030



[newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au)



City of  
Newcastle

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# Acknowledgement of Country

**We all sit on Awabakal and Worimi land  
'Niirun Yalawa Awabakal dha Worimi burrai'**

City of Newcastle (CN) acknowledges its Local Government Area (LGA) sits within the Country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient relationships. We acknowledge the custodianship of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples and the care and stewardship they have performed in this place since time immemorial.

We recognise the history of truth that acknowledges the impact of invasion and colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and how this still resonates today.

**Always was, always will be Aboriginal land  
'Wunyibu wunyibu warra wunyibu wunyibu kuumba Guuri burrai'**

## Uluru Statement of the Heart

CN supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the campaign for Constitutional Recognition and come together to support a First Nations Voice to Parliament.



## A message from our Lord Mayor

City of Newcastle (CN)'s Social Strategy 2030 places people at the centre of our vision for a socially just and inclusive place for all. We recognise that human health and the health of our planet are interwoven. Together we must balance our social foundations – things like care for health and wellbeing, education and access to food – with ecological concerns such as a healthy climate, biodiversity and clean water. From this basis, our strategy champions evidence-based decision-making and innovative practice to inform our approach, while ensuring strong, respectful and transparent relationships with our community partners.

Newcastle is a liveable city with a remarkable natural environment, local economic opportunities, and an increasingly diverse social, cultural and creative foundation that contributes to quality of life. However, as Newcastle undergoes significant growth and change,

an increasing number of community members risk being left behind, unable to realise their full potential as part of a thriving society.

Our Social Strategy seeks to respond to these challenges by removing barriers to inclusion and equal opportunity, encouraging community connection and participation, celebrating our rich social and cultural diversity, and strengthening community health and wellbeing.

Thank you to those who contributed through the consultation stage to form this plan and the community sector organisations who we work with to make Newcastle a socially just and inclusive place for all. I look forward to championing the implementation of this plan into the future.

**Councillor Nuatali Nemes**  
Lord Mayor of Newcastle

# Our Newcastle

## Community Strategic Plan – Newcastle 2040



### Newcastle is a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city

**Newcastle 2040 is CN's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and is the highest level of planning we undertake at the local government level. Newcastle 2040 is a shared community vision, developed as a guide to inform policies and actions throughout the city for the next 10+ years.**

For those who live, work, play and study in Newcastle, this vision sets the direction for how we want our city to grow. With direct input from a wide cross-section of the community, it represents what we value in our city and what we want to prioritise.

In 2040, Newcastle will be a liveable, sustainable and inclusive global city. We will celebrate our unique city and protect our natural assets. We will optimise opportunities and build resilience in the face of future challenges. We will champion inclusion so that everyone is valued, and we will encourage innovation and creativity. As we make our way towards 2040, we will work together to achieve our vision by building trust and collaborative relationships.

To guide us forward, we will focus on four themes that emerged from our shared planning process. These themes work together in harmony to deliver our vision for Newcastle as a place for everyone.



# Our city, our people

Newcastle is a proud community and is increasingly made up of people from diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, as well as people with diverse social identities and lived experiences.

**The Awabakal and Worimi peoples are descendants of the traditional custodians of the land situated within the Newcastle local government area (LGA), including the wetlands, rivers, creeks and coastal environments.**

Their heritage and cultural ties to Newcastle date back tens of thousands of years, and they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession. CN acknowledges the devastating impacts of invasion, settlement, and colonisation on Aboriginal people, and recognises the implications this continues to have on Aboriginal people and their communities today. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Awabakal

and Worimi peoples continues to enrich and inform the contemporary Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of Newcastle and the Hunter Region.

European settlement introduced a range of activities, from commercial scale farming to coal mining and industry. While the industrial sector continues to play a role in employment, a substantial and growing portion of our economy is now based around the service sector.

We are home to artists, galleries, museums, theatres, creative enterprises, education institutions, community groups, volunteer networks, social and health agencies and a community that embraces cultural expression, community connection and health and wellbeing of people. We have a diverse natural environment, from coastal headlands and beaches to wetlands, mangrove forests, steep ridges and rainforest gullies. Our suburbs are also diverse – from the heritage-lined streets of Newcastle East to the leafy homes of our middle suburbs such as Lambton and Kotara, and our more recent communities at Fletcher and Minmi.

# Our place in the region

Newcastle is located about 160 km north of Sydney. It is Australia's seventh-largest city and is the centre of the Greater Newcastle Region, the largest regional centre in NSW.

**Newcastle is the economic hub of the Hunter Region and accounts for approximately 30% of the Hunter's developed industrial space and 80% of its office space.**

Newcastle is home to the University of Newcastle; the John Hunter Hospital, which is the tertiary referral hospital for Northern NSW; and several world-class research organisations, including the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Hunter Medical Research Institute. Newcastle is the cultural heart of the Hunter Region, supporting Newcastle Art Gallery, Newcastle Museum, and the Civic Theatre and Playhouse, and hosting a diverse calendar of cultural events.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* and the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* are the key regional development planning documents that support Newcastle. The *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan* states that:

**'Metropolitan cities succeed and perform best when all tiers of government collaborate and work together with business, industry and community to deliver a shared vision for their city.'**<sup>1</sup>

Multicultural Neighborhood Centre Services Expo at the Station.



# Our population

Newcastle population 2021

**169,317**

Population by 2041

**202,049**

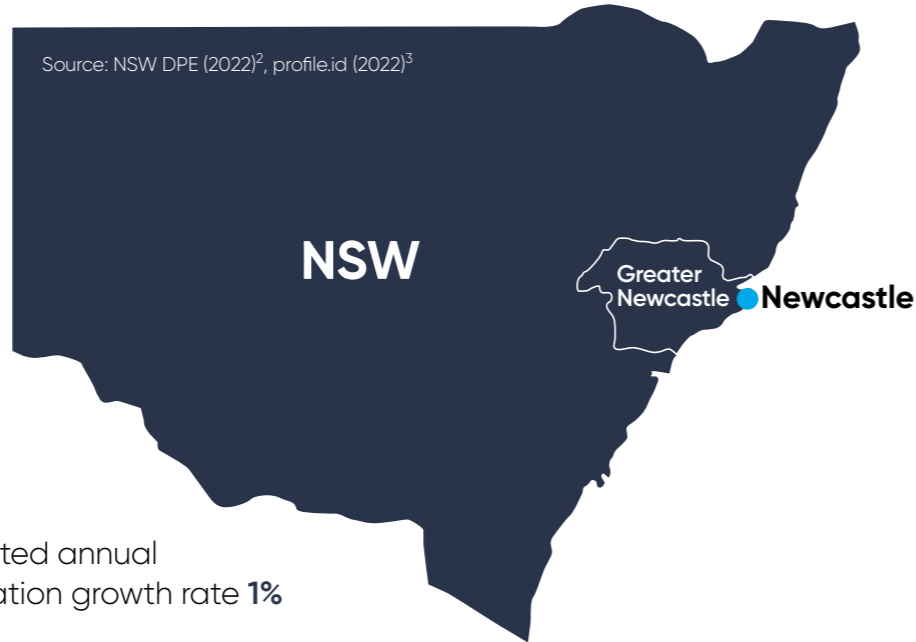
Greater Newcastle population 2021

**604,115**

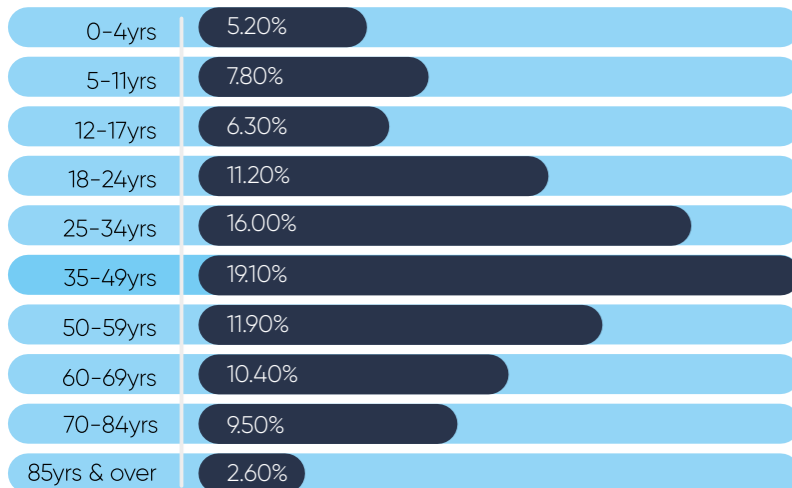
Population by 2041

**773,825**

Estimated annual population growth rate **1%**



## People<sup>4</sup>



## Housing Stress

Overall, 26.6% of households are experiencing rental stress and 5.6% of households are experiencing mortgage stress, while there were an estimated 1,073 homeless people based on 2021 Census results.

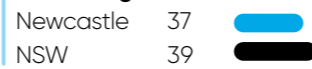
**20,000** people



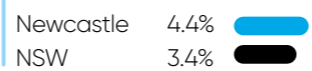
**Up to 11% of Australians may have a diverse sexual orientation, sex, or gender identity. In Newcastle this equates to approximately 20,000 people.**

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, (2014) Face the Facts

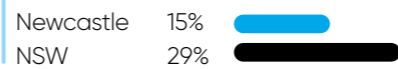
## Median age



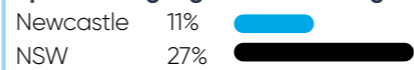
## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population



## Born overseas

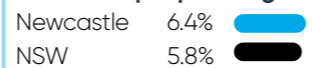


## Speak a language other than English



134 different languages spoken at home – most widely spoken included Mandarin, Macedonian, Italian, Greek, Arabic AND languages spoken with greatest need for translation included Arabic, Mandarin, Swahili, Persian/Dari and Tibetan.

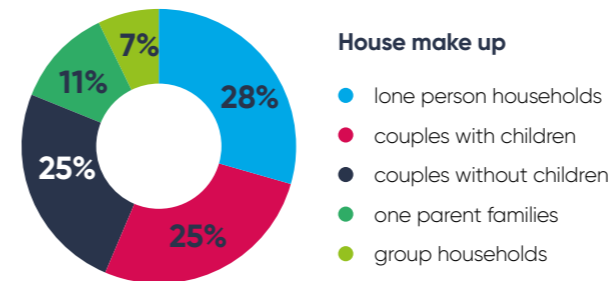
## Number of people living with disability



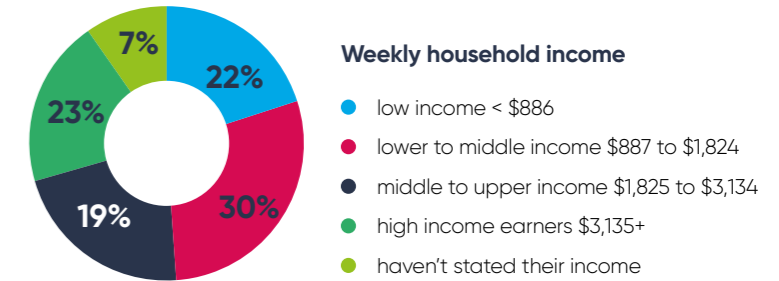
Needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long term health condition.

# How Newcastle lives and works

## Live



## Work



## 52 Suburbs

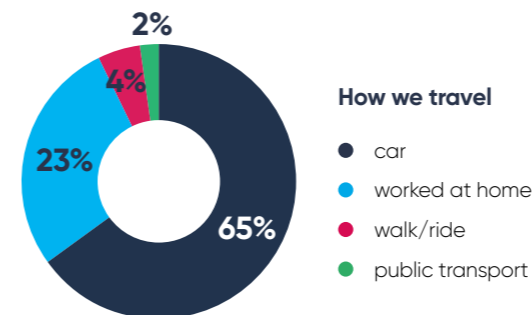
Average household size **2.34** people

Internet access at home **80.85%**

**33%** of dwellings are medium or high density

**29%** of residents fully own their home;

**30.3%** have a mortgage; **34.5%** are renting



**1** ferry crossing – Queens Wharf to Stockton

**2.7km** light rail, with **6** stations

**127** transport shelters

**850km** of roads

## Top 3 industry sector by employment

Health care & social assistance – creating **20,293** jobs

Education and training – creating **9,789** jobs

Retail trade – creating **8,803** jobs

## 102,800 jobs in Newcastle

**49%** live within LGA

Median weekly household income **\$1,802**

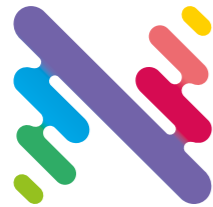
Unemployment rate **3.5%**

**53.5%** journey to work by car

## 36,331 businesses

**30%** of the Hunters developed industrial space

**80%** office space



City of Newcastle

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

City of Newcastle support(s) the Sustainable Development Goals

## Our global commitment

In September 2015, 193 countries committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals provide a global roadmap for all countries to work towards a better world for current and future generations.

CN declared its support and intention to deliver the SDGs and began proactively implementing action and engagement. We are committed to contributing to the achievement of the SDGs and have been working towards increasing and improving our contribution to this shared global vision.

**The SDGs are significant and will take time to achieve. However, it is important to recognise the steps we are taking to progress these goals. While CN recognises the importance of all 17 SDGs, we have focused our efforts on the areas where we can have the most impact in our local communities regarding the Social Strategy. Our strategy most closely aligns with 10 of the 17 SDG's depicted in the image and outlined in detail in the following table.**



**Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.**

Every human has the right to not live in poverty. The strategy will address this priority through its research and advocacy agenda, working to understand local challenges in detail and propose possible solutions in partnership with key stakeholders.



**Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.**

This strategy will collaborate with local business, government agencies and not-for-profit organisations to address local food insecurity challenges.



**Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, at all ages.**

This strategic priority will be supported by working in partnership with the health and community sector on identified local priorities, such as mental health and overall wellbeing, while promoting healthy lifestyles.



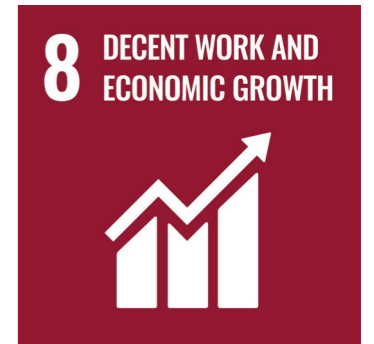
**Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

Several delivery programs will provide community members and organisations with opportunities for capacity-building, skills development and education.



**Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**

The strategy's delivery programs will include targeted support of the domestic and family violence sector and projects that address stigma, prejudice and discrimination experienced by people in Newcastle.



**Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.**

The strategy will respond to this priority by promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in collaboration with business and social enterprise sectors.



**Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.**

At the heart of the strategy, and embedded across all its delivery programs, is the aim of reducing inequalities to give all community members the opportunity to thrive.



**Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

The Strategy supports the development and retrofit of our city's infrastructure to be more energy-, water- and waste-efficient, as well as to prepare for the effects of climate change and build a climate-resilient city.



**Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.**

The strategy addresses this priority by enabling active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life, as well as access to CN and Newcastle LGA-specific information and data.



**Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

The structural changes needed to create a more socially just and inclusive city cannot be tackled by one organisation alone. To realise the priorities of the strategy, continued partnerships across governmental, non-governmental and private sectors are required.

# Our role

Many of the social issues and concerns facing Newcastle are complex and beyond the direct control of CN. This means we need to work with our community and a range of stakeholders to ensure our collective wellbeing.

State and federal governments are responsible for ensuring people have access to services such as health, education, police, housing, communications, emergency management and other social services to support and improve quality of life.

However, CN works with the state and federal governments, as well as community-based organisations, to help ensure our community development resources add value to each organisation's programs and projects at a local level.

To deliver our vision of a socially just and inclusive Newcastle, CN also works with other stakeholders, including community groups, local businesses and industry, educational institutions, and other service providers.

Depending on the activity, CN's role can include the following:



## Leadership

Identifying key community issues and stakeholders to respond where appropriate



## Research and strategy

Developing an evidence base to better understand, plan and advocate for the community, and developing policies and plans that respond to community needs



## Connections

Identifying and connecting different contributors to encourage innovation, maximise social outcomes and support social cohesion



## Advocacy

Drawing on our research and partnerships to advocate for our community to other levels of government and amplify the work of our local partners



## Partnerships and grants

Partnering with organisations and the community to achieve shared goals including through providing grants



## Capacity-building

Unlocking capacity within the community by equipping people with the skills they need to achieve social outcomes



## Delivery

Designing and delivering programs and initiatives that align with key strategies, plans and community needs, ensuring community engagement and involvement



## Infrastructure

Planning and delivering places and spaces that promote social connectivity, inclusion and a sense of belonging



Newcastle City Hall



# Our strategy

## Purpose

A social strategy provides a framework for CN and the community to remove barriers to inclusion and equal opportunity; encourage community connection and participation; celebrate our rich social and cultural diversity; and strengthen community health and wellbeing. In working towards this mission, we aim to achieve the vision of a socially just and inclusive place for all.

The strategy falls under and supports CN's *Newcastle 2040 CSP*, aligns with state and regional plans, and defines CN's social priorities until 2030, including its four-yearly action plans of which there will be two during the lifespan of the strategy. The *Action Plan 2023-2027* is included in the appendix.

## Who is this strategy for?

The *Social Strategy* is for the whole community. However, CN acknowledges that some groups in Newcastle are more likely to be excluded from social, economic and political opportunities due to discrimination and other access barriers. Therefore, this strategy focuses on enabling priority communities and groups to be involved in all aspects of life in Newcastle.

We also recognise that people's social identities, social positions and lived experiences are complex. The priority groups identified below often experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression. This means we need to take an intersectional approach to promoting social justice and inclusion in Newcastle.

Through research, consultation and understanding of local needs, priority community groups have been identified, with details included in the *Local Social Discussion Paper* (which can be accessed via our website).

### Priority community groups include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Socio-economically disadvantaged and newly vulnerable communities
- People with disability
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- People of diverse sexualities and genders
- Older people
- Young people

**It is important to note that people of diverse backgrounds acknowledged in the priority community groups above have always been citizens, workers, and visitors of Newcastle. They are contributors and participants in its vibrant culture, its infrastructure, its workforce, and its communities.**



Community members at the Newcastle Foreshore

## Guiding principles that shape our strategy

**Several principles shape our approach to supporting social justice, inclusion and positive social change in our city.**

### Those principles are:

- Social justice
- Relationships
- Evidence and innovation
- Regenerative practice

### Social justice

Social justice is about fair and just relations between individuals and society. It means making sure that all community members are empowered to make decisions about their lives. We promote social justice in Newcastle by ensuring fair distribution of resources, equal access to services, participation in decision-making, and equal rights in all areas, as outlined in these four principles:

**Equity:** Resources are allocated according to need with the aim of achieving more equal outcomes, particularly for those with greater needs or barriers to access.

**Access:** People have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

**Participation:** People can fully participate in community life and genuinely influence decisions that affect their lives.

**Rights:** Human rights are universal – everyone has the right to be treated with respect, equality and dignity. Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that people are entitled to, including economic, social, cultural and political rights.

**Relationships**

Relationships are key to inclusive, socially just communities. A relational approach embodies values such as respect, inclusiveness, honesty, compassion, cooperation, and humility. However, it is also about the connections between people and the planet.

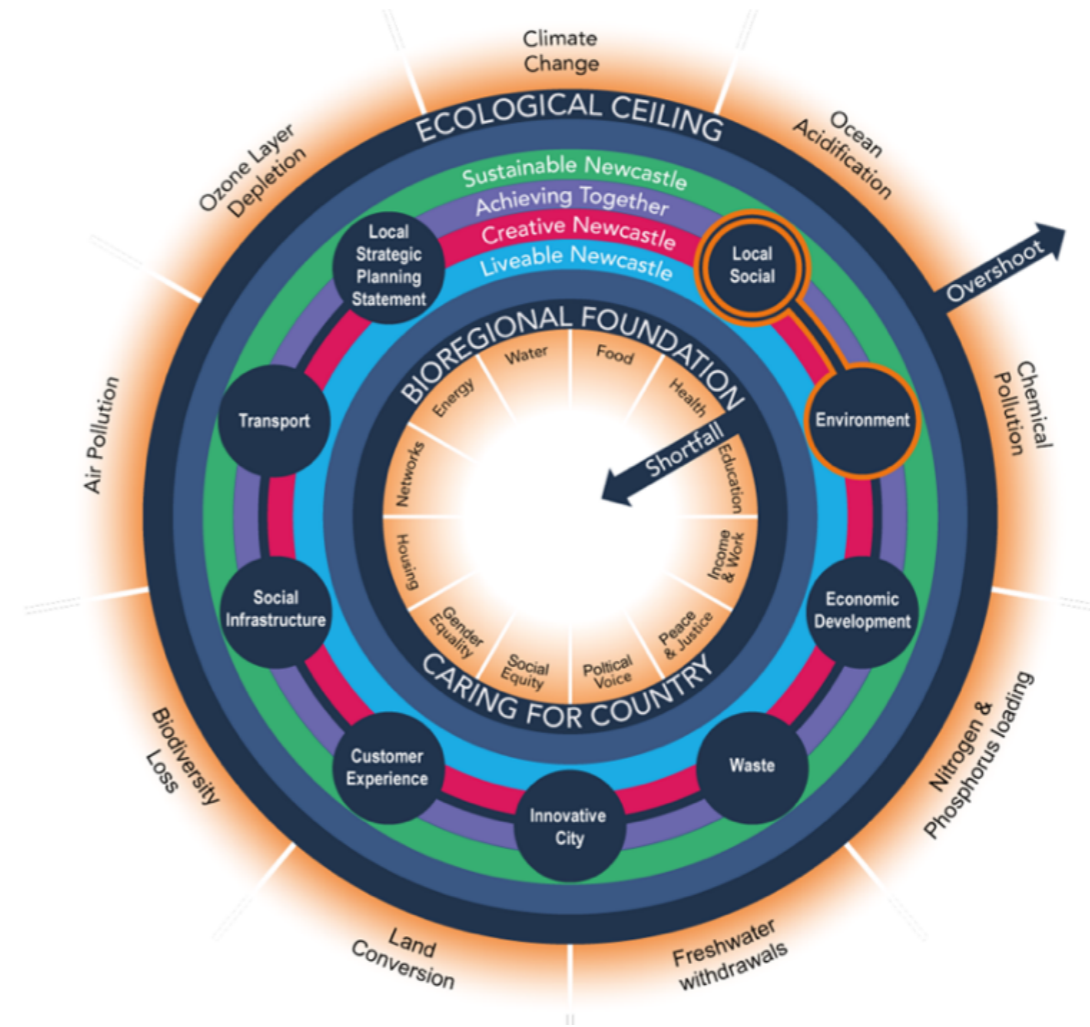
For CN, forming strong, respectful and transparent relationships and working partnerships is essential to achieving the desired social outcomes for our communities.

**Evidence and innovation**

Many community issues require integrated approaches that combine social, economic, demographic, cultural and environmental considerations. When developing local responses to these issues, innovation and evidence-based decision-making are essential. Evidence-based needs assessment and prioritisation, as well as meaningful monitoring and evaluation, can help us achieve the desired outcomes for our communities. Innovation in the public sector seeks to create value and impact by responding to public interest, addressing citizens' basic needs, and enhancing efficiency of public services. Continued innovation in our public sector and communities will assist us in adapting and responding to our ever-changing community context and needs<sup>6</sup>.

**Regenerative practice**

To strengthen the regenerative capacity of our communities, to regrow or be renewed or restored, we have drawn inspiration from two models: 'Doughnut Economics'<sup>7</sup> and the Greenprints approach<sup>8</sup>. These models link social needs with planetary boundaries. The objective of the 'Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries' shown below is to balance our social foundations (ensuring no one falls short on essentials like healthcare, education and food) and our ecological boundaries (ensuring a healthy climate, biodiversity, clean water and sustainable use of natural resources). Together, our strategies will help our community to thrive while using our resources wisely and not exceeding the capacity of our ecological systems.

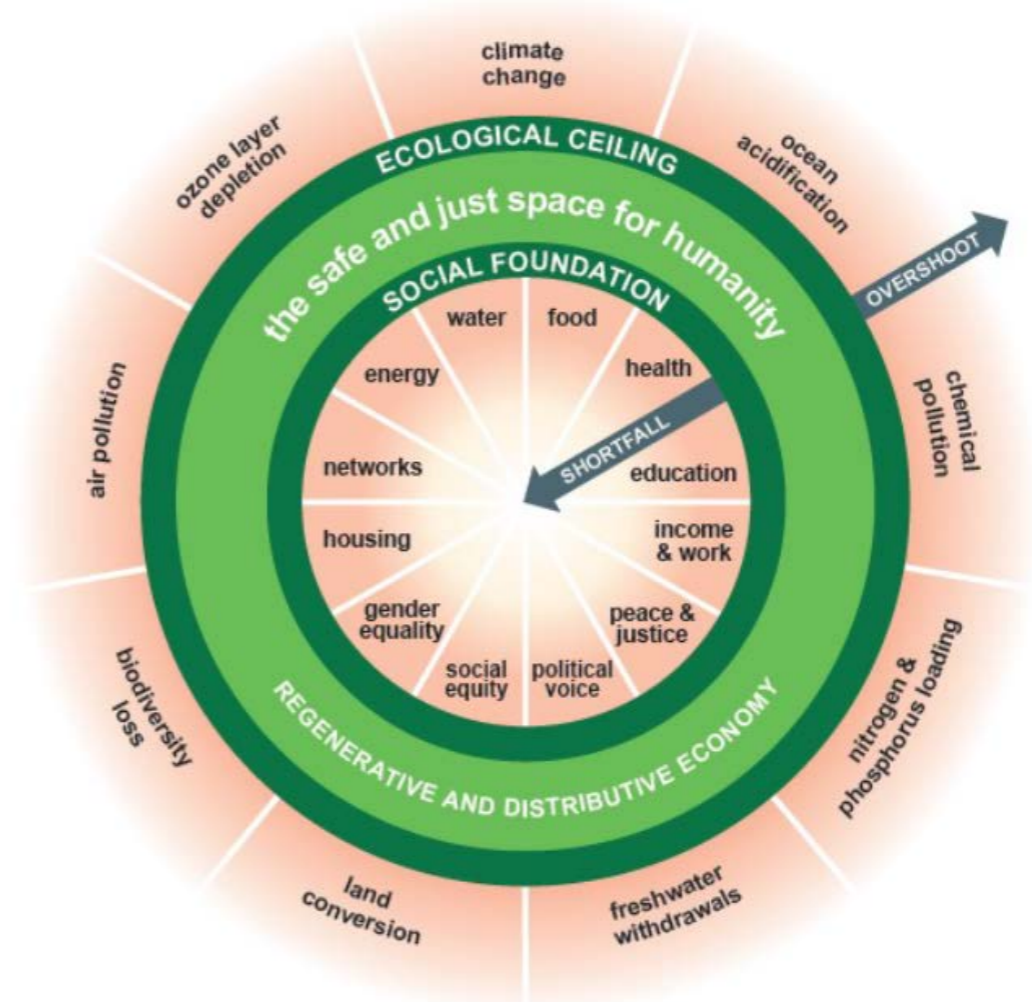


Reference: Australian EarthLaws Alliance; Michelle Maloney and James Lee 2022



City of Newcastle

Life in Colour - LGBTQ+ Art Prize & Virtual Exhibition at Fort Scratchley Function Centre



Reference: Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries Source: Kate Raworth (2017)

# Our engagement

## How we engaged

To inform development of the *Social Strategy*, CN carried out a range of engagement activities from June to September 2021 to better understand community sentiment around social justice and inclusion. Over 2,400 people participated in the community engagement process to help us shape this strategy.

The engagement activities targeted various key groups in our community who are often less represented, vulnerable or experiencing disadvantage. These groups included people of diverse sexualities and genders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from CALD communities, people living with disability, young people (16–29 years) and older people (70+ years).

## Engagement activities



**286**

people attended:

- 12 workshops and forums
- 5 community events



**2,120**

people completed surveys:

1,720 online survey exploring community participation, access to services, wellbeing, safety and social justice issues and matters.



400 short survey exploring social matters and participation in the community.

## Social media campaign

To encourage broad participation, CN delivered an innovative digital campaign, titled, Your Place.

A key component of the campaign, with the message, 'This is your place, too.' was the use of digital profiling to speak directly and personally to our target groups. Target groups saw creative content specifically about them, and when linked to the microsite, saw a microsite with curated content related to them.

The campaign achieved high levels of engagement with the social media posts, and more than 20,000 visits to the Your Place website.



Delivered through



Total video views:

**183,397**



Positive reactions:

**2,872**



Positive comments:

**467**



Website total visits:

**20,465**



Shares:

**625**



Unique visitors:

**8,013**

# Background

## Demographic overviews and trends

### Population projections and housing

With the Newcastle LGA population projected to grow to 202,049 by 2041, an estimated 19,450 new dwellings are needed to meet demand. The western corridor of the Newcastle LGA (west from Wallsend to the M1 freeway and LGA boundary at Minmi) will have significant development, largely on greenfield sites (undeveloped bush land), with up to 4,500 new dwellings accommodating up to 10,000 people built over the next 15–20 years. Urban renewal corridors in Adamstown, Broadmeadow, Hamilton and Islington will also see increased dwelling densities. In all these locations, services and facilities will be required to respond to increased population size and densities.

### Socio-economic disadvantage

As part of the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas Census (SEIFA)\*, the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage examines community disadvantage through 17 indicators generally associated with social wellbeing. The SEIFA Index of Education and Occupation brings together indicators associated with a community's educational and occupational wellbeing.

Overall, Newcastle has a relatively positive profile on each of these indicators. In 2016, it was in the least disadvantaged 33% of LGAs in Australia, and in the upper 18% of LGAs for educational and occupational status. However, there are some very disadvantaged areas in each of these measures of community wellbeing – particularly Beresfield–Hexham SA2 (Statistical Area Level 2), which is in the most disadvantaged 8% of SA2s in Australia and the lowest 2% of areas for education and occupational status; and Shortland–Jesmond SA2, which is in the most disadvantaged 9% of SA2s in Australia and the lowest 38% of areas for education and occupational status.

Other relatively disadvantaged areas are the SA2s of the Stockton area, Mayfield–Warabrook, Wallsend–Elernmore Vale and Waratah–North Lambton, which are all in the most disadvantaged one-third of areas in Australia. These areas of more severe disadvantage are generally associated with high concentrations of social housing; older and generally higher-density private rental housing; concentrations of older people, including those previously employed in lower-income employment; and/or younger age profiles, high rates of unemployment and low educational achievement<sup>2</sup>.

## Social challenges in Newcastle

The key areas of social need in Newcastle can be grouped into four themes: equity, inclusion, connection and health challenges. A summary of these challenges is provided below. Detailed findings are presented in the *Local Social Discussion Paper*, available via our website.

### Equity challenges

Equity concerns refer to housing affordability and insecurity; rising living costs; and inadequate access to transport, social infrastructure and services. Housing affordability and insecure housing is by far the most significant. It is estimated that there are currently 10,700 housing-stressed households<sup>10</sup> in Newcastle<sup>11</sup> and 7,000–7,500 affordable houses required by 2041, with 139 delivered to date<sup>12</sup>. There is also evidence of increasing homelessness locally, which includes people sleeping in vehicles and couch surfing.

Concerns regarding rising living costs in Newcastle were also reported. This includes the cost of housing and rentals, but also other living costs such as transport, food and health services, and disparity between living costs and wages. While Newcastle has relatively low levels of socio-economic disadvantage, there are significant differences within the LGA, with high levels of disadvantage experienced in some geographic areas and demographic groups. The COVID-19 pandemic further impacted those disadvantaged groups, with an increase in vulnerable community members experiencing housing, financial and food insecurity for the first time.

### Inclusion challenges

Inclusion concerns refer to inequality of opportunity, particularly within employment and training; discrimination against diverse groups; and limited opportunity to express and connect to culture. Access to meaningful employment with fair pay was a key concern for survey respondents, with the main barriers being a lack of job opportunities, job insecurity and an insecure future job market. The rapid pace of digital technology has created digital exclusion, or an environment where some people are being left behind, particularly older people, people with limited secondary education, people with low incomes, and linguistically diverse communities.

In Newcastle, a broad range of community members and stakeholders expressed concern about race-based and place-of-origin discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities, which has impacted their economic, cultural and social lives. Similar concerns were expressed around discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, which can exclude people from equal access to services, facilities and workplaces. Exclusion from economic and social life was also felt by older people and people with disability; the accessibility of the built environment was of particular concern.

Discrimination based on race, origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age and ability is increasingly an issue in Newcastle. While values of respect and fairness are at the heart of Australia's culture, one in 4 Australians experiences major discrimination through unfair policy, law, treatment or practices<sup>14</sup>. If diverse cultures, identities and experiences are not welcomed, people feel excluded, and worse, discrimination is perpetuated.

\*The SEIFA Index for Disadvantage results will only be updated with 2021 Census results in May 2023, while this strategy document was updated in December 2022.

### Connection challenges

Participating in and feeling connected to community life is an essential aspect of the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community. It contributes to social capital – that is, social relations that have productive benefits for the community, which is an outcome of community engagement and capacity-building processes. Elevated levels of social capital reduce inequalities in communities and contribute to social cohesion, which refers to the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper.

A lack of social connection within communities can lead to social isolation and loneliness, which can be harmful for both mental and physical health. Close to 30% of people in Newcastle live alone<sup>5</sup>, which is one of the primary risk factors for social isolation and loneliness<sup>6</sup>. In Newcastle, visiting an art gallery, museum or library and attending a community event, festival or celebration were the top activities reported by respondents to our online survey. Survey results indicate that barriers to participation in community activities include lack of time, health and wellbeing, feeling unsafe or uncomfortable (for people of diverse sexualities and genders), and difficulty accessing venues or transport (for people with disability).

Access to information and news has also been identified as a barrier to connection, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Vulnerable groups in particular have been excluded due to the reliance on digital information and channels, as limited face to face engagement.

### Health challenges

Health concerns include health and wellbeing issues, mental ill-health, risk of violence, and safety in the community. In Newcastle, and across Australia, mental ill-health and declining trends in physical health are a major public health issue. Increased demand for mental health services and concerning rates of suicide among younger populations have been observed. Overweight and obesity is a major public health issue and a leading risk factor for ill health in Australia. Nationally, 67% of adults over the age of 18 years are overweight or obese, with the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network reporting 69% of the adult population as overweight or obese<sup>7</sup>.

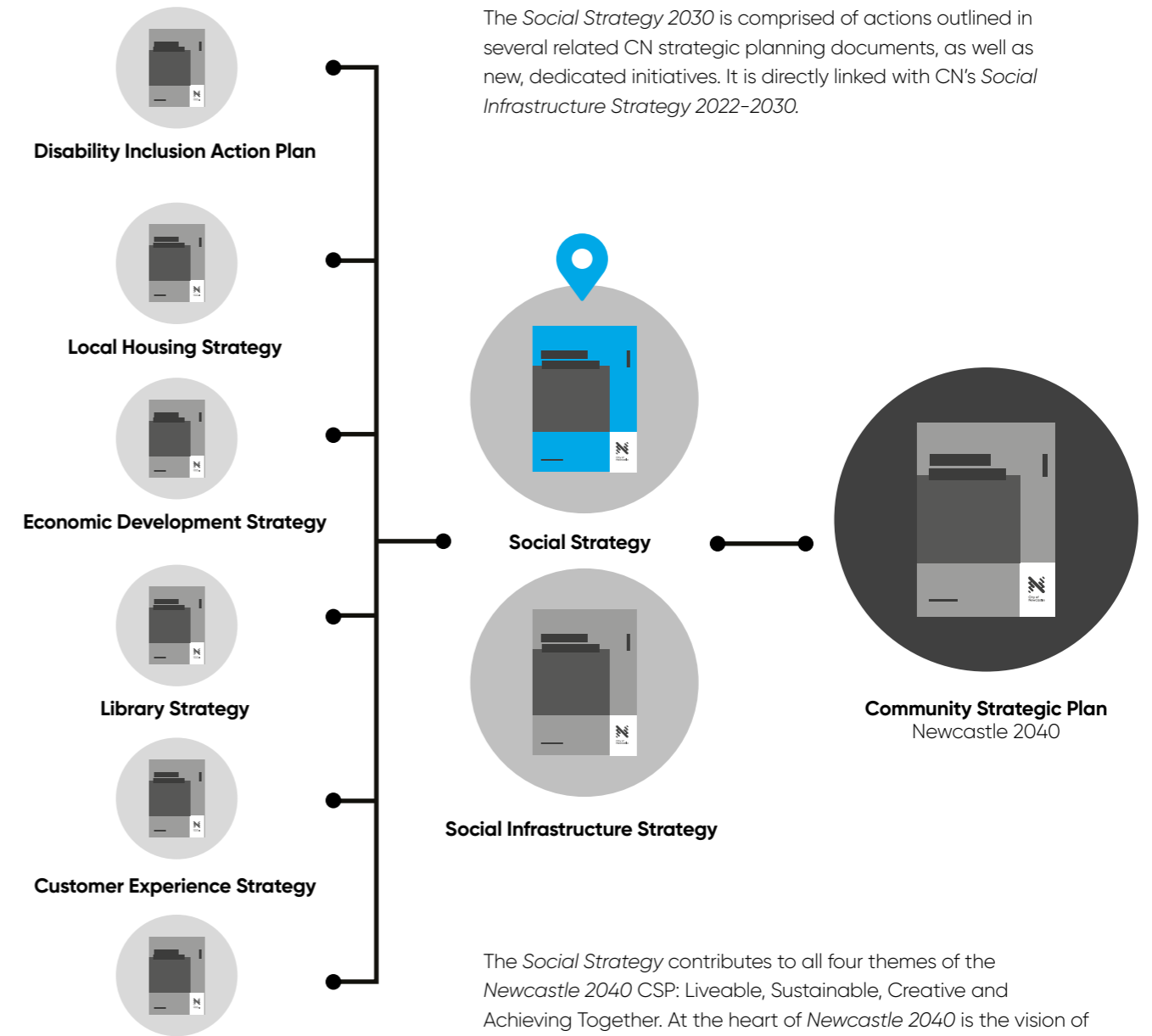
Global issues, such as climate change challenge the health and wellbeing of Australians, as well as the capacity of health and social support systems to respond. We know our climate is changing, with impacts in the form of rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, higher frequency of bushfires, rising sea levels and temperatures, and ocean acidification. There are strong relationships between the quality of the environment (air, water and food systems) and our physical and mental health and wellbeing. These relationships require attention as we continue to adapt to climate change and crisis events, and consideration of social impacts are essential.

Community safety is a complex issue, requiring collaborative efforts across agencies. Survey respondents generally feel safe at home, in their neighbourhood, and in the city during the day but feel less safe at night, both in their neighbourhood and in the city centre. Analysis by key groups revealed that people who identify as non-binary felt the least safe overall, followed by older respondents and people with disability. Domestic and family violence (D&FV) and drug- and alcohol-related crime were raised as two key areas of concern by community members and stakeholders.

# Strategic context

## City of Newcastle

The *Social Strategy 2030* is comprised of actions outlined in several related CN strategic planning documents, as well as new, dedicated initiatives. It is directly linked with CN's *Social Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2030*.



The *Social Strategy* contributes to all four themes of the *Newcastle 2040 CSP*: Liveable, Sustainable, Creative and Achieving Together. At the heart of *Newcastle 2040* is the vision of an inclusive city – a place for everyone. To achieve this, we must remove barriers to inclusion and equal opportunity, encourage community participation, celebrate our rich social and cultural diversity, and strengthen community health and wellbeing. These ambitions form the core mission of the *Social Strategy*.

While the *Social Strategy* contributes to all these themes, it will focus on the following priorities:

- 1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places
- 1.2 Connected and fair communities
- 1.3 Safe, active and linked movement across the city
- 1.4 Innovative and connected city
- 2.1 Action on climate change
- 3.1 Vibrant and creative city
- 3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation
- 3.3 Celebrating culture
- 3.4 City-sharing partnerships
- 4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning
- 4.2 Trust and transparency
- 4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach

## Policy drivers at state and regional levels

Key NSW legislative requirements and policies actively support CN's social planning responsibilities. The *Local Government Act 1993* outlines the social justice requirements placed on councils: 'Councils' long-term community strategic plans must be based on social justice principles and address social issues along with civic leadership, environmental and economic issues.' The NSW Government's Premier's Priorities represent the government's commitment to making a significant difference to enhance the quality of life of all people of NSW; the policy priority of breaking the cycle of disadvantage is particularly relevant to the *Social Strategy*. The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* also prescribes a specific legislative framework that has guided the development of CN's *Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)*.

CN also acknowledges key integrations with other NSW government strategies, including the *Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy*, *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan* and *Multicultural NSW Strategy Plan 2021-2025: Stronger together*. Federal government policies of significance to the *Social Strategy* include the *Social Inclusion Agenda*, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, *Creating Places for People: An Urban Design Protocol for Australian Cities*, and the social lens of the *National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy*.

Our work is also informed by policy and planning at the regional level. The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* and *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* are key regional planning documents that outline the vision, goals and actions needed to achieve greater prosperity for all people who live, work and study in the Hunter Region. Across these two plans, priority goals of relevance to the *Social Strategy* include supporting thriving communities and providing greater housing choice and jobs.

These plans recognise that celebrating and encouraging the diversification of communities provides a significant competitive advantage for the region on economic, cultural and social levels. Furthermore, as the region's population grows, providing diverse housing that is close to jobs and services, while ensuring enhanced environmental conditions and amenity choice, is essential for community resilience and quality of life.



Multicultural Neighborhood Centre Services Expo at the Station

# Overview of strategy priorities and objectives

The image below presents an overview of the four priorities, 16 objectives and four principles of the *Social Strategy*. At the centre of all we do are our people and our planet; we recognise the importance of learning about, and connecting with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, philosophies and practices about caring for Country.

The four key principles informing our strategic approach are:

- Social justice**

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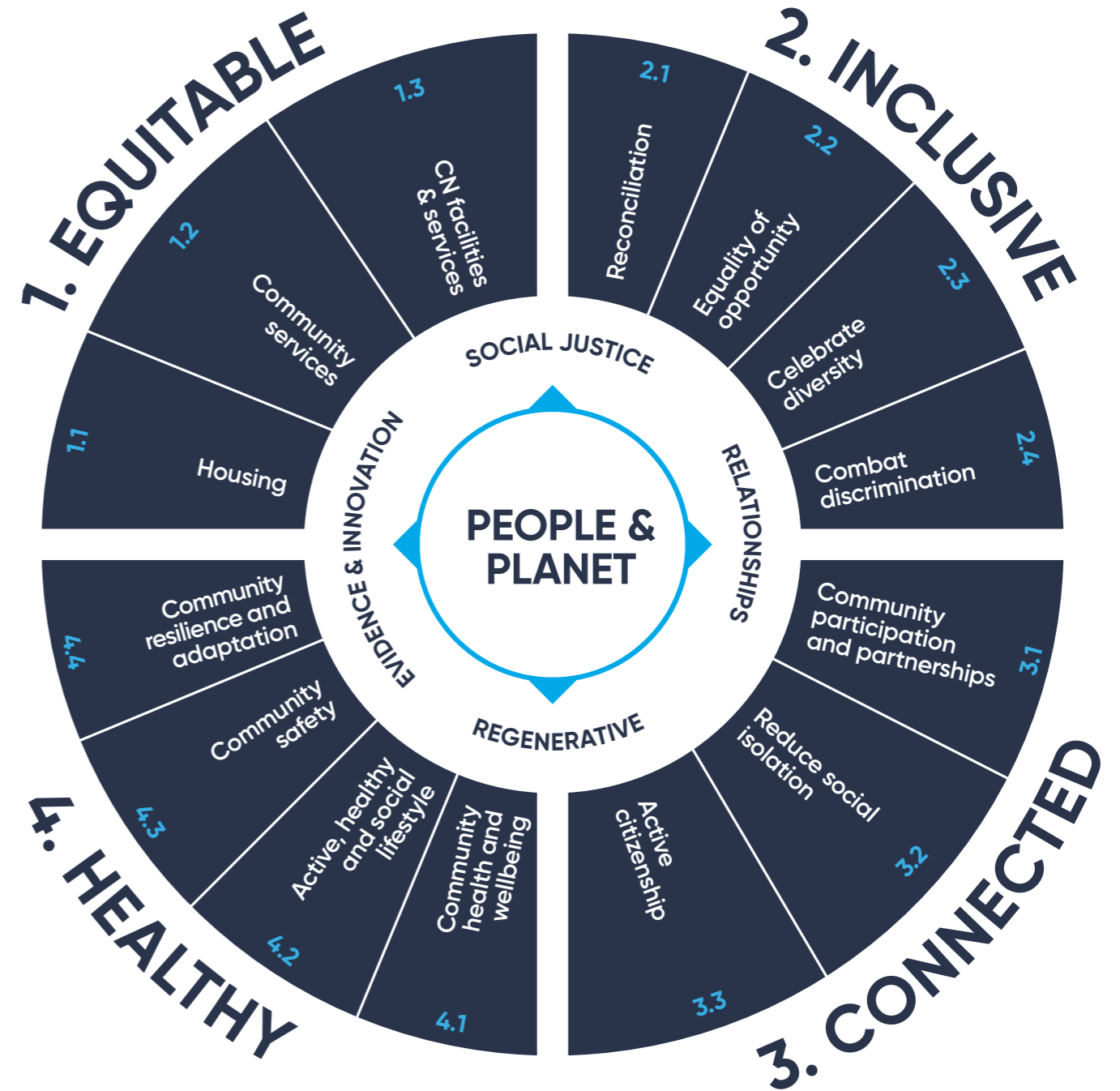
- Relationships**

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- Regenerative practice**

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- Evidence-based decision-making and innovation**



# Our priorities



## Priority 1: Equitable communities

<b>Priority</b>	To support access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing, as well as services, programs and facilities to improve quality of life and the strength of our community.	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>What do you want to achieve?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Support and advocate for access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing for all community members.</li> <li>1.2 Support the community services sector to deliver improved transport, health and social services.</li> <li>1.3 Provide equitable access to CN community programs, grants, services and social infrastructure.</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>What does success look like?</b>	Our residents have access to affordable housing, and homelessness has greatly decreased. Everyone can access inclusive transport, health and social services. Residents, workers and visitors are able to equitably benefit from CN community programs, grants, services and facilities.
<b>Community Indicator</b>	<b>How will you measure success?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of housing-stressed households in Newcastle LGA trending downwards.</li> <li>• Number of people sleeping rough in Newcastle LGA trending downwards.</li> <li>• SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage trending downwards, particularly in priority Statistical Areas Level 2.</li> <li>• Perceptions of affordable and diverse housing trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>• Perceptions of adequate and accessible public transport trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>• Perceptions of adequate and accessible medical, mental health and social services trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>• % of people living within 800m of social infrastructure trending upwards.</li> <li>• 2022 baseline through CN GIS mapped data.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to CSP</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Connected and fair communities</li> <li>1.3 Safe, active and linked movement across the city</li> <li>3.4 City-shaping partnerships</li> <li>4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning</li> <li>4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach</li> </ol>	
<b>Links to other City of Newcastle strategies/plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>Social Infrastructure Strategy</li> <li>Disability Inclusion Action Plan</li> <li>Newcastle Transport Strategy</li> </ul>	

## Case study

### COVID-19 Community Resilience Package

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. Within one month, CN responded to the crisis with its Community and Economic Resilience Package (CERP). The community resilience component of this package particularly focused on the most vulnerable and emerging at-risk members of our communities.

A Community Grants Program was established in 2020 to provide financial and in-kind support to mobilise assistance for community groups and organisations to scale and respond to community need during the pandemic. The first phase of the Program was the Rapid Response Grant program that was designed to free up early urgent funds for those in need. The second stage of funding, Boost Our City, assisted with ongoing COVID-19 related challenges and sought to directly support the health and wellbeing of the community.



**59** community groups and organisations were provided grants in 2020 and 2021 to support the health and wellbeing of our communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic



**\$863,309**

in community response grants were provided in 2020 and 2021 as part of the COVID-19 Community Resilience Packages

CN responded to the 2021 outbreak of COVID-19 with an expanded and comprehensive CERP 2.0. In terms of community resilience, CN provided rapid response and recovery grants for projects that responded to community need and targeted gaps in support not covered by State and Federal Governments.

Activities that were funded across these two community resilience packages included mental health and wellbeing support, provision of food and essential supplies, addressing social isolation, crisis support, technology assistance to connect to support or education services and more.



# Delivery programs

## Housing First

### Objective 1.1

Local government's role in housing and planning has traditionally been to comply with policies and targets set by the state governments. However, with increasing unmet housing need and homelessness being experienced across many parts of Australia, councils are extending their involvement to respond to the needs of their communities.

The Housing First delivery program seeks to support an increase in supply of social, affordable, adaptable and alternative housing by investing in targeted projects and developing partnerships, research, advocacy and brokerage which have a focus on homelessness and housing stress. These efforts will be underpinned by the development of an evidence framework of information, research and data surrounding homelessness and housing stress, which will inform initiatives and be available for use by community partners.

CN has already formed meaningful partnerships with the State Government's Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC). Over three years, commencing in 2021/22, CN is effectively waiving almost \$2 million annually in land rates paid by LAHC in return for a written commitment to reinvest more than double this amount in increased social housing supply within the Newcastle local government area. LAHC owns 4,300 social housing dwellings across the Newcastle LGA, and City of Newcastle is working with LAHC to fast-track projects such as the renewal of existing properties in Waratah West and Wallsend, where two dwellings have been converted into 10 homes.

CN has also formed a partnership with Home in Place (formerly Compass Housing), contributing \$3 million towards a \$6 million affordable housing development in Wickham. Eight of the 17 one and two-bedroom units have been reserved for key workers, with the remaining nine for social housing tenants.

## Community-Focused Services

### Objective 1.2

Available and accessible community-focused services, such as transport, health and social services, are an essential component of equitable communities. It is crucial to ensure there is a fair distribution of services based on diverse needs in terms of cost, location and appropriateness. These services are predominantly delivered by state governments and non-governmental organisations. However, as the arm of government that is closest to communities, local government has a role in advocating and planning for locally based services that meet the changing needs of the community. Without appropriate services to meet the needs of Newcastle's changing demographics, it will be increasingly challenging to promote and ensure ongoing participation of all community members, particularly those experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability.

As local government does not deliver transport, health and social services, collaboration with stakeholders across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors is essential. The Community-Focused Services delivery program will advocate for improved availability, affordability and access to transport, health and social services. This advocacy work will be based on an understanding of local needs, achieved through applied research on complex community service delivery issues and requirements. A key component of this delivery program will involve supporting local community sector networks to deliver joint initiatives in an equitable way. This will include facilitation of the Newcastle Interagency Network, community sector networking opportunities, and priority projects to support the delivery of effective, coordinated and innovative community services.



Count Us In Festival at the Digital Library

## City Access

### Objective 1.3

Social infrastructure refers to the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support a community's quality of life and wellbeing. CN offers a variety of services and programs through its social infrastructure network, including community facilities, libraries, cultural institutions and open spaces. CN's draft *Social Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2030* provides an integrated framework for the planning, funding and delivery of social infrastructure for the next 20 years. The *Social Strategy 2030* focuses on the activation of this social infrastructure through community programs and interventions, while ensuring the broad range of services provided to communities are applying equity, diversity and inclusion considerations in their design and approach.

All CN strategies and plans are underpinned by the *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026* (DIAP) outlining how CN will enhance access and inclusion for people with disabilities, including strategies for providing access to CN buildings, facilities, services, events and activities.



## Priority 2: Inclusive communities

<b>Priority</b>	Our vision is for Newcastle to be a place where the strength, resilience and living culture of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and our diverse, communities are respected, recognised and celebrated. Discrimination is combatted through education and commitment to change. Equality of opportunity in employment, skills development and digital inclusion is prioritised for all people. Inclusion is championed so that everyone across our communities is supported, valued and respected.	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>What do you want to achieve?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Foster reconciliation, inclusion and connection to culture and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse communities in Newcastle.</li> <li>2.2 Work towards equality of opportunity in employment, training and digital inclusion.</li> <li>2.3 Celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities.</li> <li>2.4 Combat discrimination and promote inclusive communities through respect, education and commitment to change.</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>What does success look like?</b>	All Newcastle residents value and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared local identity and the broader diversity of our communities is celebrated and embraced. Inclusive education and training opportunities are available for all which assists in reducing the digital divide and improves access to meaningful employment and fair pay. Newcastle is a place where people do not experience discrimination, and everyone is increasingly included in the social, economic and cultural life of the city.
<b>Community Indicator</b>	<b>How will you measure success?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual results of the CN Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Impact Measurement report show CN is progressing against its RAP commitments.</li> <li>• Newcastle LGA digital inclusion index trending upwards from 69.0 score in 2021.</li> <li>• Perceptions of meaningful employment opportunities trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>• Perceptions of feeling part of local community and that Newcastle is welcoming of diversity trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to CSP</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.2 Connected and fair communities</li> <li>1.4 Innovative and connected city</li> <li>3.1 Vibrant and creative city</li> <li>3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation</li> <li>3.3 Celebrating culture</li> </ol>	
<b>Links to other City of Newcastle strategies/plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>Social Infrastructure Strategy</li> <li>Disability Inclusion Action Plan</li> </ul>	

## Case study

### Tiddas in Muloobinba (Translation: Sisters of Newcastle)

Having a strong cultural identity and connection to Country is vital to the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. *Tiddas in Muloobinba* was developed and resourced by CN in close collaboration with locally based Yolngu artists and industry professionals, the Illume Girls.

The program was launched during CN's 2021 Youth Week Program and was the first of its kind for the city. The Illume Girls provided mentorship and collaboration to young women from out-of-home care and other vulnerable settings over a three-day program, culminating in a public performance.



Over **80 people** attended the public performance at the Civic Theatre Playhouse.



The *Tiddas* program was filled to capacity with eight young women attending a three-day intensive workshop.

The success of the program has laid a foundation for supporting aspiring young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in Newcastle.

Activities that were funded across these two community resilience packages included mental health and wellbeing support, provision of food and essential supplies, addressing social isolation, crisis support, technology assistance to connect to support or education services and more.

# Delivery programs

## Strength in Diversity

### Objective 2.1

Local governments are involved in activities that foster multiculturalism, promote social cohesion and work towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our LGA is made up of people from different cultures, countries and backgrounds, and this diversity adds to the vibrancy of our community. CN respects and acknowledges the unique culture, societies, history and traditional lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Newcastle. Through our *Reconciliation Action Plan 2021–2024 (RAP)*, we actively work towards closing the gap in employment, economic participation, health and education outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community. These efforts extend to all people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to ensure everyone is given the same opportunities and resources to thrive.

Through the Strength in Diversity delivery program, in partnership with the community, we will explore and guide how CN supports connection to Country and cultural expression for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as enrichment of the broader community. We will respond to the RAP's pillars of Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance by facilitating community partnerships that advance reconciliation and availability of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Another priority will be to foster awareness, tolerance and understanding of cross-cultural and lived experience through increased connections among diverse community members and the wider community. This will take the form of events, targeted initiatives and programs. Through continuous improvement and learning, CN will ensure the delivery of its services, programs and information is appropriate, sensitive and inclusive of people's needs according to culture, language and lived experience.

## Equal Opportunity

### Objective 2.2

Local government plays a key role in the promotion of local and regional economic development, employment growth and income equality. As outlined in CN's *Economic Development Strategy*, the local economy will organically deliver for most people, but government has a role to play in intervening where the market fails and some people are left behind. Supporting equal opportunity in employment, training and digital inclusion for all our residents will drive labour force growth, economic opportunities and community wellbeing. There are many government and non-government organisations involved in the delivery of employment, training and digital inclusion. As such, collaborative stakeholder efforts are essential, with local government able to support in facilitating and coordinating local opportunities.

Our Equal Opportunity delivery program will in partnership with initiatives through our local libraries, provide access to education, training and capacity-building opportunities and materials for community members, groups and organisations that contribute to positive economic and social outcomes for our communities. Improved digital literacy and inclusion will be fostered by initiatives that counter digital exclusion and facilitate community access to digital technology and equipment, education, training and lifelong learning opportunities. CN will collaborate on workplace equity, diversity and inclusion policies and practices that are informed by community perspectives for continuous improvement. Partnerships and collaboration with the local business sector through corporate social responsibility and social enterprise initiatives will be a key component in delivering improved opportunities for our communities. The Social Strategy will also help inform and support CN's internal Equal Opportunity goals.



Multicultural Neighborhood Centre Services Expo at the Station

## Welcoming City

### Objective 2.3

Local government, in partnership with local community agencies and businesses, is well placed to understand the complexity and nuances within and between its communities. In understanding these complex realities, we can create communities where everyone can belong, access opportunities, and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life. By being a welcoming and inclusive city for all people, including newcomers, we can leverage the social and economic ideas and innovation that are fostered by diverse community members who feel supported, resourced and encouraged.

The Welcome City delivery program seeks to celebrate diversity and create a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities. Initiatives will aim to strengthen a sense of belonging among residents and workers. These will focus particularly on new arrivals, international students and people from CALD backgrounds, but will recognise all diverse communities in Newcastle.

This delivery program supports CN development of external and internal communications that celebrates and reflects our diverse communities, so that people see themselves represented and included.

## Respectful Communities

### Objective 2.4

People who experience discrimination can suffer from significant stress-related mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, which in turn impact relationships, employment and overall health<sup>18</sup>. It is in everyone's interest to combat discrimination and support social inclusion. Through the Australian Human Rights Commission and NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, the Federal and State Governments manage Commonwealth and NSW anti-discrimination laws and compliance. However, local government also has a role to play in taking all reasonable steps to prevent unlawful harassment, discrimination, vilification and/or associated victimisation of staff, councillors and members of the public.

Under the Respectful Communities delivery program, initiatives that address stigma, prejudice and discrimination experienced by people in Newcastle will seek to combat these issues and promote inclusive communities.



## Priority 3: Connected communities

<b>Priority</b>	To support diverse communities to build strong social and cultural connections through active, engaged and informed participation. Facilitating access to community activities, events and gatherings can lead to better integration of isolated community members. Participation in community life can also have positive social, cultural, economic and political impacts. Community engagement and involvement leads to informed decision making, and enables citizens to contribute meaningfully to local social issues and support their communities.	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>What do you want to achieve?</b>	<p>3.1 Facilitate innovative, community-focused participation, collaboration and partnerships to support social cohesion and inclusive decision-making.</p> <p>3.2 Increase social connectedness among diverse communities to reduce social isolation, enhance trust and build supportive social networks.</p> <p>3.3 Enable active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life.</p>
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>What does success look like?</b>	The people of Newcastle are actively engaged in the civic, social and cultural life of our community. They have access to relevant, timely and trusted information which supports their involvement in informed local decision-making, while supportive social networks that address social isolation and enhance trust are strengthened.
<b>Community Indicator</b>	<b>How will you measure success?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in organised and personal social activities trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>Participation in political or civic events trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>% of Newcastle residents doing volunteer work trending upwards. ABS Census.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to CSP</b>		<p>1.2 Connected and fair communities</p> <p>3.1 Vibrant and creative city</p> <p>4.2 Trust and transparency</p>
<b>Links to other City of Newcastle strategies/plans</b>		<p>Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>Social Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>Disability Inclusion Action Plan</p>

## Case study

### Inclusive Conversations Series

During the past two years CN has developed a series of quality, inclusive and accessible virtual conferencing experiences for community stakeholders in the form of the Inclusive Conversations Series.



**70**

organisations actively participated in the Inclusive Conversations Series

The first Inclusive Conversations Series was delivered in July 2021. Titled 'Unpacking Vulnerability', the session attracted approximately 70 participants and over 40 community sector organisations. The second conference, 'Housing and Homelessness in Newcastle', was delivered in November 2021 and attracted over 100 participants and 70 organisations. Throughout both days, staff gathered valuable, evidence-based stakeholder feedback to assist in forming the response of CN and its partners to the homelessness and affordable housing crisis.

Key outcomes were:

- Presentation of international and local Housing First outcomes
- Identification of key gaps and data-driven approaches to responding to homelessness locally
- Creation of a platform for local community groups and providers to share stories, experiences and learnings and collectively design actions
- Sharing CN data and information on various policy positions in the housing affordability space.

Presenters across the two virtual forums included:

- CN Urban and Social Planning Teams – Affordable Housing Snapshot Data
- Newcastle Assertive Outreach and Access and Demand Teams – Department of Communities and Justice
- Policy Director, Shelter NSW
- Policy Manager, Homelessness NSW
- Research Manager, Y Foundations Finland
- Manager Strategic Partnerships, Compass Housing
- Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Link Housing
- Chairperson, Hunter Homeless Connect
- Hunter Community Alliance Listening Campaign
- Local Government NSW
- NSW Council of Social Services.



**200**

participants logged in to the forum over the two days

# Delivery programs



Rising from the Embers - Land and Cultural Festival at the University of Newcastle

## Engaged Communities

### Objective 3.1

Genuine community engagement provides opportunities to further align our service delivery and operations with the needs and expectations of our community, including vulnerable groups. It also empowers citizens and builds their capacity to participate in community life.

CN's community engagement program has significantly expanded in recent years and has strategic objectives around engagement with hard to reach groups and ensuring engagement activities are accessible and inclusive.

The Engaged Communities delivery program seeks to further improve our levels of engagement with underrepresented sectors of the community to best inform decision making. Further, there are opportunities for CN to increase the level of public participation, especially in partnership projects and programs.

## Social Connect

### Objective 3.2

A vibrant and inclusive city is one where diverse community members feel socially connected through supportive networks and activation opportunities, while enjoying a sense of belonging and harmony. CN plays an active role in nurturing a vibrant and inclusive city at a strategic and local scale through operating cultural and civic institutions, delivering cultural programming and events, delivering a major events program, and facilitating external stakeholders to deliver events and activations. To ensure everyone can enjoy a vibrant city, an inclusive city must also be guaranteed. Some people may face barriers to participation such as cost, distance, accessibility or safety concerns.

The Social Connect delivery program aims to strengthen social connection and trust both within and between our diverse communities, while also addressing social isolation. We will deliver community-based social, cultural and creative events and activities that appeal to diverse people, and increase active participation among sectors of the community who may face barriers. We will apply best practice approaches and evidence to inform our work (i.e., Social Connection 101). Another key component of this delivery program will involve connecting people with volunteering opportunities and delivering place-based services, projects and initiatives in and around social housing precincts and urban renewal areas.

## Active Citizenship

### Objective 3.3

Active citizenship is about citizens actively engaging in political society. Without this participation, democracy can suffer. Citizenship is not just a legal status; it is the way you participate in your community and the duties you carry out. Traditionally, this includes things like paying taxes and voting (duties) or going to school and voicing your opinions (rights)<sup>19</sup>. However, active citizenship implies exercising your rights and duties in a balanced way through civic engagement in your community, and can also include volunteering, activism, and participation in social movements to improve conditions for others or help shape the community's future<sup>20</sup>. As the level of government closest to the people, local government has a duty to support its communities in engaging with the civic life of the city.

The Active Citizenship delivery program will enable active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life. Key components of this work will include strengthening people's civic awareness and increasing civic participation through CN processes among diverse sectors of the community who do not usually engage.

CN formed Strategic Advisory Committees in 2019 to support civic participation. These are: Liveable Cities, Strategy and Innovation, Community & Culture, and Infrastructure. These committees place key staff in partnership with Councillors and members of the community who are subject matter experts in their related fields. In 2020, Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee marked 20 years existence. CN's Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee was established in 2017, following the adoption of Newcastle's first DIAP.



## Priority 4: Healthy communities

**Priority** To promote and support active and healthy communities that have strong physical, mental and spiritual health and feel safe and secure in the city. This priority also aims to address the social dimensions of climate change and crisis events. In developing programs and initiatives that support these outcomes, we work towards one of the fundamental rights of every human: the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without distinction of race, religion, political belief or economic and social condition<sup>22</sup>.

Objective	What do you want to achieve?
	4.1 Contribute to improvements in community health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health.
	4.2 Encourage an active, healthy and social lifestyle supported by local facilities, services and spaces.
	4.3 Contribute to improvements in community safety, including domestic and family violence and perceptions of safety.
	4.4 Facilitate community resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change and crises.

**Outcome** **What does success look like?** The people of Newcastle enjoy improved health and wellbeing, with an active and social lifestyle that contributes to physical and mental health. Newcastle is a safe city, both in the public domain and within households. Communities are resilient and adaptable to climate change and crises and are supported equitably to ensure no one is left behind.

Community Indicator	How will you measure success?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate of physical activity trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>Satisfaction with physical and mental health trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>Perception of sporting facilities and active lifestyle opportunities meeting needs of community trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> <li>Local crime offences, particularly domestic and non-domestic violence related assault, theft and fraud, trending downwards. NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research annual crime trends data.</li> <li>Perception of safety in city centre and local neighbourhood trending upwards. 2022 baseline through CN Liveability &amp; Wellbeing Survey.</li> </ul>

Links to CSP
1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places
1.2 Connected and fair communities
1.3 Action on climate change

Links to other City of Newcastle strategies/plans
Social Infrastructure Strategy
Disability Inclusion Action Plan
After Dark Strategy

## Case study

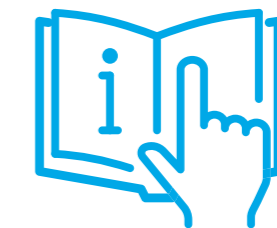
### Five years supporting the health and wellbeing of older people in Newcastle

CN has played a role in supporting older people to lead active, healthy and engaged lives by connecting them to information about services and activities in the community. The Newcastle Seniors Directory (2015–2020) promoted a range of activities, including active pursuits such as sport, dancing, education and lifelong learning, music and performance, and other civic and social clubs. The directory also promoted health and wellbeing services, including access to My Aged Care, legal support and support for carers. Sometimes, just knowing where to go is the biggest hurdle.



**Newcastle Seniors Directory**  
produced annually since 2017

The Seniors Directory also provided content to inspire people to live active, healthy and engaged lives. In 2020, the directory promoted cycling in the city and featured Novacare's Cycling Without Age and Newcastle Cycleways Movement, which demonstrate that there is no age limit to staying mobile and healthy. Information from the Newcastle Seniors Directory is now included on My Community Directory, an online information platform that has been localised for the Newcastle community.



Over **5000 print copies** distributed and available on CN's website

# Delivery programs



*A Day in the Garden, Hunter Multicultural Communities*

## Community Health and Wellbeing

### Objective 4.1

Numerous and diverse organisations, both public and private, are involved in the delivery of healthcare services with the State Government responsible for delivery of clinical health services.

Through a collaborative approach with government and non-government organisations, the Community Health and Wellbeing program will deliver initiatives aimed at improving health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health and identified local priority issues. The program will be further strengthened by advocacy initiatives that address entrenched social and economic disadvantage, acknowledging the importance of the Social Determinants of Health as the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes; increase the affordability and accessibility of healthy and nutritious food; and support public health education at a local level on topics such as nutrition, obesity and mental health, as well as the importance of the first 2000 days of life for babies and young children.

## Active People

### Objective 4.2

Local government is responsible for creating built environments and public places where people can live healthy, active lives and participate in their communities. When we enhance the social impact of urban development and renewal through best-practice design for all ages and abilities, we further enhance our community's enjoyment of the public domain and infrastructure. Innovative activation of public and private spaces, land and buildings can contribute to positive economic, social and cultural outcomes.

The Active People program will seek to increase access to community-based sport and recreation opportunities for people experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or exclusion. Collaboration with the planning, urban design and development sectors will increase the positive social impact of public domain enhancements, urban development and renewal, while enhancing personal amenity for people of all ages and abilities.

## Safe City

### Objective 4.3

NSW Police has a lead role in crime prevention and detection as well as perceptions of safety within the community. Local government works closely with NSW Police, as well as other government agencies and non-government organisations, to assist in the delivery of safer outcomes for the community. Governments at all levels, communities and businesses need to be collaborative and actively engaged to create safe communities. Key roles for local government include managing public space and building design, engaging in social planning, and developing policies that assist in achieving safer outcomes.

To support community safety and crime prevention, the Safe City program will prioritise several actions. Improvements in community safety will be directed by best practice in public domain design and collaborative initiatives with government and non-government organisations to address identified community needs. Delivery of projects that improve public safety and perceptions of safety will be facilitated by initiatives such as inclusive education campaigns and space activations, using current safety evidence and crime data to understand the Newcastle-specific situation. The program will also continue to support local domestic and family violence organisations such as Got Your Back Sista and Nova for Women and Children to respond to need in the community and build capacity within the sector.

## Community Resilience and Adaptation

### Objective 4.4

As our climate changes, our health and wellbeing are challenged – as is the ability of our health and social systems to support us. The relationships between our environment, our physical and mental health, and our social domain must be examined as we continue to adapt to climate change and crises.

Particular attention needs to be given to vulnerable communities. Adaptation must be inclusive and account for the underlying factors that contribute to vulnerability, such as issues related to geography, culture, age, gender, diversity, disability and socio-economic status. (For example, heatwaves can disproportionately impact the elderly, children, outdoor workers and those suffering from chronic disease).

Along with state and federal governments, local government has a responsibility to adopt policies and practices that prepare for the unavoidable impacts of crisis events and climate change through community resilience-building and adaptation. Supporting the community's capacity to respond to crises is another key component of this delivery program. Community resilience-building will be supported by neighbourhood-based social network and emergency-preparedness initiatives.

# Appendix: Action Plan



2023 - 2027



Priorities	1. Equitable communities	2. Inclusive communities	3. Connected communities	4. Healthy communities
	<p><b>VISION:</b> Support access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing, services, programs and facilities to improve quality of life and the strength of our community</p>	<p><b>VISION:</b> Acknowledge, value and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' strength, resilience and living culture. Recognise and embrace the diversity of community members. Champion inclusion across our community so that everyone is supported, valued and respected</p>	<p><b>VISION:</b> Support diverse communities to build strong social and cultural connections through acceptance, participation and inclusion, so that everyone feels welcome in Newcastle and enjoys a sense of belonging and place</p>	<p><b>VISION:</b> Promote and support active, healthy and resilient communities that have strong physical, mental and spiritual health and feel safe and secure in the city</p>
Objectives	<p>1.1 Support and advocate for access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing for all community members</p>	<p>2.1 Foster reconciliation, inclusion and connection to culture and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse communities in Newcastle</p>	<p>3.1 Facilitate innovative, community-focused participation, collaboration and partnerships to support social cohesion and inclusive decision-making and address local social issues</p>	<p>4.1 Contribute to improvements in community health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health</p>
	<p>1.2 Support the community services sector to deliver improved transport, health and social services</p>	<p>2.2 Work towards equality of opportunity in employment, training and digital inclusion</p>	<p>3.2 Increase social connectedness among diverse communities to reduce social isolation, enhance trust and build supportive social networks</p>	<p>4.2 Encourage an active, healthy and social lifestyle supported by local facilities, services and spaces</p>
	<p>1.3 Provide equitable access to CN community programs, grants, services and social infrastructure</p>	<p>2.3 Celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities</p>	<p>3.3 Enable active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life</p>	<p>4.3 Contribute to improvements in community safety, including domestic and family violence and perceptions of safety</p>
		<p>2.4 Combat discrimination and promote inclusive communities through respect, education and commitment to change</p>		<p>4.4 Facilitate community resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change and crises (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic)</p>





## Priority 1 Equitable communities

VISION: Support access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing, services, programs and facilities to improve quality of life and the strength of our community

Priority 1. Equitable communities VISION: Support access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing, services, programs and facilities to improve quality of life and the strength of our community					
Objective	Delivery Program	Action	Timeframe	Role	CSP Priority
1.1 Support and advocate for access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing for all community members	Housing First	1.1.1. Work in partnership to facilitate increased supply and access to social, affordable, adaptable and alternative housing and address issues of homelessness and rough sleeping.	Long term	Partner and advocate	1.2 Connected and fair communities
1.2 Support the community services sector to deliver improved transport, health and social services	Community Focused Services	1.2.1. Advocate for improved transport, health and social services availability and access with a focus on people with disability, low-income earners and people who experience other forms of disadvantage.	Long term	Advocate	1.3 Safe, active and linked movement across the city
	Community Focused Services	1.2.2. Identify initiatives that provide support to the Newcastle Community Sector Networks through research and programs, with a focus on western suburbs of Newcastle.	Short and medium term	Partner	4.1. Inclusive and integrated planning
1.4 Provide equitable access to CN community programs, grants, services and social infrastructure	City Access	1.3.1 Informed by local perspectives, increase Inclusion, Diversity & Equity awareness within the organisation for continuous improvement.	Medium term	Lead and partner	1.2 Connected and fair communities 4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning
	City Access	1.3.2. Continue to deliver grants aimed at social inclusion as part of the Community Grant Funding Program.	Short, medium and long term	Lead and partner	1.2 Connected and fair communities 4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach
	City Access	1.3.3. Undertake an Intergenerational Places and Spaces Plan which analyses and documents actions for better access, inclusion and programming across identified social infrastructure within the LGA	Medium and long term	Lead and advocate	1.1. Enriched neighbourhoods and places 1.2 Connected and fair communities



## Priority 2 Inclusive communities

VISION: Recognise and embrace the diversity of community members lived experience. Champion inclusion across our community so that everyone is supported, valued and respected, while acknowledging the unique culture, knowledge, history and traditional lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Newcastle.

Priority 2. Inclusive communities					
VISION: Recognise and embrace the diversity of community members lived experience. Champion inclusion across our community so that everyone is supported, valued and respected, while acknowledging the unique culture, knowledge, history and traditional lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Newcastle.					
Objective	Delivery Program	Action	Timeframe	Role	CSP Priority
<b>2.1 Foster reconciliation, inclusion and connection to culture and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse communities in Newcastle.</b>	<b>Strength in Diversity</b>	2.1.1. Respond to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021 – 2024 pillars by facilitating community partnerships which advance reconciliation and opportunities available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	Short, medium and long term	Partner and advocate	1.2 Connected and fair communities 3.3. Celebrating culture 4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach
	<b>Strength in Diversity</b>	2.1.2. Amplify the stories and voices of diverse community leaders and representatives to learn about and celebrate their cultures.	Short, medium and long term	Lead and partner	1.2 Connected and fair communities
<b>2.2 Work towards equality of opportunity in employment, training and digital inclusion</b>	<b>Equal Opportunity</b>	2.2.1. Provide access to education, training and capacity-building opportunities for community members, groups and organisations that exist for social connection, community wellbeing and voluntary purposes.	Short and medium term	Lead	3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation 1.2 Connected and fair communities
	<b>Equal Opportunity</b>	2.2.2. Support business sector for inclusion, diversity and equity outcomes and progress, including through corporate responsibility agendas and social enterprise initiatives.	Medium and long term	Lead and partner	3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation 1.2 Connected and fair communities
<b>2.3 Celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities</b>	<b>Welcoming City</b>	2.3.1. Embed inclusion, diversity and equity principles in CN's external and internal communications and support initiatives which welcome new residents to our city.	Medium and long term	Lead	1.2 Connected and fair communities 3.3. Celebrating culture
<b>2.4 Combat discrimination and promote inclusive communities through respect, education and commitment to change</b>	<b>Respectful Communities</b>	2.4.1. Deliver or support projects and initiatives that address stigma, prejudice and discrimination and foster cross-cultural and lived experience awareness, acceptance and understanding.	Short, medium and long term	Lead, partner and advocate	1.2 Connected and fair communities



## Priority 3

### Connected communities

VISION: Support diverse communities to build strong social and cultural connections through acceptance, participation and inclusion, so that everyone feels welcome in Newcastle and enjoys a sense of belonging and place.

Priority 3. Connected communities					
VISION: Support diverse communities to build strong social and cultural connections through acceptance, participation and inclusion, so that everyone feels welcome in Newcastle and enjoys a sense of belonging and place.					
Objective	Delivery Program	Action	Timeframe	Role	CSP Priority
3.1 Facilitate innovative, community-focused participation, collaboration and partnerships to support social cohesion and inclusive decision-making and address local social issues	Engaged Communities	3.1.1. Undertake engagement with community groups and community sector in the development and delivery of identified social, cultural, creative and place-based projects and initiatives (a community development approach).	Medium and long term	Advocate and lead	4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach 1.2 Connected and fair communities
3.2 Increase social connectedness among diverse communities to reduce social isolation, enhance trust and build supportive social networks.	Social Connect	3.2.1. Identify and deliver activities, place-based approaches and volunteer opportunities which support social connectedness.	Medium term	Lead and partner	1.2 Connected and fair communities
3.3 Enable active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life.	Active Citizenship	3.3.1. Provide opportunity for diverse community members to participate citizenship and civic life by increasing people's civic awareness and leadership.	Medium term	Lead and advocate	4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning 1.2 Connected and fair communities



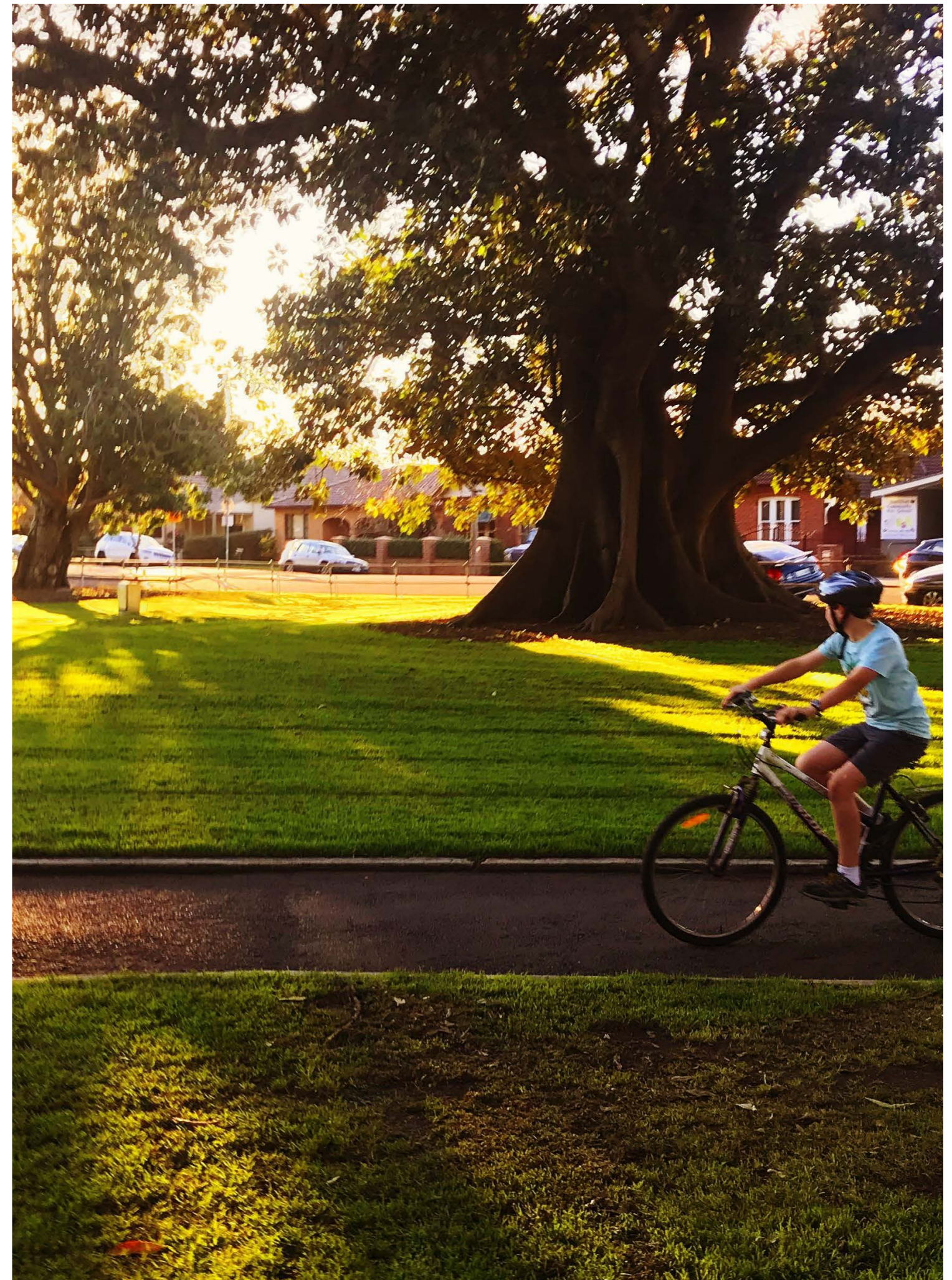
## Priority 4 Healthy communities

VISION: Promote and support active, healthy and resilient communities that have strong physical, mental and spiritual health and feel safe and secure in the city

Priority 4. Healthy communities					
VISION: Promote and support active, healthy and resilient communities that have strong physical, mental and spiritual health and feel safe and secure in the city					
Objective	Delivery Program	Action	Timeframe	Role	CSP Priority
4.1 Contribute to improvements in community health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health.	Community Health and Wellbeing	4.1.1. Collaborate with partners in the health and community sector to deliver projects and initiatives aimed at improving community health and wellbeing, with a focus on identified local priority issues.	Medium and long term	Partner and advocate	1.2 Connected and fair communities
4.2 Encourage an active, healthy and social lifestyle supported by local facilities, services and spaces.	Active People	4.2.1. Advocate for increased public participation in public domain and city planning consultative processes to support sense of belonging and inclusion, while increasing access to community-based sport, activities and recreation for people experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or exclusion.	Medium and long term	Advocate	1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places 1.2 Connected and fair communities
4.3 Contribute to improvements in community safety, including domestic and family violence and perceptions of safety.	Safe City	4.3.1. Work in partnership with agencies on identified projects that improve public safety and perceptions of safety with the Newcastle LGA.	Medium and long term	Partner	1.1. Enriched neighbourhood and places 1.2 Connected and fair communities
4.4 Facilitate community resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change and crises.	Community Resilience and Adaptation	4.4.1. Deliver targeted initiatives to support diverse and vulnerable communities' adaptation to climate change impacts and resilience to shocks and emergencies (eg floods, bushfires) through community programs and emergency preparedness.	Long term	Partner and advocate	1.2 Action on climate-change

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Cycling through Gregson Park

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