

**ATTACHMENTS DISTRIBUTED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

**CCL 25/07/2023 – ADOPTION OF SOCIAL STRATEGY**

- |     |                      |  |
|-----|----------------------|--|
| 8.2 | <b>Attachment A:</b> | Social Strategy 2030                                     |
| 8.2 | <b>Attachment B:</b> | Social Strategy – Public Exhibition<br>Engagement Report |
| 8.2 | <b>Attachment C:</b> | Public Exhibition Engagement Summary<br>Report           |
| 8.2 | <b>Attachment D:</b> | Local Social Discussion Paper                            |

**DISTRIBUTED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

# Social Strategy

2030



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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**

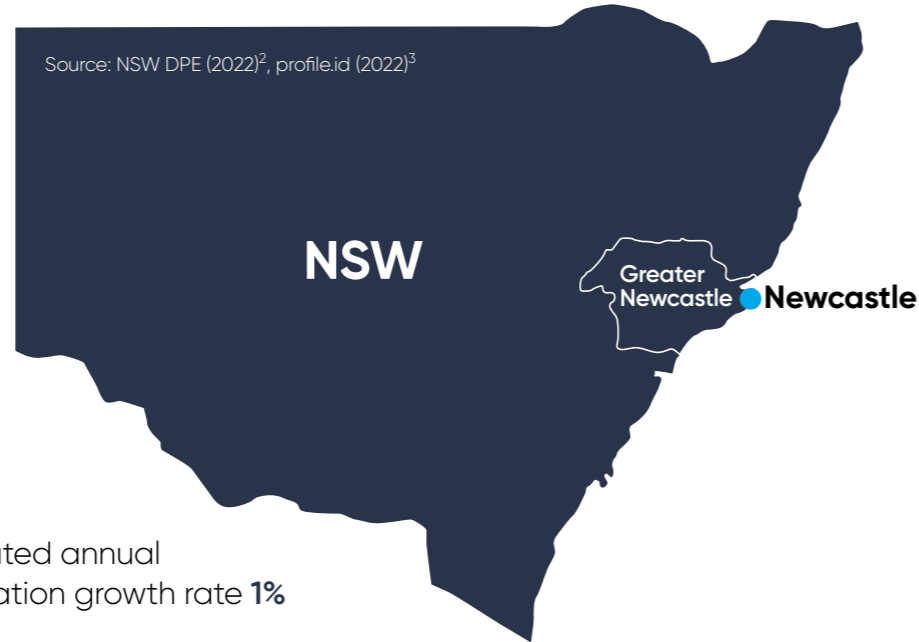
Greater Newcastle population 2021

**604,115**

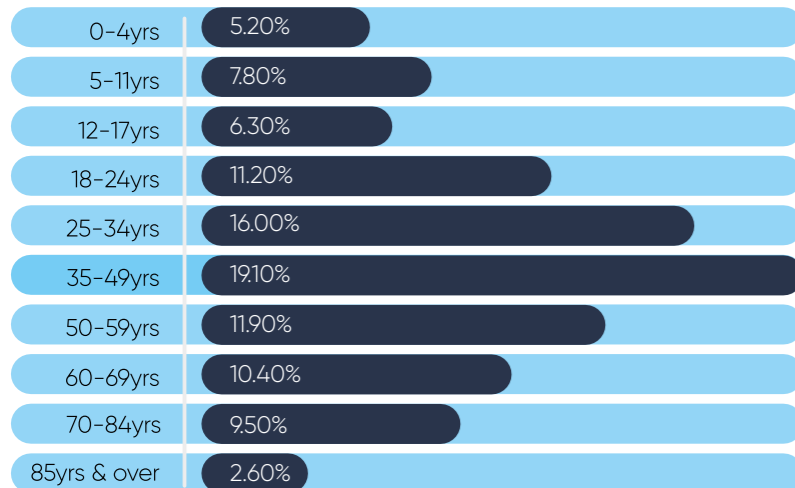
Population by 2041

**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.

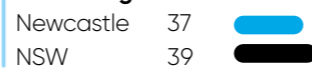
**20,000** people



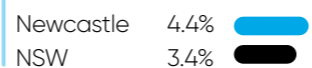
Up to 11% of Australians may have a diverse sexual orientation, sex, or gender identity. In Newcastle this equates to approximately 20,000 people.

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

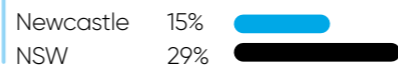
### Median age



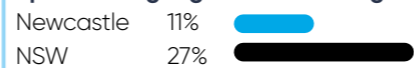
### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population



### Born overseas

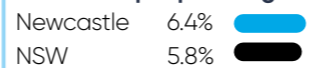


### Speak a language other than English



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.

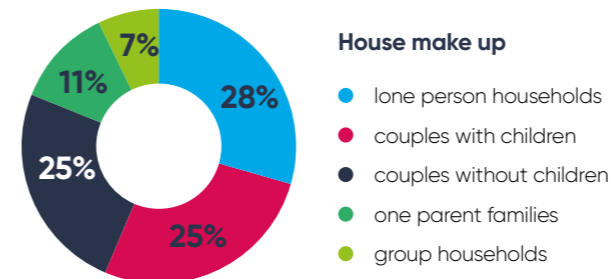
### Number of people living with disability



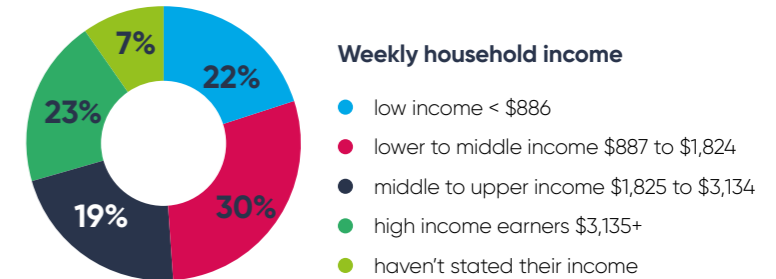
Needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long term health condition.

## How Newcastle lives and works

### Live



### Work



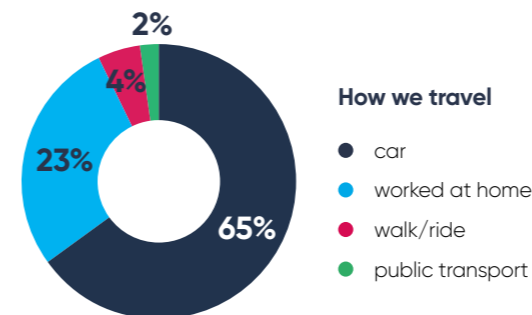
### 52 Suburbs

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



# 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.

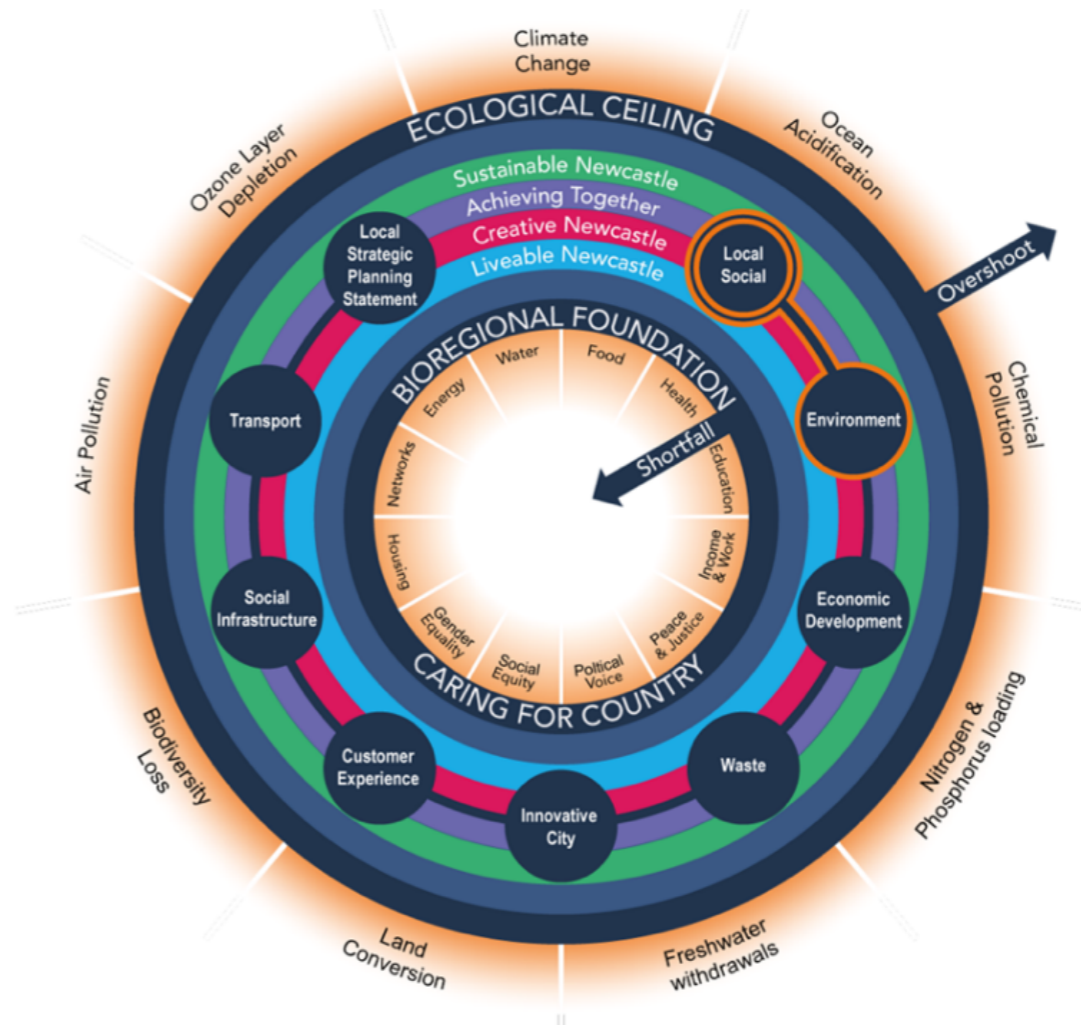
For CN, forming strong, respectful and transparent relationships and working partnerships is essential to achieving the desired social outcomes for our communities.

**Evidence and innovation**

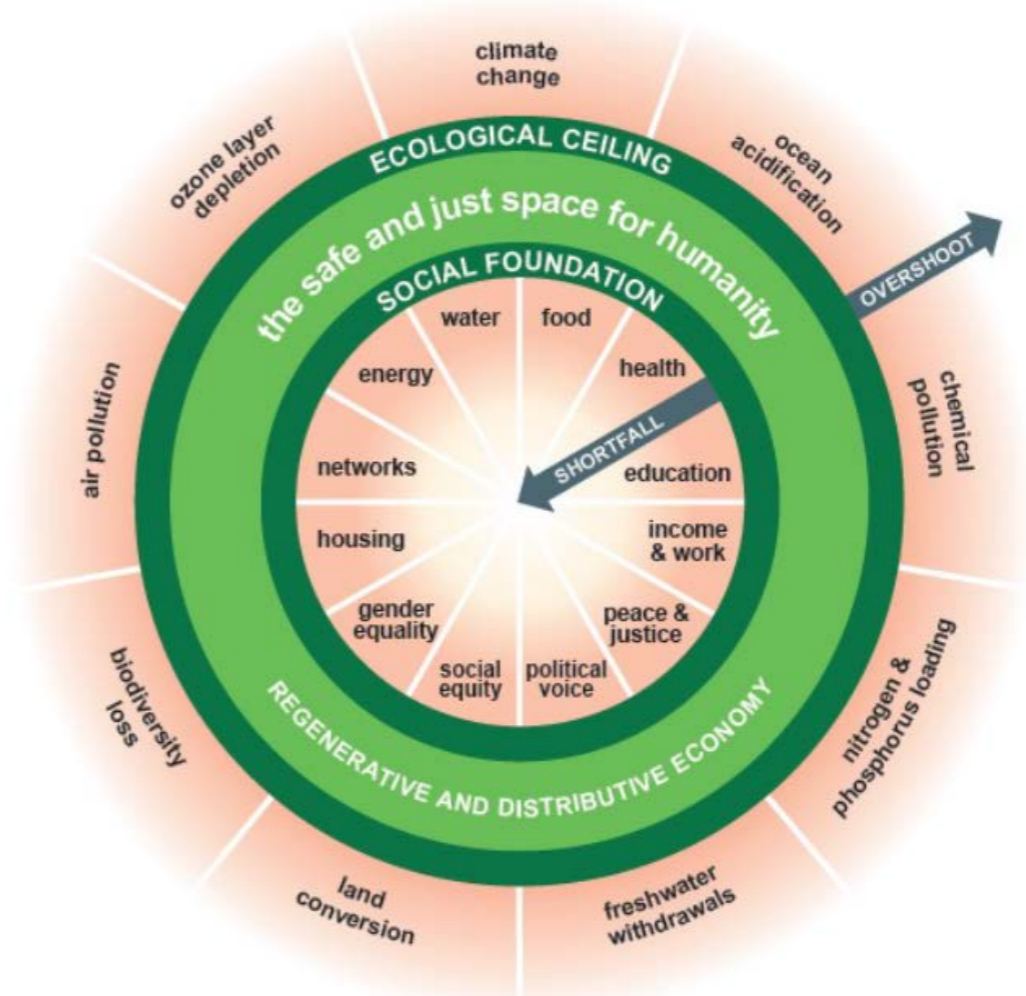
Many community issues require integrated approaches that combine social, economic, demographic, cultural and environmental considerations. When developing local responses to these issues, innovation and evidence-based decision-making are essential. Evidence-based needs assessment and prioritisation, 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



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–Elmore 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.

# Strategic context

## 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

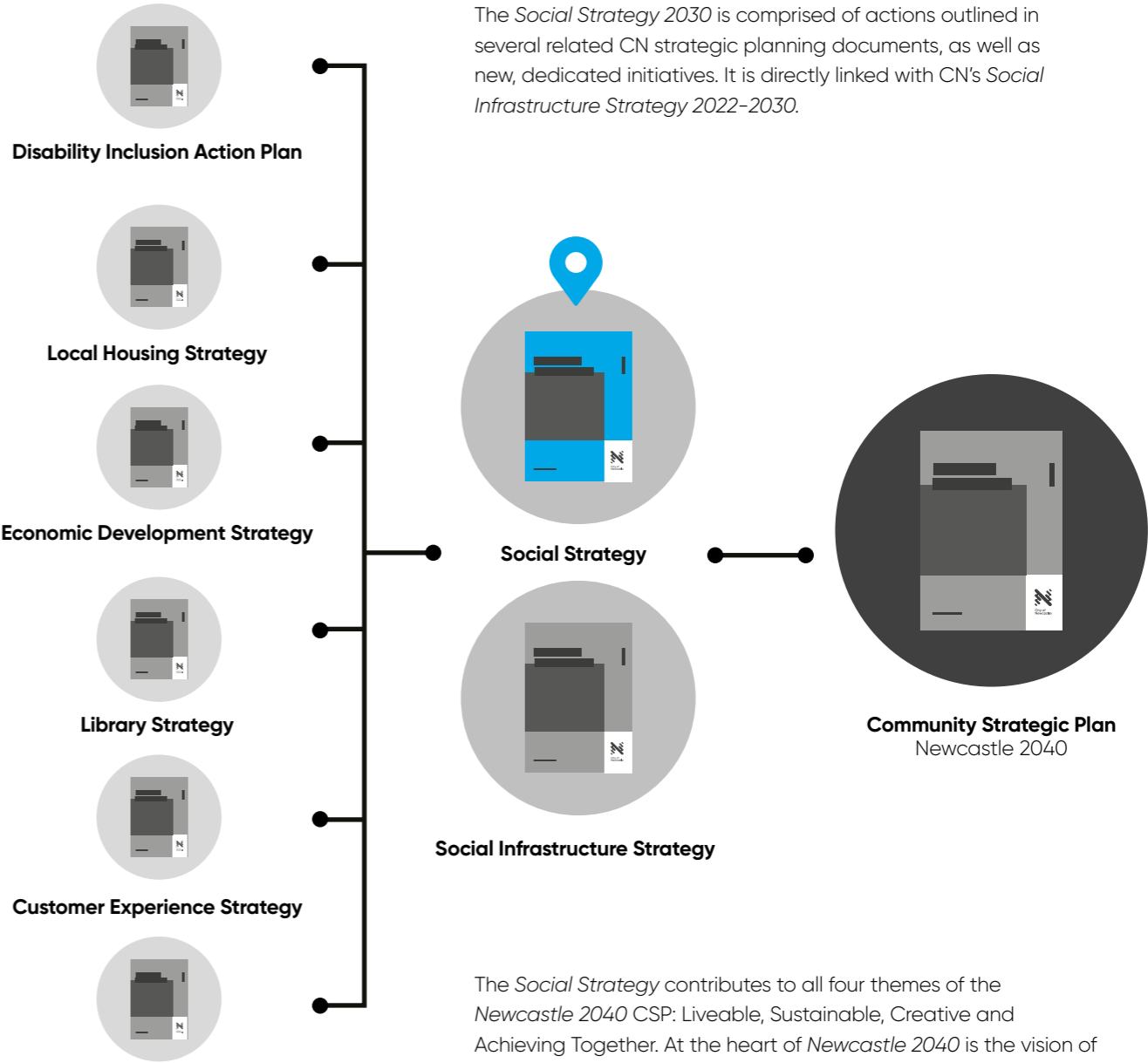
Health concerns include health and wellbeing issues, mental ill-health, risk of violence, and safety in the community. In Newcastle, and across Australia, mental ill-health and declining trends in physical health are a major public health issue. Increased demand for mental health services and concerning 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.

## 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.



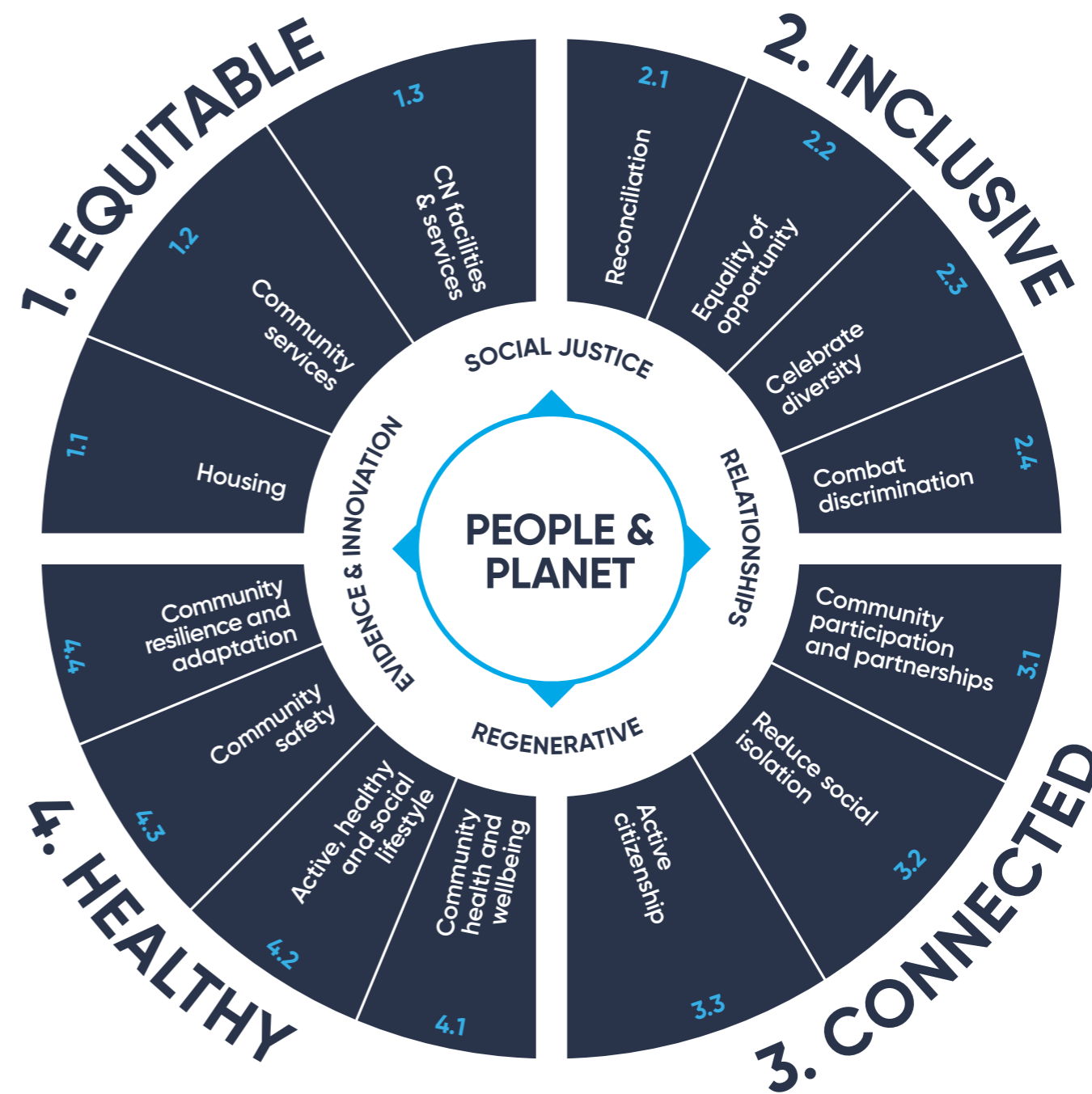
Multicultural Neighborhood Centre Services Expo at the Station

# 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**
- Relationships**
- Regenerative practice**
- 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.



**\$863,309**

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

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.

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.



**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

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

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.

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



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

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

**Priority** 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>	3.1 Facilitate innovative, community-focused participation, collaboration and partnerships to support social cohesion and inclusive decision-making.
		3.2 Increase social connectedness among diverse communities to reduce social isolation, enhance trust and build supportive social networks.
		3.3 Enable active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life.

**Outcome** **What does success look like?** 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>
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<b>Links to CSP</b>	1.2 Connected and fair communities
	3.1 Vibrant and creative city
	4.2 Trust and transparency

<b>Links to other City of Newcastle strategies/plans</b>	Economic Development Strategy
	Social Infrastructure Strategy
	Disability Inclusion Action Plan

## 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
2.1 Foster reconciliation, inclusion and connection to culture and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse communities in Newcastle.	Strength in Diversity	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
	Strength in Diversity	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
2.2 Work towards equality of opportunity in employment, training and digital inclusion	Equal Opportunity	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
	Equal Opportunity	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
2.3 Celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities	Welcoming City	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
2.4 Combat discrimination and promote inclusive communities through respect, education and commitment to change	Respectful Communities	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

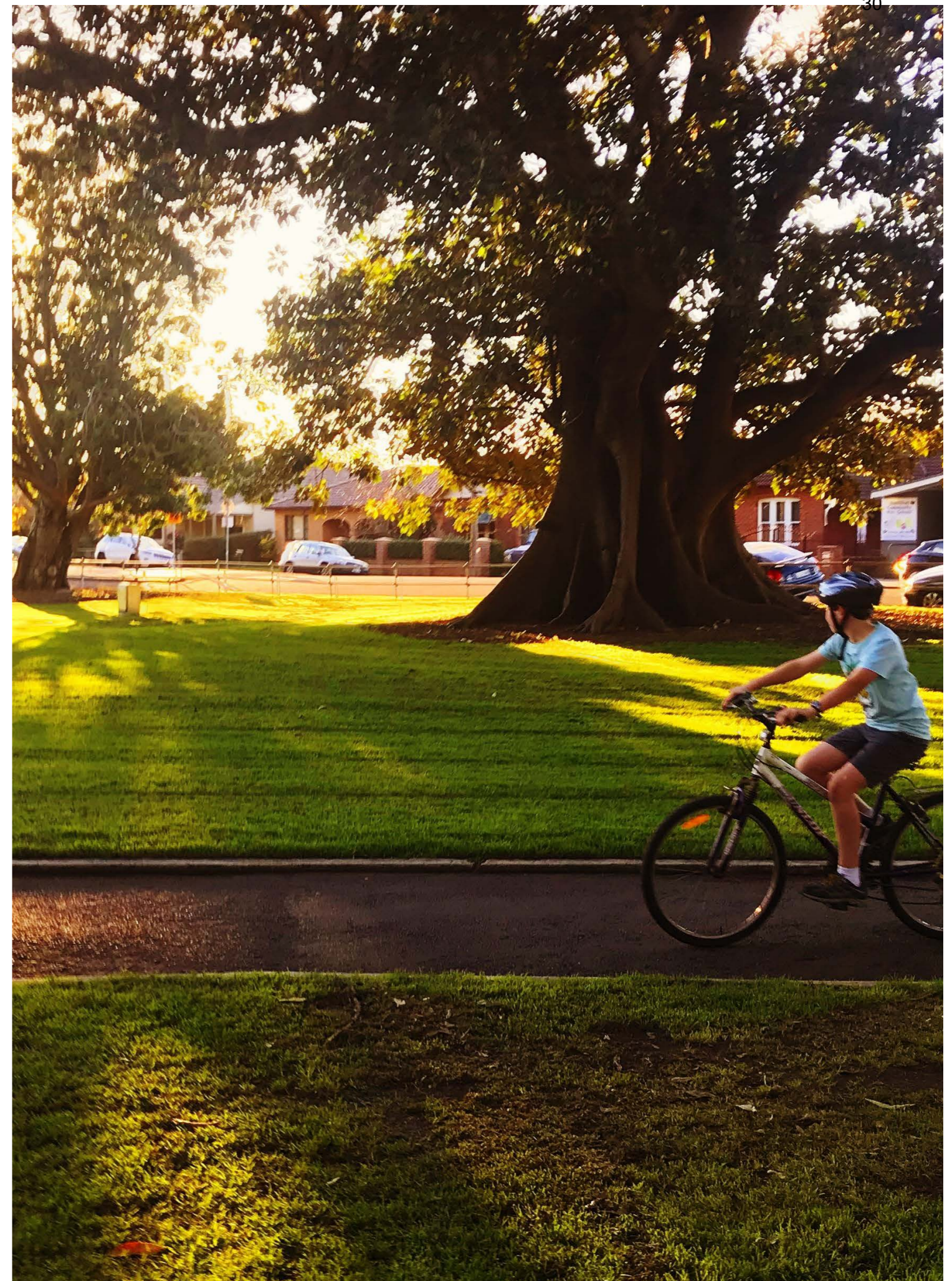
### Healthy communities

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

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



# **Social Strategy**

## **Public exhibition report**

### **January 2022**

**December 2022**

**Prepared by:** Media Engagement Economy & Corporate Affairs

**Enquiries:** [engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au) or (02) 4974 2000



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## Executive summary

Newcastle has changed a lot over the years. Today it is more diverse than ever, with people of all ages, background and beliefs. In 2021, City of Newcastle (CN) heard from over 2000 people who told us about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusions issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, access to services, safety and inclusion in the Newcastle area. These ideas and feedback were used to develop the Social Strategy (SS). To help finalise the draft framework, CN sought feedback from the community and stakeholders via public exhibition of the draft SS from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

The engagement objectives included gaining a better understanding of community and stakeholder opinion on the draft SS, including what they like about the draft and what could be improved; generating conversation around social justice and CN's role and actions; and strengthening relationships and building trust between community members, key stakeholders and CN.

During the public exhibition, a variety of communications and promotion activities were deployed to raise awareness of the SS and promote the opportunity for community members to provide feedback. Key communications activities included a dedicated Have Your Say Page, post card style hand outs and static displays, emails to key stakeholders, social media posts, newsletters, and a media release.

The community were invited to provide feedback on the draft SS through the online open feedback form, or alternatively by mail, email, phone. In total there were 30 submissions through the online form and email.

The online submissions revealed general support of the Strategy, with **70% of respondents agreeing with the four priorities** and offering suggestions for improvement rather than disagreeing with the strategy overall. The feedback for areas that were liked and areas that could be improved to the draft strategy and implementation, were broken into key themes/topics.

Areas that are liked themes/topics included:

- Emphasis on strong communities, that are resilient, engaged, inclusive, diverse, and connected,
- Inclusion of housing affordability and access,
- Priority on health and safety for all communities.

Areas that could be improved themes/topics included:

- Community engagement, including early and ongoing consultation to improve community-led decision making,
- Mention of traffic and transport – connect ability, accessibility, and parking,
- Local government – responsibilities and remit, policies, and implementation,
- Other suggestions included community education, inclusive infrastructure/event spaces, housing affordability/development, support for new parents, sustainability and support for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Community members and key stakeholders were also able to provide feedback through one of the 15 stakeholder and community events and workshops that ran over the public exhibition period by the CN Community Planning and Development Team. Collectively, approximately 300 community members and stakeholders attended the events. The documented conversations and feedback from these workshops were also analysed and discussed. Across the feedback that emerged from the workshops, five key themes were identified:

- Tailored support for specific groups – people of diverse sexualities and genders, new parents, people with disability, older people, Culturally and Linguistical Diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and domestic and family violence survivors,
- Collaboration and partnership with relevant sector leaders and organisations on a local, state and national level,
- Community engagement, including regular and ongoing consultation,
- Local government, roles, responsibilities, remit, and advocacy.

As a result of public exhibition some changes have been made to the draft SS reflecting community comment and the amended draft SS will be presented to the Council for consideration of adoption. A summary of changes is included from page 18.

## 1. Background

Newcastle has changed a lot over the years. Today it is more diverse than ever, with people of all ages, background, and beliefs. Individually we may be very different but, together Newcastle is a place we come together to live, work or visit. As the region continues to grow, City of Newcastle (CN) wants to make sure that individuals can grow with us and are a valued part of our vibrant community.

In 2021, CN heard from over 2000 people who told us about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusion issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, access to services and safety and inclusion in the Newcastle area. These ideas and feedback were used to develop the Social Strategy (SS)

To help finalise the draft framework, CN sought feedback from the community and stakeholders via public exhibition of the draft SS ahead of sending the final Strategy to Council for adoption in early 2023.

The report outlines the SS public exhibition engagement activities that were undertaken from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

## 2 Engagement objectives

To better understand community and stakeholder opinion on the draft SS, CN publicly displayed the Strategy from 28 September to 25 November 2022.







More specifically, the public exhibition sought to:

- Obtain community and key stakeholder feedback on the draft SS, identifying what they like about the draft Strategy and what could be improved.
- Generate conversation around social justice and CN's role and actions, including CN as a Refugee Welcome Zone, gender equity advocate, child friendly, safe city and advocate for First Nations reconciliation.
- Strengthen relationships and build trust between community members, key stakeholders, and CN.

## 2. Communication and promotion

During the public exhibition, a communications campaign was implemented, including a competition to raise awareness of the SS and promote the opportunity for community members to provide feedback.

Key communications activities are summarised on the following page, and key pieces of communications collateral are available in [Appendix 1](#).

Channel	Description	Reach
 <b>Have Your Say webpage</b>	<p>A dedicated project webpage was created on CN's Have Your Say landing page. A link to this page was also added to CN's Public Exhibitions page. The page aimed to provide information and raise awareness about the draft Social Strategy and direct people to the online feedback form.</p>	3,699 page visits
 <b>Post card and static displays</b>	<p>A post card style hand out was designed to be distributed at events and workshops that took place in the public exhibition period.</p> <p>To support this, static displays with information about the proposed Social Strategy were displayed at community centres and libraries across the city.</p>	<p>500 post cards distributed</p> <p>15 onsite locations</p>
 <b>Stakeholder emails</b>	<p>Information about the draft Social Strategy was emailed to subscribers of the Community Planning &amp; Development community admin newsletter, community members who requested to stay informed about Social Strategy updates and community development stakeholders.</p>	Distributed to 1,145 subscribers
 <b>Social media</b>	<p>The public exhibition was promoted via a paid post of CN's Facebook page. The post intended to raise awareness and encourage people to have their say.</p>	9,926 reached 143 engagements 506 clicks
 <b>Newsletters</b>	<p>Information about the draft Social Strategy was published in two of the dedicated Have Your Say monthly e-newsletters.</p>	Distributed to 2,439 subscribers
 <b>Media</b>	<p>A media release with information about the draft SS was issued on 10 October 2022</p>	n/a

### 3. Engagement activities

The community were invited to provide feedback on SS from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

The community were able to provide comment on the SS in a number of ways:

#### **Feedback form**

A link to the guided online feedback form was provided on the dedicated SS Have Your Say page. The Have Your Say page provided the Strategy to view in several formats, including a summary version that was embedded into the form for reference. A Mentimeter version of the feedback form was also used at the LGBTQIA+ Community session (17 October 2022). The guided form, including single choice, and open-ended questions asked participants the following questions:

1. Do you agree with the four priorities?
2. What parts of the draft Strategy do you like?
3. What parts of the Strategy could be improved?
4. Do you have any additional comments about the draft Social Strategy?

In total, 28 people provided feedback via the feedback form (including online and Mentimeter). Findings from the online form are presented in section [4. Key findings](#). Verbatim comments and feedback can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

#### **Other submissions**

Community members were also able to provide feedback on the SS by mail, email, or phone. In total, 2 submissions were received via these channels. De-identified copies of the submissions received are included in [Appendix 3](#).

#### **Stakeholder consultation, committee meetings and workshops**

The Community Planning and Development team (CP&D) organised and facilitated a variety of events and workshops to promote the draft Strategy and seek feedback. The team met with approximately 300 community members and advocates to raise awareness of the Strategy and ask for feedback. The events included:

- Drop-in sessions at Hope Street, Baptist Care (12 October, 13 October, and 19 October 2022)
- LGBTQIA+ Community session, Lambton Park Hotel (17 October 2022)
- Guest Lecture on Sustainable Development Goals, University of Newcastle (18 October 2022)
- Hunter Ageing Alliance Morning Tea & Learn, CN Digital Library (20 October 2022)
- Community Sector Afternoon Tea, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (26 October 2022)
- Community & Culture Advisory Committee Meeting, City Hall (31 October 2022)
- Making Change in Our Suburbs Meeting, Shortland Public School (9 November 2022)
- Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) Morning Team & Learn, CDAH Office (15 November 2022)
- Making Changing in Our Suburbs Youth Project, Wallsend Library (16 November 2022)

- Humanitarian Settlement Program Newcastle meeting, Hamilton (16 November 2022)
- Access & Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting, CN Digital Library (17 November 2022)
- LGBTQIA+ Representatives meeting, The Edwards (18 November 2022)
- Wallsend Active Hub Open Day (20 November 2022)
- Soul Café meeting, Soul Café Homeless Support Services (22 November 2022)
- Disability & Employment Video launch, CN Digital Library (25 November 2022)
- Liveable Cities Advisory Committee Meeting, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (29 November 2022)

During these events, CP&D representatives engaged in a number of focus group style discussions about the draft SS where they were able to receive feedback and comments. The key themes that emerged from nine of these workshops are presented [4. Key findings](#). Verbatim comments and feedback can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

## 4. Key findings

During the community consultation period CN received:

- 28 feedback forms
- 2 written/emailed submissions
- Feedback from 9 workshops or meetings (attended by 290 community members/stakeholders)

### 4.1 Feedback form / written or emailed submissions

Respondents of the online feedback form were a self-selecting sample, and results are therefore not necessarily representative of all relevant stakeholders. The responses and feedback from the online feedback form and written submissions are outlined in this section.

#### 4.1.1 Agreement with four priorities (feedback form only)

Respondents who completed the feedback form were asked if they agree with the four priorities in the draft Strategy (Priority 1: Equitable communities, Priority 2: Inclusive communities, Priority 3: Connected communities, Priority 4: Healthy Communities). The majority of respondents (70%) stated that they agreed with the priorities in the SS, while 14% stated that they did not and 14% answered *Not sure* (see figure 1).

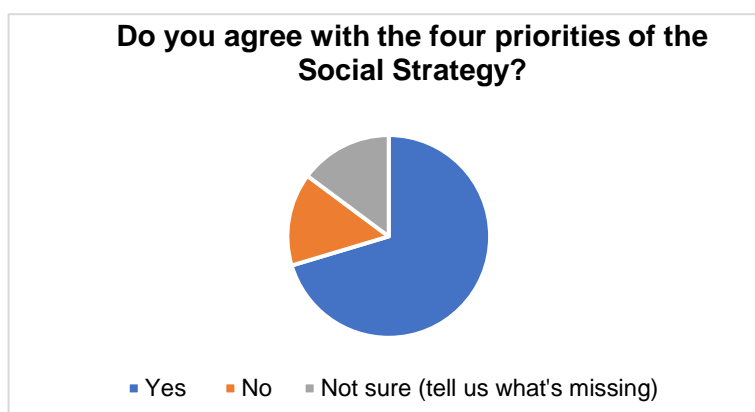


Figure 1: Agreement with the four priorities of the Social Strategy (N=27)

All respondents were able to write additional comments to support their response.

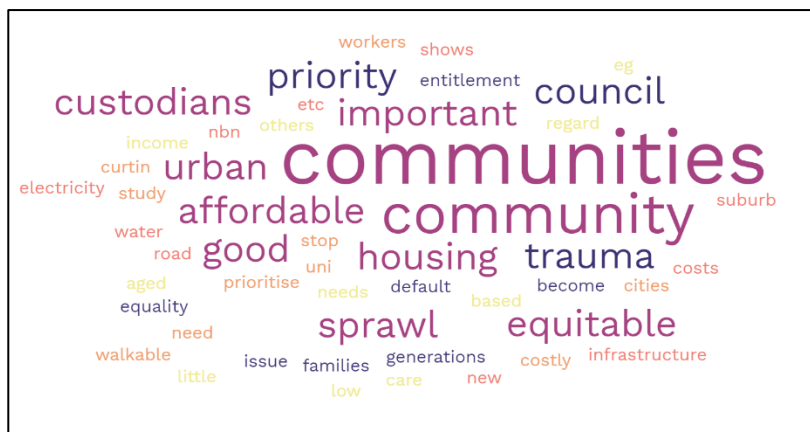


Figure 2: Word cloud of additional comments to support their agreement with the four priorities of the draft SS

Of those who agreed, three respondents continued to praise the priorities in their commentary, one comment specified that the focus should be on entitlement rather than equity, and the importance of housing security and affordability. One respondent also specified that safety was also an important priority as the night-time economy expands.

Table 1: Selection of verbatim comments on agreement with the four priorities of the SS

Agreement with the four priorities of the Social Strategy – Verbatim comments
"safe" is an important priority, particularly as the night economy expands into residential areas
"BUT: The issue is not 'equality' - it is 'entitlement'. Community / affordable housing should not become the default for generations of the same families, with little regard for others on low income."
"Clear logical and ambitious"
"it's a good framework"

Of those who disagreed, commentary focused on the inclusion of safety to limit trauma for people experiencing disability (one respondent) and clarifying the role of local government in developing strategies such as the SS (one respondent).

Table 2: Selection of verbatim comments on disagreement with the four priorities of the SS

Disagreement with the four priorities of the Social Strategy – Verbatim comments
"I would like to council to address safety as a way to limit trauma such as the trauma of being disabled and forced to wheel through the kitchen each time because there that's the only accessible entrance and work alongside people with lived experience and support them"
"Has nothing to do with what the council is employed to do"



Of those who answered unsure, one respondent expressed the need to prioritise transport and connectivity to mitigate urban sprawl. Another respondent suggested that Awabakal and Worimi peoples be recognised as ongoing custodians.

Table 3: Selection of verbatim comments from those who answered unsure in agreement with the four priorities of the SS

Answered unsure to the question agreement with the four priorities of the Social Strategy – Verbatim comments
<p>"Overall excellent. However, recognition of Awabakal and Worimi peoples as more than the 'descendants of the traditional custodians' is really important - they are the ONGOING custodians of these unceded lands.</p> <p>I also think that reference to the UNDRIP would enhance the strategy"</p>
<p>"Need to prioritise walkable cities and to stop urban sprawl. Urban sprawl is too costly: A 2009 Curtin uni study shows infrastructure (road, water, NBN, electricity etc) costs for a new suburb are \$684,000 per dwelling (Curtin_Sustainability_Paper_0209). Buses / active transport"</p>

#### 4.1.2 Areas that are liked

26 out of the 28 respondents discussed what they liked about the SS.

##### **Strong Communities**

Of the 26 submissions that discussed what they liked about the SS, 18 submissions made a comment of support for the strategy's focus on building strong communities that are resilient, engaged, inclusive, diverse and connected. Eight of these respondents made explicit mentions of the *inclusive / inclusion* priority, and four referred to the *equity / equitable* priority as ways the strategy will strengthen communities. Two responses also commented on the inclusion of 'reconciliation.'

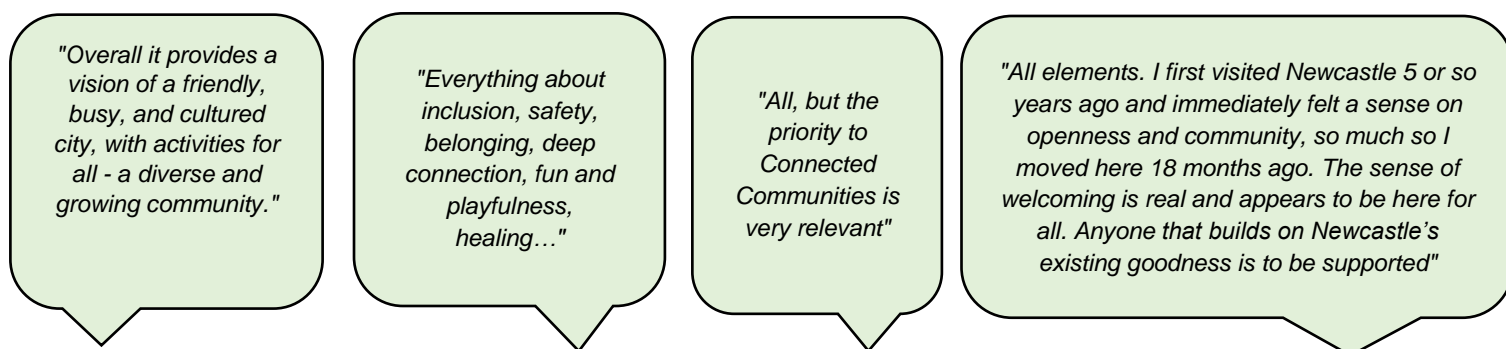


Figure 3: Selection of verbatim comments on the theme: Strong communities as priorities to support a socially just and inclusive place for all

##### **Housing – affordability and access**

Five submissions noted support for housing as a suitable priority included within the strategy. One of the five submissions mentioning housing noted that additional detail would be needed including eligibility, responsibility, and location.

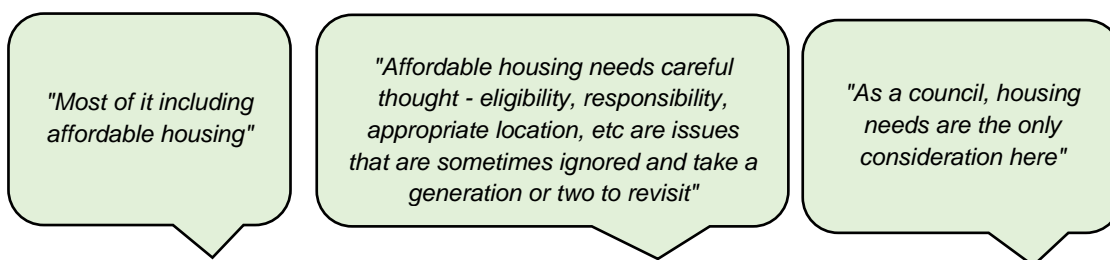


Figure 4: Selection of verbatim comments on the topic: Housing (affordability and access) as a priority to support a socially just and inclusive place for all

### Health and safety

Five submissions emphasised their support for the reference to health and safety in the draft Strategy. One of the five respondents who referred to health and safety in their response, specified that this was particularly important in places, spaces, and social infrastructure within Newcastle.

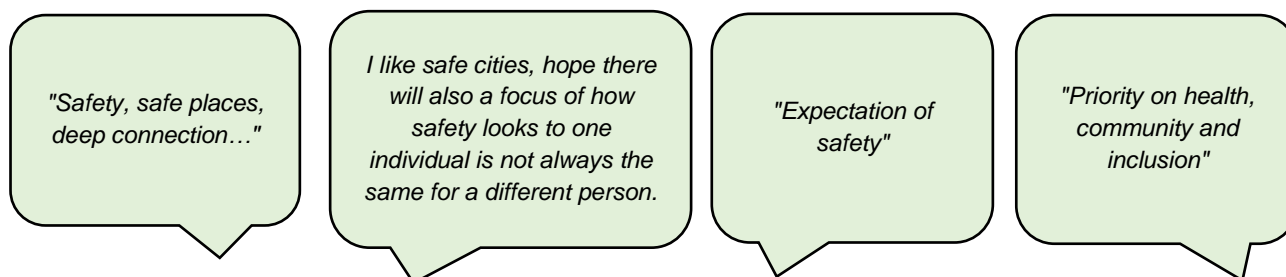


Figure 5: Selection of verbatim comments on the topic: Health and safety as priorities to support a socially just and inclusive place for all

#### 4.1.3 Areas that could be improved

20 of the 28 respondents who completed the online form, and all the written submissions discussed what could be improved or aspects that may be missing in the Strategy.

#### **Community engagement – early and ongoing consultation / community led decision making**

Seven responses mentioned that an emphasis on early, increased and ongoing community engagement would be important in delivering on the priorities highlighted in the SS. Furthermore, two respondents suggested that they would like CN staff to be more visible in the community to improve the engagement on these issues as part of the Strategy. One respondent suggested that the current community consultation model would need to be improved to deliver the strategic priorities and strengthen community led decision-making.

Table 4: A selection of verbatim comments on areas that could be improved related to community engagement

<b>Areas that could be improved – Community Engagement – Verbatim comments</b>
<i>"Council to have Pride in us. Not just see us as some group to occasionally cater for. Don't think it's all done because you talked to us a couple of times. Nothing is really done until our society changes and we truly"</i>
<i>"I feel like there could be more community consultation, particularly with marginalised communities within LGBTQI+ communities"</i>
<i>"It's a good start, but ideally needs to move beyond the current government-community consultation and build more substantial community led decision making. It is hard to know how and where to engage council staff around these issues"</i>
<i>"More emphasis on Community Engagement and respect for Community involvement and response"</i>

### **Traffic and Transport – connect ability, accessibility, and parking**

Six responses commented on including a reference to public transport or parking. Two of the six respondents suggested that frequent, efficient and affordable transport would be key to delivering the connected communities priority.

Table 5: a selection of verbatim comments on areas that could be improved related to traffic and transport

<b>Areas that could be improved – Traffic and Transport – Verbatim comments</b>
<i>"A free tram or bus link to certain locations which are not on the public and private bus routes would be a help with the connections"</i>
<i>"Transport. All these local social events mean nothing when the community of people can't attend due to transport, parking"</i>
<i>"CONNECTED COMMUNITIES should also emphasise the importance of frequent, efficient, and inexpensive public transport"</i>

### **Local Government – responsibilities and remit, policies and implementation**

Five responses noted that greater detail was needed on how CN would effectively resource the strategy, align or update current Local government frameworks to support the strategy and their overall commitment to implementing the strategy.

Table 6: a selection of verbatim comments on areas that could be improved related to Local Government

<b>Areas that could be improved – Local Government – Verbatim comments</b>
<i>"The terms SIA process, Social Impact Assessment, Community Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment are taken to be interchangeable terms and to have a similar intent. The existing SIA Policy (1999) has not been reviewed and updated since its adoption and implementation."</i>
<i>"Are there the resources, will and commitment to make this happen?"</i>

## Other areas

Other suggested improvements included an emphasis on community education (three respondents), additional inclusive infrastructure / event spaces (three respondents), housing affordability / development (two respondents), support for new parents / 'First 2000 Days' (one respondent), sustainability (one respondent), and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members including advocating regarding Justice and incarceration (1 respondent).

Table 7: selection of verbatim comments on other areas that could be improved

Areas that could be improved – Other – Verbatim comments
<i>Education. It's important to educate people about people of difference in many ways. Formal, schools, workplace, entertainment, media, public events ...</i>
<i>"NCC should recognise that the most critical years of a person's life is the first 5 years. These determine the outcome with regard to health (mental and physical), employment, addiction, incarceration, domestic violence."</i>
<i>"Justice seems to be missing - maybe because it seems beyond the power of council. So is health, and yet that is included."</i>

## 4.2 Feedback from workshops

Over the public exhibition period, the CP&D attended over 15 workshops, including lunch and learn events, advisory committee meetings, informal events with key stakeholder and community groups to discuss the draft SS and gather feedback. The conversations and feedback were documented across nine of the fifteen sessions. The remaining six sessions were information sessions, so no formal feedback was recorded. The workshops including:

- Drop-in sessions at Hope Street, Baptist Care (12 October, 13 October, and 19 October 2022)
- Hunter Ageing Alliance Morning Tea & Learn, CN Digital Library (20 October 2022)
- Community Sector Afternoon Tea, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (26 October 2022)
- Community & Culture Advisory Committee Meeting, City Hall (31 October 2022)
- Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) Morning Team & Learn, CDAH Office (15 November 2022)
- Access & Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting, CN Digital Library (17 November 2022)
- LGBTQIA+ Representatives meeting, The Edwards (18 November 2022)
- Soul Café meeting, Soul Café Homeless Support Services (22 November 2022)
- Liveable Cities Advisory Committee Meeting, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (29 November 2022)

Deidentified copies of the workshop notes and feedback can be viewed in **Appendices 4**.



Table 8: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme tailored support for specific groups

<b>Tailored support for specific groups – Verbatim workshop notes</b>
<i>Explore the idea of 'Data Feminism' Young girls experience bias in urban spaces, an example includes state parks not inclusive</i>
<i>What makes individuals feel safe and included as a queer person. Othering of the queer community. Queer community want to be labelled.</i>
<i>Broad perspective is needed. It is not just about seniors and young people focus on a broad spectrum of people and particularly those falling through the gaps. Would be good to have an even bigger focus in LS on how do I find my community? And focus on who aren't we hearing from? And why?</i>
<i>A need for more volunteers in the [aged care] sector. Discussed what Local Government can do in this space and reflect in the LS Strategy.</i>
<i>Would like to see more information in Social Strategy on the importance of the first 2000 days of life of babies and young children</i>
<i>Night Life in Newcastle is very alcohol-based culture dominant. Are there options available focused activities.</i>
<i>D&amp;FV are different. Importance of having a gendered and queer lens on strategies. Sex work –wasn't mentioned in strategy but it is addressed in the national plan on D&amp;FV</i>

### **Collaboration / partnership**

Across the workshops, participants discussed the need for CN to collaborate and partner with relevant sector leaders and organisations on a local, state and national level to achieve the SS objectives. More specifically, attendees discussed ways that existing facilities, programs, events, and infrastructure could be leveraged / maximised to ensure strategic alignment and progress on identified objectives in the Strategy.

Additionally, participants suggested that the CN could support / fund various initiatives in collaboration with local businesses, education partners (universities/TAFEs/school) and community groups. In particular the development of inclusive resources, workshops, internship / work opportunities.

Table 9: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme collaboration / partnership

<b>Collaboration / partnership – Verbatim workshop notes</b>
<i>Could Council support funding/mentorship regarding business ideas. Support with grants. Include collaboration with Economic Development team.</i>
<i>Innovation and Entrepreneur / Creative Industries Course that looks at hypothetical problems. Design focus on Social Innovation. Use practical CN examples in courses.</i>

<i>For "galvanising and harnessing" service/community goodwill and action from different community services, volunteer groups etc, with differing objectives and values, consider applying similar "shared skill sets" model</i>
<i>Less diversity of services, and get existing to work more effectively, CN can assist with this (funding, social network analysis, strategic planning for key sectors)</i>
<i>Asked for clarify regarding Community Sector Interagency meetings. Look at ways to make these work better/harder.</i>

### **Community engagement / regular/ongoing consultation**

Throughout the workshops and sessions, the need for ongoing and regular community engagement to take place with various community members and stakeholders, particularly those who are apart of specific groups/communities was discussed. Attendees discussed the need for CN to seek feedback in a more informal manner, including visiting various community members in their spaces and having conversations. Discussion about ongoing community engagement also included suggestions for ongoing/regular meetings to measure the Strategies' progress.

In addition, respondent's suggested that engagement opportunities should be incentivised through payment and/or food, drinks and events. Respondents also expressed the need for engagement opportunities to be promoted via accessible channels, including online and in person.

Community engagement was also discussed as a way to empower community leadership and community / stakeholder involvement in the Strategy.

*Table 10: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme community engagement*

<b>Community engagement – Verbatim workshop notes</b>
<i>Create a way that community can engage</i>
<i>People who aren't rate payers, can they engage with CN and these strategies. There are many people who are renters and those in social housing</i>
<i>Reference Group for Queer community. There is a genuine need and want to have a group of community representatives to speak to regularly.</i>
<i>Pay Queers for consultation</i>
<i>engage with people who may not usually be involved in strategic planning</i>

### **Local government roles, responsibilities, remit and advocacy.**

During the sessions with stakeholders and community members, attendees discussed the roles and remit of CN and staff in improving social inclusion. Across the workshops, participants discussed the need for Council to be a key leader in educating the broader community and businesses about different groups and communities facing adversities.

Furthermore, attendees suggested that CN/local government could assist in advocating for improved outcomes on a variety of issues including affordable housing, cost of living pressures,

housing supply and affordability, increased welfare and pension payment and support including resource development for small businesses.

Local government – Verbatim workshop notes
<i>Would like CN/strategy to identify ways to assist/advocate/support addressing very-low income households living off 'below poverty line' pensions.</i>
<i>CN to advocate for more funding roles, tafe/uni placements, etc.</i>
<i>Only people over 67 years can access higher threshold for pension. Need for advocacy for people on disability pension.</i>
<i>There has been an increase in D&amp;FV victims applying to have AVO's adjusted to allow perpetrators to see the children. Further assistance with their children needed, which has spiked the amount of work for Hunter Legal Centre. Look at more low-cost care and holiday activities for children of young single mums would be helpful. Is there remit to Council to help with this.</i>

Table 11: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme Local Government - roles, responsibilities, remit and advocacy

## Final take outs

Overall, the community was very supportive of the draft SS. The key areas/aspects of the Strategy that received positive comments were inclusion of items related to:

1. Strong communities
2. Housing – affordability and access
3. Health and safety

The key aspects/areas of the Strategy that there were suggested improvements included:

1. Community engagement, including early and ongoing consultation to improve community-led decision making
2. Mention of traffic and transport – connect ability, accessibility, and parking
3. Local government – responsibility and remit, policies, and implementation



## Summary of submissions and amendments to Social Strategy

Summary of submissions during Public Exhibition of draft Social Strategy 28.09.2022 - 25.11.2022

### Recommended amendments to draft Social Strategy (SS)

Submission Theme/s	Section of Strategy comment relates to/Strategic Priority Strategic Priorities are:  Equitable Communities, Inclusive Communities, Connected Communities and Healthy Communities	Suggested approach/Outcome Supported/Not supported  Note: Supported or not supported in this context relates purely to the inclusion of the comment within the plan and not the merit of the comment in an overall context.
<p>Emphasis on early, increased and ongoing community engagement important in delivering on the priorities highlighted in the SS, as well as ensuring excluded community members are engaged and remunerated for their time.</p>	<p>Priority 3. Connected Communities</p>	<p>Noted. CN strives to continuously improve community engagement within all its services units and progress diversity, inclusion and equity considerations for the organisation. For the delivery of the Social Strategy (SS) strategic priorities and actions, the Community Planning and Development (CP&amp;D) team undertake a genuine engagement and community development approach to including and strengthen community led decision-making.</p> <p>As per the commentary in Table 4 and Table 10 of the Social Strategy Public Exhibition Report, CN acknowledges that the work to make Newcastle a more inclusive and socially just place is continuous which requires ongoing relationships with community groups and members, not only occasional consultation. It is important to note that all community members, whether they live, work, play, are rate payers or not, can engage with all CN strategies and policies.</p> <p>Change to strategy supported in part:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 3.1 and Actions 3.1.1 already identifies opportunities for CN to facilitate community-focused participation, collaboration and partnerships with a focus on genuine engagement to support inclusive decision-making and address local social issues.</li> <li>Under Objective 3.3, the Action 3.3.1 already seeks to provide increased opportunity for diverse community members to participate in CN community advisory committees, in response to the community</li> </ul>

		<p>feedback requesting a Queer Community Advisory Committee specifically. All CN community advisory committees follow the same timeline as the elected Council, with new advisory committees only able to be proposed at the start of these terms, which must also be championed by the elected Councillors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently there is no organisational policy of remuneration of community members for engagement consultation and developing this is beyond the scope of the Social Strategy, however CN will investigate models into the future.</li> </ul>
Traffic and transport – frequent, efficient and affordable transport key to delivering the Connected Communities strategic priority.	Priority 1: Equitable Communities	<p>Change unsupported as this challenge has already been addressed in Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.1. of the SS. Furthermore, it is the State government that is responsible for delivering public transport services, not the Local Government. However, as the level of government closest to community, CN is committed to advocating for improved transport availability and access, particularly for people with disability, low-income earners and people who experience other forms of disadvantage. The CN Newcastle Transport Strategy also outlines its responsibilities in relation to public transport and a new transport strategy for CN is currently in development. Matters relating to public and active transport networks and provision of same are principally analysed and addressed as part of CNs transport strategy suite. Issues pertaining to equity of access and barriers which are social justice related could be dealt with as a one of program under Action 1.2.1 (as stated above), depending on priorities in the Delivery Program of the time.</p> <p>Public submission comments in relation to this theme can be found in Table 6 of Social Strategy Public Exhibition Report.</p>
Greater detail needed on how CN would effectively resource the strategy, align or update current Local government frameworks/policies to support the	Priority 1: Equitable Communities	<p>Noted (comments in Table 6 of the Social Strategy Public Exhibition Report) – One submission put forward the need to review and update the City of Newcastle (CN) Social Impact Assessment Policy (1999). Change unsupported at this stage.</p>

<p>strategy and their overall commitment to implementing the strategy.</p>		<p>Noted – one submission questioned what the resources, will and commitment are to make the SS happen.</p> <p>Council resolving to publicly exhibit and receive a report back on this strategy to adopt the strategy into the corporate planning framework is a clear signal of the organisation's commitment to deliver the strategic priorities and overarching objectives of the plan.</p> <p>The accompanying SS Action Plan has been devised to inform resource allocation for the life of the SS (2023-2027). As part of developing the SS, financial and human resources that would be required to deliver the strategy are modelled and analysed through internal processes making robust assumptions on what impact the SS actions make towards the Delivery Program and Operational Plan to 2027. The Action Plan is a targeted way of informing council resourcing for each annual budget which is required as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, however the plan is designed to be priorities focussed as there is finite financial and human resourcing in the short term.</p>
<p>Community education and Sustainability – call out the need for sustainability</p>	<p>Priority 2: Inclusive Communities and Priority 4: Healthy Communities</p>	<p>Comments in Table 7 of the Social Strategy Public Exhibition Report noted and change unsupported as themes already addressed through the SS or in other CN strategies.</p> <p>Submission which highlighted the importance of educating community about people's differences in many ways already addressed in Objective 2.1, Action 2.1.2; Objective 2.3, Action 2.3.1; and Objective 2.4, Action 2.4.1 in SS.</p> <p>Submission which highlighted the need to call out "sustainability" is already addressed throughout the SS in Objective 4.4, Actions 4.4.1 and through one of the four principles which shape the SS which is "Regenerative society", which goes beyond sustainability in arguing that we need to regenerate our planet and communities, not just sustain.</p>

<p>Inclusive infrastructure/event spaces – there must be infrastructure in place when development takes place. Public transport, schools, healthcare should not lag decades behind. This is particularly true for outer suburbs and green space development. Public/social infrastructure should be inclusive of the variety of needs of our diverse communities i.e., make urban spaces inclusive for young girls, older people, queer community</p>	<p>Priority 1: Equitable Communities and Priority 4: Healthy Communities</p>	<p>Noted. CN strives to continuously make its social infrastructure and event/community spaces more inclusive of the variety of needs of our diverse communities. Changes to SS are supported in part.</p> <p>Actions relating to the provision of Social Infrastructure and outlining CNs role in this space is principally dealt with under the (draft) Social Infrastructure Strategy. This (draft) strategy is a suite of actions which set the strategic roadmap for CN in dealing with social infrastructure matters in Newcastle, from advocacy through to delivery. This includes the need to review existing policy and plans to ensure that resourcing is allocated appropriately.</p> <p>A community submission which requested large open spaces be equipped with age-friendly exercise equipment and large parks with adequate seating, shade and open toilets are more appropriately addressed in the CN draft Social Infrastructure Strategy and the Parkland and Recreation Strategy. However, within the SS under Objective 1.3 and Action 1.3.3 which seeks to undertake an Intergenerational Places and Spaces Plan, these questions are well suited and will be further investigated.</p> <p>A community submission which stated that third spaces should be identified to provide socialisation for isolated people and to provide safety in the event of extreme weather events is noted and not supported as it is already addressed in the SS, draft Social Infrastructure Strategy and draft Environment Strategy (to be placed on public exhibition in 2023). This theme is addressed in Objective 1.3, Action 1.3.3 and Objective 4.4, Action 4.4.1 of the SS.</p> <p>Overall, this theme is addressed in Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.2 which works in partnership to deliver improved community services in the Western Suburbs of Newcastle; Objective 1.3, Action 1.3.3 regarding the Intergenerational Places and Space Plan which proposes actions for better access, inclusion and programming across identified social infrastructure within the LGA; and Objective 4.2, Action 4.2.1 which seeks to consider and incorporate community design ideas where possible in public domain design processes.</p>
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		<p>The SIS and SS relate to each other as ‘sibling strategies’ meaning that strategically they set out to achieve better outcomes for the community, particularly those from diverse background or experiencing vulnerabilities and the response locally to support these groups.</p>
<p>Housing affordability, access and development</p>	<p>Priority 1: Equitable Communities</p>	<p>Five submissions expressed their support for housing as a suitable priority in the SS, with one submission noting that affordable housing needs careful thought, particularly in relation to eligibility, responsibility and location. This is noted and no change required as these complexities are addressed in Objective 1.1, Action 1.1.1 of the SS.</p> <p>Additional community submissions on housing affordability and development are noted and changes to SS unsupported. The specific comments and responses are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness should be eliminated by 2030. Singapore and Finland have achieved this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CN is not the sole agency responsible for the reduction in homelessness, with state agencies such as the Department of Community and Justice one of the leading organisations to address this. As such, CN cannot claim responsibility to eliminate homelessness by 2030 and follows the Premier's Priority to reduce street homelessness by 50% by 2025.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A Housing First Strategy should be adopted to provide for homeless people supported by wrap-around services (mental health, addiction, etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CN addresses this through the SS and Local Housing Strategy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Suitable emergency accommodation should be available for women fleeing domestic violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CN will seek to better understand local emergency accommodation needs through advanced data and research. Similar to above.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of options for older people should be available. To this end, suitable land should be identified that is reasonably flat and close to public transport, shops and services.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CNs Housing Strategy, prepared under the Local Strategic Planning Statement (pursuant to provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979) is the primary planning document which deals with housing typology and tenure across the city. Landuse frameworks are largely informed by and respond to directions of the NSW Government through strategies such as the Greater Newcastle Metro plan amongst others. CN will further work to articulate housing options for a range of community members who particularly face housing stress i.e., older people (particularly women), people with disability, queer community, low-income households, refugees and newly arrived migrants etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Support for new parents and First 2000 Days of life of babies and young children Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Priority 1: Equitable Communities and Priority 4: Healthy Communities</p>	<p>Noted and change supported in part. Acknowledgement of the importance of the first 2000 days of life of babies and young children in determining an individual's health outcomes, as well as social and economic outcomes on page 41 of the SS.</p> <p>Theme also already addressed in Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.1 and Objective 4.1, Action 4.1.1 which seeks to collaborate with partners (i.e., Hunter New England Health Local Health District, community services sector, Education department etc) to deliver improved community services in Western Corridor (including a focus on young children) and address community health and wellbeing identified local priority issues.</p>
<p>Advocacy regarding Justice and raising the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years</p>	<p>Priority 1: Equitable Communities</p>	<p>Noted that the theme of Justice appears to be missing in SS, which is indeed beyond the power of CN to influence, however the topic of health is included. Change to include specific reference to Justice advocacy not supported as this type of advocacy work is already included in the Strategy as part of its local advocacy approach. If a topic such as raising the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years is identified as a priority local social issue by CN, the community</p>

		sector and wider community, this could be one of the topics CN prioritises though such consultation.
Useful for the SS to support tailored services and facilities for various groups, including hybrid and holistic health and support services and support recruitment of health care professionals, staff and volunteers required.	Priority 1: Equitable Communities, Priority 3: Connected Communities and Priority 4: Health Communities	Noted and change unsupported as already addressed in SS under Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.1; Objective 3.2, Action 3.2.1 and Objective 4.1, Action 4.1.1.  Furthermore, this theme is also addressed in the Economic Development Strategy as it has a key focus on attracting skilled workers to Newcastle through the New Move program and other initiatives.
Need for tailored, inclusive and accessible events, such as alcohol-free night life, outdoor activities (mitigate COVID-19 risk), and a variety of workshops and events that could improve the skills, confidence, and wellbeing of community members.	Priority 2: Inclusive Communities, Priority 3: Connected Communities and Priority 4: Healthy Communities	Noted and any change to SS unsupported as already addressed in strategy under Objective 2.3, Action 2.3.1; Objective 2.4, Action 2.4.1; Objective 3.2, Action 3.2.1; Objective 4.1, Action 4.1.1; and Objective 4.2, Action 4.2.1.  Specific consideration of accessibility considerations for public events is addressed under the CN Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 2026 (DIAP).
Inclusive language and data to ensure that the needs (and nuances) of each group within Newcastle area are understood and appropriately addressed.	Priority 1: Equitable Communities, Priority 2: Inclusive Communities and All	Noted and change supported in part. Changes to language in the strategy have been made on pages 21, 33, 44, 49 in relation to preference for use of 'people of diverse sexualities and genders' rather than 'LGBTQIA+'.  Inclusive language also addressed in Objective 2.1, Action 2.1.2; and Objective 2.3, Action 2.3.1.  Noted reference to explore concept of Data Feminism in approaches to data science.
Importance of recognising the intersectional nature of the lived experience of people of diverse sexualities and genders.	Priority 2: Inclusive Communities	Noted and change supported in part. The SS is for the queer community, but it is also for all the diverse communities of Newcastle. As such, we would like to be inclusive of all these groups, not just one. Some of the proposed text has been included on page 13 as follows:  "It is important to note that people of diverse backgrounds acknowledged in the priority community groups above have always been citizens, workers, and visitors

		<p>of Newcastle. They are contributors and participants in its vibrant culture, its infrastructure, its workforce, and its communities."</p> <p>There is also acknowledgement of some of the challenges faced by people of diverse sexualities and genders specifically on page 21 of the SS.</p>
CN to advocate for more funded roles for TAFE and University placements/ traineeships in the community development space.	Priority 2: Inclusive Communities	Noted, change unsupported but CN will continue to explore opportunities to include this action in lower order plans and policies that relate to the SS. CP&D will continue to advocate for trainee/apprentice placements from diverse communities and provide evidence to the organisation about community sentiment and employment needs of diverse groups.
Could Council support funding/ mentorship regarding business ideas and innovation. Support with grants.	Priority 1: Equitable Communities and Priority 2: Inclusive Communities	<p>Noted and change unsupported as already addressed in Objective 1.3, Action 1.3.2 of SS relating to the Social Inclusion Grants and Objective 2.2, Action 2.2.2 regarding support to business sector regarding equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.</p> <p>Furthermore, support for funding and mentorship of business ideas and innovation is addressed through the CN Economic Development Strategy and business grant opportunities addressed within the Grants and Sponsorships program, specifically the Special Business Rates Program and Grant Finder web platform.</p>
CN to assist in coordinating the community services sector to work more effectively and explore opportunities to revise/modernise the Interagency meetings, as well as convene group to address issue of social isolation of older people and people with disability.	Priority 1: Equitable Communities	Noted and change unsupported as already addressed in Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.2 which seeks to support the Newcastle community sector and review the existing Interagency model and the approach it takes to addressing local social issues. Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.2 also seeks to work in partnership to deliver improved community services and place-based initiatives in the Western suburbs of Newcastle. All of these actions will see specialist networking events, workshops and forums delivered.



<p>Request that CN and SS identifies ways to support very-low-income households living below the poverty line and advocacy on increased pension for people with disability under the age of 67.</p>	<p>Priority 1: Equitable Communities, Priority 3: Connected Communities and Priority 4: Health Communities</p>	<p>Noted and change unsupported as already addressed in SS through Objective 1.2, Action 1.2.1; Objective 1.3, and Actions 1.3.3; Objective 3.2, Action 3.2.1; Objective 4.1, Action 4.1.1; and Objective 4.2, Action 4.2.1 which all focus on opportunities for CN to provide programs, services and advocate on behalf of people in Newcastle experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or exclusion, including through income inequity.</p> <p>Specific disability advocacy work, such as increased pension for people with disability under the age of 67, is addressed in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 2026 (DIAP).</p> <p>One submission requested specific support for more low-cost and holiday activities for children of young single mothers. Change to SS unsupported as CN already provides a range of free school holiday activities through its Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery and the SS seeks to support CN to have increased awareness of equity, diversity and inclusion considerations (such as this) through Objective 1.3, Action 1.3.3.</p> <p>One submission stated that the SS should offer older people living alone solar panels to assist with electricity generation to manage extreme heat and cold. Change is unsupported as this request is better addressed in the CN Climate Action Plan and the upcoming draft Environment Strategy.</p>
<p>How will CN deliver the actions that seeks to understand inequities in Newcastle? Will people with lived experience be included in decision making process and their needs investigated?</p>	<p>Priority 1: Equitable Communities</p>	<p>Noted. Under CNs social planning approach we work towards understanding equity in Newcastle. This work requires input from communities with lived experience of the inequities CN is trying to understand, as well as further investigation of the best practices that currently exist in relation to researching, monitoring and reporting on inequity and social justice concerns in a local setting.</p>
<p>P5 of SS- First Nations peoples should be mentioned first. Having the bold paragraph above the fine print one about</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Change supported.</p>

Awabakal and Worimi peoples is inappropriate.		Adjustment to the text on page 5 has occurred by removing the sentence "We have survived earthquakes, superstorms and the closure of industries, and we continue to grow and change" as this is deemed inappropriate to place ahead of reference to the experiences of First Nations communities in Newcastle. And additional sentence has been added as follows:  "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."
Pictures in draft Social Strategy do not reflect the diversity of the Newcastle community.	All	Change supported by replacing photos on pages 6, 15, 24, and 42 which better reflect the diversity of Newcastle communities. Advice taken from community groups on which photos to include.

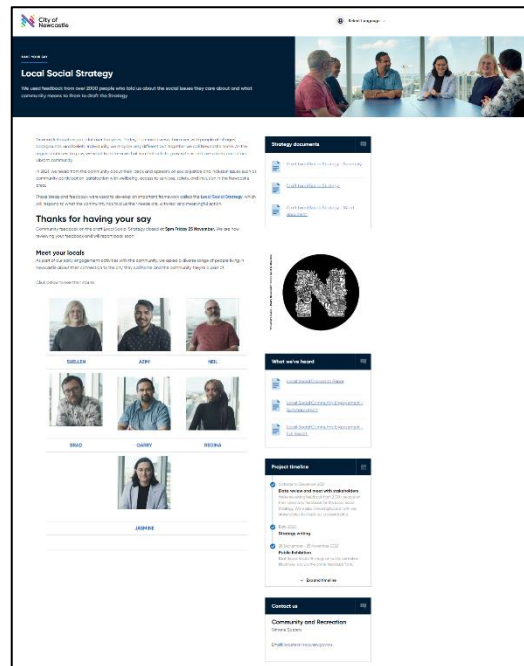
## Additional changes to Social Strategy

1. Change all timeframe references for Action Plan from 2022 – 2026 to 2023 – 2027
2. In Action Plan all the items in the "Responsibility" column were updated due to the new CN Organisational Structure that came into effect in October 2022. The various directorates in CN will still be responsible to lead on delivery of the relevant action but the new name of those directorates needed to be reflected.
3. Sentence regarding the Uluru Statement from the Heart was included on page 3 following the Notice of Motion that CN Councillors passed on 22 March 2022 supporting the statement.
4. Number of objectives reduced from 16 to 14 to avoid duplication.
5. Number of overall actions reduced from 39 to 23 to minimise identified areas of duplication across the actions.
6. Population and demographic information have been updated on page 7 and 8 with Census 2021 data.
7. On page 15 under the principle of "Relationships" have added the words "working partnerships" to the last sentence in the paragraph to reflect and respect the many partnerships CN forms to deliver on the desired social outcomes of the SS.
8. On page 19 have added the following footnote: "The SEIFA Index for Disadvantage results will only be updated with 2021 Census results in March 2023, while this strategy document was updated in December 2022" to reflect the use of 2016 SEIFA data in this section.
9. Action 1.1, under "Outputs" the *Homelessness, Housing Insecurity and Affordable Housing Action Plan* name was changed to *Housing Stress and Homelessness Action Plan* in consultation with the Affordable Housing Working Party, under the Liveable Cities Advisory Committee.

10. Changes to Objective 2.1, Action 2.1.1 and Action 2.1.3 based on consultation with the Guraki Advisory Committee and CN Aboriginal Engagement Partner.
11. Changes to the vision statement of Strategy Objective 2 – Inclusive Communities based on community feedback.

# Appendix 1 – Promotional materials

## Have your say webpage



## Postcard



## Social media



**Newsletter**

*Have Your Say e-Newsletter*



**Simone to insert other stakeholder email (if appropriate)**

**Media release**

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Our Responsibilities  
Our Organisation  
Our Commitment to Sustainability

[About Us](#) / [News and Updates](#) / [Latest News](#) / Working together to achieve an inclusive, liveable city


## Working together to achieve an inclusive, liveable city

10 Oct 2022

Labels Share

City of Newcastle (CN) is inviting the community to have their say on how to address housing affordability, social isolation and access to public spaces.

The draft Local Social Strategy 2030, which has been placed on public exhibition, sets out a framework for CN and the community to remove barriers to inclusion and equal opportunity, encourage connection and participation, and strengthen community health and wellbeing.



Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuortai Nelmes said City of Newcastle has a leadership role to play in achieving a shared vision of a socially just and inclusive city for all.

"We've heard from the community about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusion issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, and access to services, safety and inclusion in the Newcastle area," Cr Nelmes said.

"The draft Local Social Strategy is based on one of the most heavily participated engagement programs in City of Newcastle's history, with underrepresented groups such as people with a disability or from diverse cultural backgrounds providing key feedback.

"We're now eager to hear what the wider community thinks about the draft strategy to help us further shape this important plan."

In addition to the draft Local Social Strategy, CN is also seeking feedback on the draft Social Infrastructure Strategy, which aims to ensure Novocastrians have better access to community assets in their neighbourhoods.

The Strategy will plan for and support an equitably distributed network of community hubs, improve the amenity and activation of existing public facilities, parks and open spaces, and facilitate increased opportunities for valuable community inclusion and connection opportunities.

CN launched the exhibition period for both draft strategies amid the recent celebrations of Hamilton South Community Centre's 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary.

Newcastle Councillor Carol Duncan said it was a fitting way to start the consultation process.

"Hearing from a diverse cross-section of our community is critical to ensuring these strategies reflect everyone, so the planning decisions we make support all Novocastrians," Cr Duncan said.

"Individually, we may be very different but, together, we can all call Newcastle home."

Both strategies are available on City of Newcastle's website for the community to provide feedback on through to 26 October 2022.

## Appendix 2 – Online feedback form and submissions

[Page 1]

### The Social Strategy

The City of Newcastle (CN)'s Social Strategy 2030 places people at the centre of its vision of a socially just and inclusive place for all.

We used feedback from over 2000 people who told us about the social issues they care about and what community means to them to draft the Strategy. You can view and find out more information about the draft Social Strategy [here](#).

To provide your feedback, please complete the online form.

If you'd like to submit a written response, please email [engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au)

[Page 2]

Please review the draft [Social Strategy](#) (summary or full version), or below key sections of the Strategy to answer the next questions.





#### Priority 1: Equitable communities


Delivery programs include:

**Housing First:** Support and advocate for access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing for all community members.

**Community-Focused Services:** Support access to community services such as transport, health and social services, as well as delivery of effective, coordinated and innovative community services.

**Understanding Equity:** Understand the reality of inequity in Newcastle to develop local responses.

**City Access:** Provide equitable access to CN community programs, grants, services and social infrastructure.



#### Priority 2: Inclusive communities


Delivery programs include:

**Strength in Diversity:** Foster reconciliation, inclusion and connection to culture for diverse communities in Newcastle, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Equal Opportunity:** Work towards equality of opportunity in employment, training and digital inclusion.

**Welcoming City:** Celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities.

**Respectful Communities:** Combat discrimination and promote inclusive communities through respect, education and commitment to change.



#### Priority 3: Connected communities

Delivery programs include:

**Engaged Communities:** Facilitate innovative community focused participation, collaboration and partnerships to strengthen social cohesion, foster inclusive decision-making and address local social issues.

**Social Connection:** Increase social connectedness among diverse communities to reduce social isolation, enhance trust and build supportive social networks.

**Active Citizenship:** Enable active citizenship through community representation, civic awareness and public participation in civic life.

**Local Data:** Facilitate access to information for community participation and active citizenship.



#### Priority 4: Healthy communities

Delivery programs include:

**Community Health and Wellbeing:** Support the health and wellbeing of our communities, including physical and mental health.

**Active People:** Enable an active, healthy and social lifestyle supported by local facilities, services and spaces.

**Safe City:** Contribute to improvements in community safety, including domestic and family violence and perceptions of safety.

**Community Resilience and Adaptation:** Facilitate community resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change and crises (eg. the COVID-19 pandemic).

**Do you agree with the four priorities of the Social Strategy?**

Yes (open response)

No (open response)

Not sure (tell us what's missing) (open response)

**What parts of the draft Strategy do you like?**

[Open response]

**What parts of the draft Strategy could be improved?**

[Open response]

**Do you have any additional comments about the draft Social Strategy?**

[Open response]

[Page 3]

**Your details****Name**

[Open response]

**Suburb**

[Open response]

**Email**

[Open response]

**I'd like to receive further information from City of Newcastle related to social justice and inclusion**

Yes

No

[Page 4]

Thank you for your feedback.

For more information about the Social Strategy, head to: <https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/projects/local-social-strategy>

-End form-



## Verbatim responses – online form

What parts of the Strategy do you like? (Open ended)
Overall it provides a vision of a friendly, busy, and cultured city, with activities for all - a diverse and growing community.
I think the idea of affordable housing needs careful thought - eligibility, responsibility, appropriate location, etc are issues that are sometimes ignored and take a generation or two to revisit and correct when required.
most of it including affordable housing
All elements. I first visited Newcastle 5 or so years ago and immediately felt a sense on openness and community, so much so I moved here 18 months ago. The sense of welcoming is real and appears to be here for all. Anything that builds on Newcastle's existing goodness is to be supported
Social justice and reconciliation focuses.
I like it all but there's a time and a place. Newcastle is diverse and that's constantly celebrated and applauded BUT it's not fair for all. The planning of the city and events don't mirror the actual community. There is NO parking and no real alternative for it. Light rail doesn't provide for Darby st or Hamilton or any venue putting on shows or reliving events to make Newcastle the prime place it can be.
All 4 are appropriate
All, but the priority to Connected Communities is very relevant
Priority on health, community and inclusion
I like the look at inclusion as a general principal instead of a focus on one single marginalised group. I like safe cities, hope there will also a focus of how safety looks to one individual is not always the same for a different person.
* focus on inclusion * focus on connection * expectation of safety
The inclusiveness may cause an opportunity for a particular group to voice their beliefs although in most cases there are just those who are involved and those who are onlookers.
None. No time for this with all the community assets falling down around us. Put more money time and effort into maintenance of all community assets and clean up the city as a whole before worrying about feel good projects, at major costs, for a minority.
As a council, housing needs are the only consideration here
Inclusiveness, priority on getting all involved. I am in a wheelchair & the access in the CBD is appalling. The state of the footpaths & ramps is not up to standard
The economic and health were the most important. Although the inclusiveness and connected communities are important.
Community resilience and adaption, strength in diversity, housing first.
Everything about inclusion, safety, safe places, deep connection. I'm terrified at times being transgender woman in Everything about inclusion, safety, belonging, deep connection, fun and playfulness, healing, Plus everything with housing and communal safe places, Everything about safety, inclusion in every area of life, belonging, fun, playfulness, healing, housing and work opportunities
Focus on equity and inclusion Climate consciousness
Lgbt inclusion and equity. Connection with community is growing and can always be improved and developed

Local data. Engaged Communities Community Resilience and Adaptation
I appreciate the attempted focus on equity and inclusion (I haven't read the whole document, so can't comment much more). Could be more clarity around things active citizenship, what reconciliation looks like
Inclusiveness equality and discrimination support diversity disability employment
Equity Connection
It seems to take an intersectional approach to social issues.
The overall vibe and priorities seem reasonable, would need to dig through the whole document properly to give proper feedback
I feel a lot of it is lip service, and that there isn't enough links yet with practical action.
<b>What parts of the Strategy could be improved?</b>
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES should also emphasise the importance of frequent, efficient, and inexpensive public transport.
transport options and city planning interlinked. Urban sprawl is too costly: A 2009 Curtin uni study shows infrastructure (road, water, NBN, electricity etc) costs for a new suburb are \$684,000 per dwelling (Curtin_Sustainability_Paper_0209). Buses / active transport (improves body and mind health) work better in well planned higher density cities (with enough green spaces intermixed). With the "extra" money the gov could even build more social housing (experts say this is a priority to make
Call out the need for sustainability
P5 - First peoples should be mentioned first. Having the bold paragraph above the fine print one about Awabakal and Woromi peoples is inappropriate. Earthquakes, storms and industry changes pale into insignificance compared with the losses experienced by First Peoples during invasion, colonial expansion, frontier wars, stolen generations and wages. 'Dispossession' is an understatement of the traumas. Suggest reference to UNDRIP - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
Transport. All these local social events mean nothing when the community of people can't attend due to transport, parking
It is a good start
More emphasis on Community Engagement and respect for Community involvement and response
Not sure
To have all events have an accessibility plan conducted so they think about the access requirement of all involved. that there are events for people who are autistic and can't be over stimulated. Like specific runs of a show at civic that will have less noise or lights. to really look at the concerns of marginalised communities like being concerned to be shunned because you lgbtq+ the fact that with all the drunk idiots on the streets after dark further abuse is created for disabled people.
* housing is difficult to resolve. Everyone wants all in the community to be properly housed, but some areas will always be expensive, and that precludes social housing.
* there must be infrastructure in place when development takes place. Public transport, schools, healthcare should not lag decades behind. This is particularly true for outer suburbs and green space development.
PERHAPS A SEPARATION OF GROUPS GEOGRAPHICALLY SO THAT ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE INVOLVED CAN TAKE THAT 50 TO 100 METRES WALK. It would be better not to have a particular group's space getting intruded upon so that arguments may not occur and there are signs identifying where a group is located.
Not required.
Remove Priority 2 & 3, council has no place in social issues like inclusiveness & connection. Council job is maintaining the city. ie roads, waste, infrastructure, housing needs

I don't understand why council would be getting involved in domestic violence? This is not something Council should do other than supporting refuges like GYBS so they & others continue to be viable
the housing and health
As you have said it hard to make good strong comments on this based on scant information, we need to study this more to provide appropriate and useful comments. Having said that there needs to be greater emphasis on safe LGBTIQ+ NCC to incentivise
Education. It's important to educate people about people of difference in many ways. Formal, schools, workplace, entertainment, media, public events ... Make consultation ongoing. Not once off. Have relationships with us. Not just formal occasional formal occasional experiences. Lots more free feeds and drinks like tonight! Put us on the payroll See us as normal. Not as different people who need special help. Council staff come and join with us in our lives. Get to know us as people. Get out of their comfort zones and stretch and learn. Council to have Pride in us. Not just see us as some group to occasionally cater for. Don't think it's all done because you talked to us a couple of times. Nothing is really done until our society changes, and we truly belong. We need semi formal social and learning times where council gets to know us as humans. Not just our sexuality. Things change when people get to know each other in deep and interesting ways. Let us know what's going on in many different ways. Social media posts font go to everyone even if we are on it. Diversity in sharing what's happening is important for diversity!
Active People City Access Respectful Communities
More engagement at the beginning, before draft stage as this was the first time I have heard of this project I also like how you have increased engagement to this point Thx you x
Whilst I haven't read the full document I feel like there could be more community consultation, particularly with marginalised communities within LGBTIQ+ communities as they know their own needs better than anyone.
It's a good start, but ideally needs to move beyond the current government-community consultation and build more substantial community led decision making. It is hard to know how and where to engage council stuff around these issues Far too much relies on corporate partnerships for implementation which bakes in various forms of inaccessibility and defangs things that might substantially threaten profits and the status quo
<b>Do you have any additional comments about the draft Social Strategy?</b>
Urban sprawl is unsocial with too much distance for people that do not want to drive. Stop planning for cars, unless you want to become as congested as Sydney
All the best with the plan.../and good luck Newcastle v Central Coast tonight
Justice seems to be missing - maybe because it seems beyond the power of council. So is health, and yet that is included. With justice partners, our city could advocate to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years (presently children as young as 10 years are placed in detention, isolated from family and culture), and encourage innovative alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offences for all ages. Incarceration is traumatic with immediate and long-term mental health consequences for individuals and families. Last week, the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) launched its position paper and recommendations: 'Incarceration: the disproportionate impacts facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' which examines how health and incarceration are inextricably linked. Our city could take a stand aligned with their recommendations.
Rid our once great city of Supercars
The future of Newcastle needs society to attend events. Transport is hard to navigate, and inconsistent with entertainment precincts. Transport needs to be addressed first because the community and social aspect is here and been ready for way too long. It's just too hard to navigate and enjoy

no
Are there the resources, will and commitment to make this happen?
N/A
Understand inequities is a good point but how are you going to do it? what is your strategy round that? How you really get disadvantage communities on your side and want to engage with you or how do you plan in supporting them as if you say your going to employ them then you need to have the infrastructure to support them. Are you going to bring on some people lived experience into the decision-making process or investigate their needs.
There are enough catering services ie food and drinks and toilet amenities.
No.
Utter waste of the money in doing these strategies. Council DO YOUR Job and not this rubbish
no
A free tram or bus link to certain locations which are not on the public and private bus routes would be a help with the connections.

## Appendix 3 – Other submissions

### Submission 1

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of Newcastle (CN)'s Social Strategy 2030.

I congratulate on the preparation of the Social Strategy and fully support the guiding principles that underly the Strategy. The strategic priorities to understand are clear and easy for all stakeholders to understand.

However, there is an identifiable gap and that is a long overdue review of the Social Impact Assessment Policy 1999.

Newcastle was one of the first Councils in NSW to develop and adopt a Social Impact Assessment Policy as part of the development assessment process. Social issues cover all aspects of human life including how we live, our culture, our community, our health and wellbeing and our aspirations. The terms SIA process, Social Impact Assessment, Community Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment are taken to be interchangeable terms and to have a similar intent.

The existing SIA Policy (1999) has not been reviewed and updated since its adoption and implementation. As one of the first SIA policies in NSW, its focus was on development applications. The SIA policy is part of Council's Development Control Plan (section 4.05) under Section 4 Risk Minimisation Provisions.

The purpose of social impact assessment is to provide a professional assessment of the likely social consequences of proposed actions or events, so that serious adverse social outcomes can be avoided. An SIA is both an anticipatory and a precautionary process that refers to the assessment of the social consequences of a proposed decision or action (development proposals, plans, policies, and projects) on affected groups of people and on their way of life, life chances, health, culture and capacity to sustain these.

The underlying principles in the current SIA Policy require review and updating to better align with the international principles for SIA (IAIA, Vanclay, 2003) and good practice approaches as supported by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA, 2010) to make clearer the basic principles of SIA - intra-generational equity (distributional equity) and the precautionary principle

Current research and the recent lived experience during Covid has highlighted the importance of the built environment for community wellbeing and overall health.

The current SIA policy applies only to development applications. Undertaking an SIA at the DA stage of development is not sufficiently strategic, resulting in an ad hoc approach to impact assessment and mitigation.

Consideration needs to be given to refocusing and broadening the scope of Council's use of SIA similar to eg Liverpool Council SIA Policy 2015 - S5.4 - SIA applies to development, strategic land use planning eg LEP's, masterplans; new projects, policies or plans that may trigger social change; use of social impacts in Council reporting processes, use of an initial assessment form for social impact comments and identification of criteria for acceptable mitigation measures.

### Conclusion

A review of the City of Newcastle SIA Policy (1999) would enable and further enhance the capacity of the City to identify and respond to current and emerging social issues in more proactive, innovative and appropriate ways.

## Submission 2

### Priority 1 Equitable Communities

- 1.1. The strategies with regard to housing should include:
  - 1.1.1. Homelessness should be eliminated by 2030. Singapore and Finland have achieved this.
  - 1.1.2. A Housing First Strategy should be adopted to provide for homeless people supported by wrap-around services (mental health, addiction, etc)
  - 1.1.3. Suitable emergency accommodation should be available for women fleeing domestic violence
  - 1.1.4. A range of options for older people should be available. To this end, suitable land should be identified that is reasonably flat and close to public transport, shops and services.
- 1.2. First 2000 days

NCC should recognise that the most critical years of a person's life is the first 5 years. These determine the outcome with regard to health (mental and physical), employment, addiction, incarceration, domestic violence.

NCC should work with HNELHD, DCJ, Education and NGOs to ensure:

- . all pregnant have accessible antenatal care
- . all mothers have accessible early childhood care
- . all children have accessible, affordable pre-school education

### Priority 2 Inclusive communities

- 2.1. Large open spaces should be equipped with age-friendly exercise equipment such as found in Victoria's Senior's Fitness Parks.
- 2.2. Large parks should have adequate seating, shade and open toilets

### Priority 3. Connected communities

- 3.1. NCC should convene a group, to include Police, Churches, NGOs, Hunter Ageing Alliance, CDAH, HCA, to address the issue of social isolation of older people and people with disabilities.
- 3.2. Older people living alone should be offered solar panels to assist with electricity generation to manage extreme heat and cold.
- 3.3. Third spaces should be identified to provide socialisation for isolated people and to provide safety in the event of extreme weather events.

#### Priority 4. Community health and well-being

- 4.1. This is largely determined by the First 2000 days (see 1.2. above).
- 4.2. NCC should work together with Active, Stronger, Better, a program run through NovaCare to provide a comprehensive range of exercise programs for older people living in Newcastle LGA.
- 4.3. Large open spaces should be equipped with age-friendly exercise equipment such as found in Victoria's Senior's Fitness Parks.
- 4.4. Social isolation and its consequent loneliness and depression should be addresses as in 3 above.

## Appendix 4 – Workshop and event notes / feedback

Hunter Ageing Alliance – Morning tea & learn
Notes
<p>Seniors Health Projects needed, hybrid models. Explore opportunities to facilitate this.</p> <p>Opportunities for collaboration. Leverage opportunities for working together.</p> <p>Community services providers are very disjointed.</p> <p>Housing for over 55s women is a real issue. Asked whether local organisations such as Novacare could build housing.</p> <p>Asked for clarify regarding Community Sector Interagency meetings. Look at ways to make these work better/harder.</p> <p>A need for more volunteers in the sector. Discussed what Local Government can do in this space and reflect in the LS Strategy.</p> <p>Broader recruitment of volunteers and staff. Drive health care workers from interstate to come to Newcastle including nurses, allied health professions, direct care staff. Discussed opportunities to link the New Move program in Economic Development.</p> <p>Idea to host an Allied Health Conference – to help the sector network. Participants from Community Therapy very interested in this idea.</p> <p>Increase focus on older people.</p> <p>How detailed does the Strategy get? What can be done now, and in the future. The Action plan is potentially too distant from reality.</p> <p>Community leadership is important for setting value for community. Create a way that community can engage. How to create the enabling environment</p>



Two Cities exist in Newcastle - affluent & wealthy vs. the bottom 25%. The bottom 25% struggle to get through.

Would like to see more information in Social Strategy on the importance of the first 2000 days of life of babies and young children.

Antenatal Care (ANC) use to go out to Hamilton South suburb, now residents need to go to hospital or health clinic, this is a missed opportunity. Only 80% of people get good ANC, what is happening with other 20%.

Public Health Network (PHN) – Local Health District (LHD) → what are they doing in this area of social justice and inclusion? Can the LS get them more involved, partner with them?

Health and Wellbeing for older people. Huge health services gaps and wait time. An example includes dementia services focused on early onset dementia.

Outline council's role in advocacy, whole community focus, mapping of health care providers, sector support for aged care. Local Government to speak for those who don't have power/influence through advocacy. Look at attracting allied health professional to Newcastle, including New Move idea as discussed.

Night Life in Newcastle is very alcohol-based culture dominant. Is there options available focused activities. Options for outdoor activities to improve safe social settings (re COVID risks). Improve air safety and health building standards in services and facilities. More outdoor areas that are rain resistant.

COVID pandemic. There has been an increase in D&FV victims applying to have AVO's adjusted to allow perpetrators to see the children. Further assistance with their children needed, which has spiked the amount of work for Hunter Legal Centre. Look at more low-cost care and holiday activities for children of young single mums would be really helpful. Is there remit to Council to help with this.

Roles and responsibilities of Local Government. Leadership and connectivity. Utilise data from CN to support pensioner discount for rates and people who get support with "bin put on street" help.

**Community Sector – Afternoon Tea & Learn Workshop****Notes**

Data and LGBTQIA+ community.

Local government has the closest relationship to/with the community.

COVID-19 has had a huge Impact on disability community.

Community confusion on whether Newcastle is a regional or metro community.

People who aren't rate payers, can they engage with CN and these strategies. There are many people who are renters and those in social housing. Rates notices is usually the way people engage with CN. It may be more useful to employ a digital campaign to engage.

Us and them mentality, rate payers vs, marginalised groups. This potentially alienates the two groups.

Intersectionality opportunities, including identities of queer, housing, CALD. Don't other people, the LS strategy addresses this intersectionality which is good.

D&FV are different. Importance of having a gendered and queer lens on strategies. Sex work – wasn't mentioned in strategy but it is addressed in the national plan on D&FV. Could/should this be added to Local Government strategies?

More community involvement and ongoing engagement.

Data on social sense.

Lack of Queer infrastructure/spaces

Explore the idea of 'Data Feminism'

Young girls experience bias in urban spaces, an example includes state parks not inclusive.

Broad perspective is needed. It is not just about seniors and young people focus on a broad spectrum of people and particularly those falling through the gaps. Would be good to have an even bigger focus in LS on how do I find my community? And focus on who aren't we hearing from? And why?

LGBTQIA+ communities - there are a practical inclusion needs but more of a culture change needed, including behaviour change. Focus on engaging with services – often don't know how to actively engage with queer community. Avoid tokenistic gestures.

What makes individuals feel safe and included as a queer person. Othering of the queer community. Queer community want to be labelled.

Othering of Disability community – needs to be discussed. Disability Comm. often don't want to be labelled.

Queer community haven't been able to control the conversation. Being trans, bi → something I chose. Being disabled is not something I chose (personal experience and reflection).

More opportunities for community in Social Enterprise space.

Include business sector at the table.

Councils position as 'Roads, Rate, Rubbish' is limited. Need to reframe.

### Community Development Alliance Hunter

#### Notes

Advocate for pensions/disability, particularly couples who get less than two singles. Those with disability pension also impacted – including choices about working. In some situations, 75% of pension taken for living arrangement

Only people over 67 years can access higher threshold for pension. Need for advocacy for people on disability pension.

Council could/should develop resources to help businesses be more accessible. Is there an action for this. Potentially better suited to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

How to continue the community feedback loops? How to increase citizenship engagement for these strategies and access to Council. Could develop a set of Resources for diverse community that focus on: how to engage with Council, how to use the tools, and how to stay updated on progress regarding strategies. What are the mechanisms to engage with communities regarding customer service (i.e., official request can just be a phone call, email, form).

How can community engage on development applications/comment on new developments.

Could Council support funding/mentorship regarding business ideas. Support with grants. Include collaboration with Economic Development team. Emphasis on community participation. Mentoring opportunities with PWD with established arts practitioner.

There is a lack of knowledge for small business owners of disability inclusion. Look to provide resources for them.

Business involvement. Staged resources for businesses and employers. How to make spaces more accessible. This is more challenging for small employers and businesses.

Related courses at Newcastle University. Innovation and Entrepreneur / Creative Industries Course that looks at hypothetical problems. Design focus on Social Innovation. Use practical CN examples in courses. Explore internships and placement opportunities for young people. Look at how to engage on this. Can Local Social enable these opportunities?

Potential collaboration with Lions. Particularly Youth Engagement (18-30 years) - Leo volunteers.

### **LGBTQIA+ Representatives meeting**

#### **Notes**

Inclusion, equity focus

Newcastle is lacking in being welcoming space.

Inclusion in decision making from the start of infrastructure development.

Library example of Trans Girl book discussion but only had trans men on panel, no trans women and the host was a drag queen – this was problematic.

Reference Group for Queer community. There is a genuine need and want to have a group of community representatives to speak to regularly.

Queer friendly / alcohol free events, especially for underage 18 years

Capacity building events. The queer community not socially adept at some key skills ie. job interview skills. Queer identified facilitators are very important, including those who are openly Queer identifying.

Youth need info on healthy relationships, consent, sex education. Include examples of queer couples. A series of workshops called "It gets better" that could link this with healthy relationships, opportunities for work, social networking.

Role model program-can we show examples of successful Queers? Give hope for Young Queers futures. Queer Youth Disabled Youth. Can it be what you can't see.

Pay Queers for consultation

Photography. A need more diverse, inclusive photos. Life in Colour.

Awesome Foundation. Money to pay Queers for advice. Sparrow keen to pitch.

Paragraph on diverse communities: *"People of diverse sexualities and genders have always been citizens of Newcastle. We are contributors and participants in its vibrant culture, its infrastructure, its workforce and its communities. We are from all cultural backgrounds, we are Aboriginal and First Nations people, we are proudly Disabled or live with disability, and we are from all age groups - our identities exist at multiple intersections. We also experience some of the highest rates of social exclusion, marginalisation, and social challenges such as health and wellbeing, equity, participation, housing, domestic violence, and community safety. Data capture undertaken by the Local Social Survey surveyed (X number) of people of diverse sexualities and genders. The rates of social exclusion and not feeling welcome were highest amongst non-binary people, with 4 in 10 reporting they feel unwelcome to access a City of Newcastle space or event. Studies of cities show that a one-point increase in LGBTQIA+ inclusion yields a 3% increase in innovation, a 3% increase in economic resilience, and a 3% increase in GDP. Including LGBTQIA+ people in our social strategy is not just the right thing to do, it pays dividends for all of our community members."*

Need to broaden out a bit, including CALD, disability etc.

No Wrong Door – D&FV work.

### Community & Culture Advisory Committee Meeting

#### Notes

No questions were asked about the strategy, but committee members were very positive about both and commended the extensive community engagement, evidence-based approach and stressed the importance of this work for the City.

Comments on the positive community engagement during public exhibition, particularly going to where community are such as at the Hope St community centre in Wallsend – engaging with people who may not usually be involved in strategic planning.

Discussed Inner West Council as an example of how to better use council facilities, including opening up their town halls for access to artists/creatives etc

Newcastle Pride – get involved in the Youth Formal they held this year for the first time. Can Local Social support this further?

Include Newcastle PRIDE and ACON Hunter emailing lists

### Liveable Cities Advisory Committee meeting

#### Notes

Members showed support for both the LS and SIS – agreeing with the four strategic priorities presented in both strategies. They commended both strategies on their evidence base, community informed approach and agreed that there was a need for both strategies in the Local Government Area.

### Access & Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting - presentation & some feedback

#### Notes

Inequalities across the LGA to be addressed, particularly across Ward 4. Request for at least one district level facility be included across each district to ensure equitable distribution.

## Soul Café

### Notes

Be clear in the LS and SIS strategies "Who do the problems belong to? Spheres of Influence. E.g. for housing and housing wrap around supports, what is councils role, influence etc.

For "galvanising and harnessing" service/community goodwill and action from different community services, volunteer groups etc, with differing objectives, objectives, values, consider applying similar "shared skill sets" model used by the Cessnock food relief service

(<https://www.hunterfoodreliefcentre.org.au/>) , whereby all contribute in different ways for same cause but don't have to agree to same objectives/TOR etc. One service delivers, while another hands out, another advocates, another offers kitchen/centre facility for cooking, etc. Furthermore, move away from competitive grants, rather provide grants that criteria calls for partnerships and "galvanising/harnessing".

Address the source of issue/s (prevention), not the results/outcome, through resource/funding, targeted CN support, programs. For example, while affordable housing for very-low/low income households is needed, it is being addressed (of shorts), what vulnerable really need is wrap around supports to sustain their existing housing tenancies, access to a bulk bill GP (\$80 session, need a medial to access social housing), etc. Prevention focus – "What would it look like if got in early at the source" with, say, couples with relationship problems who indicating early signs of coercive control/DV, provide path to intervene for perpetrator to address at start/source, and couple can likely sustain relationship. CN to work with services to get them to "move upstream" to the source of issues, and rather than current of addressing results of issues. Also, the general public/community needs to go back to working together to support one another, strong community ties, community connections, relationship social capital, etc to add more people in the mix to address source. Addressing the source of issues approach also cheaper in long run as numerous studies point to.

Also need more crisis (all sectors) support staff, who are moving out of sector to private as gaining better salaries and less high-need clients to manage. These is a contributing factor why the "no wrong door" model is not working as well as it could. CN to advocate for more funding roles, tafe/uni placements, etc.

Less diversity of services, and get existing to work more effectively, CN can assist with this (funding, social network analysis, strategic planning for key sectors). Consider reducing or keeping to existing number/diversity of support services, and CN support these services to expand or pivot to cohorts/issues of need rather than funding new services. This would assist vulnerable people to navigate a smaller number of services rather than adding to complexity of systems or places to go for support.

## Hope Street, Baptist Care – Drop-in sessions

### Notes

Would like CN/strategy to identify ways to assist/advocate/support addressing very-low income households living off 'below poverty line' pensions. Cost of living expenses have risen (rent, groceries, electricity, water, petrol etc) however minimal rises in pensions so no relief. Also, for electricity too expensive to get solar on housing (if you own); this is not available to vulnerable, renters, etc.

Those who are homeless (on street, in cars, etc) would like to access showers, towels, lockers, kiosk arrangement. Help people to gain some dignity by being able to get showered, clean, hygienic to support their mental health, brush teeth (to reduce tooth root).

Seek access to bulk bill GP's and medication. My health medication is \$100/mth and to afford the cost of GP on top of this to gain refill and check up means I sometimes go without medication which is dangerous for my health.

Portable showers, pods to sleep in.

You can't put everyone in one area, e.g Hamilton South, as vulnerabilities, mental health etc means there are higher inflamed tensions. Need to disperse social housing across city. People would rather shower at beach in public as non-confrontational with other people and support service staff.

Cost of living has risen. What was a dollar is now \$4, cant now even afford to buy sausages, 'poorman's meat'. These costs are only going to increase with flooding impacts in food growing regions, conversion to green energy for electricity and petrol etc. Seek assistance to help afford food/shelter.

Society has moved away from supporting one another and community connection, such as no longer knowing your neighbour through to ever changing staffing of support services. I like how CN is providing public places and spaces o bring community together and develop sense of community around it. Also, suggest guiding those not treating such spaces/places with respect (vandalism, riding motorbikes in parks, bar wire on playground slides) how to value them, community and how to contribute community to give sense of belonging.

Affordable available housing, retention of tenancy without fear of no grounds evictions, at a cost we can afford is my biggest ask of council! I have years of perfect rental history, 3 mths ago (Aug 2022) advised rent going from \$395 to \$600/wk. 75-100 people were at each open house for rent we looked at. Took a while but found another rental, however costing \$420/wk so still an increase we can't afford. Suggestion to put a cap on rent increases for some types of housing. Contributing to



rental housing in availability are developers replacing cheaper rentals with new high-end builds and out pricing most people. Also, out of area people buying into Newcastle with higher funds and contributing to affordable housing supply issues. Is there potential for CN to promote the 'good' reasonable real estate/landlords who give vulnerable people a chance to get into a rental. Advocate for cap on % rent increases rather than no ground evictions by landlords. Idea to promote or come up with way for vulnerable very low-income people to use rent towards a longer-term home loan. I would happily have a 50+yr mortgage as it would give me and my children security and continuity.

Key for my family is to 'find security' and don't mind if it's a rental, mortgage if could gain tenure security, as has flow on to children's schooling grades, our wellbeing etc.

Seek to maintain (and increase) number of refuges for women and children and more than just 6-8 weeks support. Don't let the number of refugees drop as needed. Homeless referral housing services – waitlist so long and not suitable for needs. For instance, single mum with 5 children, after the 28 day DCJ support period had to leave temporary accommodation (DCJ provided hotel) but no 4+bedroom social housing available. As a result, family had to move out of area away from supports (services, family, existing schools, GP, mental health services etc) to gain accommodation and now trying to re-establish a life in a new location. Storage sheds also full as people use for their belongings while that find housing.

Cost of living pressures: to afford groceries my family is living on pasta/rice which we know is not nutritious but have to make a choice for family of 5 between cost of, say, 4 apples or 4kg of frozen chips; I sadly must go with the chips. I don't get food hampers from Hope St as see others more in need of them. Seek reduction in cost of living, bring down cost for milk, eggs, mince, vegies, fruits. Idea to promote / share more information about where/what/when people who need support can find it, e.g. food hampers in strategy. Meet people where they are at and distribute information. Getting into a doctor, let alone a bulk bill doctor, so can return to work after day off due to illness to gain a sickness certificate but it's three weeks to see a doctor for the certificate. I can't wait three weeks to return to work, my family needs the money and I need to maintain my employment. Loss of bulk billing is a major issue for our family as appointment costs and medications add to costs, which has been too much for us along with groceries, increased rent, electricity, water, petrol etc each week.



# Local Social Strategy

## Public Exhibition Summary Engagement Report



"It's what's inside... that's Newcastle"  
Artists: Tunzi and Olan One

In 2021, City of Newcastle (CN) heard from over 2000 people who told us about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusion issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, access to services, safety and inclusion in the Newcastle area. These ideas and feedback were used to develop the Local Social Strategy (LSS).

**Newcastle has changed a lot over the years. Today it is more diverse than ever, with people of all ages, background and beliefs.**

### Engagement activities

To help finalise the draft framework, CN sought feedback from the community and stakeholders via public exhibition of the draft LSS from **28 September to 25 November 2022**. The community were invited to provide feedback on the draft LSS through the online open feedback form, or alternatively by mail, email, or phone.

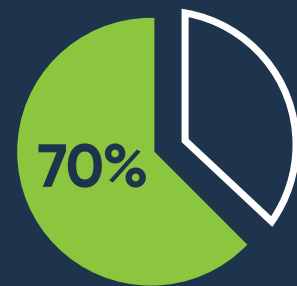


30 submissions in total through the online form and email.

### Key findings

The online submissions revealed general support of the Strategy, with **70% of respondents agreeing with the four priorities** and offering suggestions for improvement rather than disagreeing with the strategy overall.

The feedback for areas that were liked and areas that could be improved to the draft strategy and implementation, were broken into key themes/topics.



#### Areas that are liked themes/topics included:

- Emphasis on strong communities, that are resilient, engaged, inclusive, diverse, and connected

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- Inclusion of housing affordability and access

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- Priority on health and safety for all communities

#### Areas that could be improved themes/topics included:

- Community engagement, including early and ongoing consultation to improve community-led decision making

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- Mention of traffic and transport – connect ability, accessibility, and parking

---

- Local government – responsibilities and remit, policies, and implementation

---

- Other suggestions included community education, inclusive infrastructure/event spaces, housing affordability/development, support for new parents, sustainability and support for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander community members





**300** people attended  
**15** stakeholder, community events and workshops



Community members and key stakeholder were also able to provide feedback through one of the **15 stakeholder and community events and workshops** that ran over the public exhibition period by the CN Community Planning and Development Team.

Collectively, **approximately 300 community members and stakeholders attended these events and stakeholder workshops**. The documented conversations and feedback from these workshops were also analysed and discussed. Across the feedback that emerged from the workshops, five key themes were identified:



Tailored support for specific groups – people of diverse sexualities and genders, new parents, people with disability, older people, Culturally and Linguistical Diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and domestic and family violence survivors

Collaboration and partnership with relevant sector leaders and organisations on a local, state and national level

Community engagement, including regular and ongoing consultation

Local government, roles, responsibilities, remit, and advocacy

## Next steps

As a result of public exhibition some changes have been made to the draft LSS reflecting community comment and the amended draft LSS will be presented to the Council for consideration of adoption. A summary of the changes is included in the full engagement report.

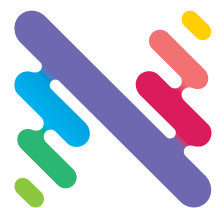


# Local Social Discussion Paper



December 2021

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



City of  
Newcastle

# 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.

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# Introduction

## 1.1 The Local Social Strategy

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 are being left behind, unable to realise their full potential as part of a thriving society.

Based on engagement, key areas of social concern for the people of Newcastle can be grouped into 4 themes:

1. **Equity** concerns refer to rising living costs; housing unaffordability and insecurity; and inadequate access to transport, social infrastructure and services.
2. **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.
3. **Connection** concerns refer to increasing social isolation and disconnection, as well as limited opportunity for participating in and influencing local decisions.
4. **Health** concerns refer to health and wellbeing issues, mental ill-health, risk of violence, and safety in the community.

These concerns and challenges are further exacerbated by the climate emergency, considered humanity's single biggest threat, and the COVID-19 pandemic, both of which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities.

To respond to these social challenges, City of Newcastle (CN) is renewing our 10-year social strategy, the Local Social Strategy. This will set out our aspirations for a socially just and inclusive city – a place for everyone. The strategy falls under and supports CN's [Community Strategic Plan \(CSP\)](#)<sup>1</sup>, aligns with state and regional plans, and defines CN's social priorities for the next 10 years, including outlining our 4-yearly action plans. This Discussion Paper outlines why Newcastle needs a social strategy, what its key social needs are, and how CN might respond to these needs.

## 1.2 Why do we need a social strategy?

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 Local 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 will identify priority communities and groups to be involved in all aspects of Newcastle life.

The Local Social Strategy will help CN meet the social justice requirements placed on councils by the *Local Government Act 1993*, which states: 'Council's long-term community strategic plans must be based on social justice principles and address social issues along with civic leadership, environmental and economic issues'.

<sup>1</sup> City of Newcastle Community Strategic Plan 2030: <https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/c642bf2e-74df-4eaa-8931-526df94598dc/3119-CSP-Strategy-FINAL-WEB.aspx>

CN has a leadership role to play in achieving our shared vision of a socially just and inclusive Newcastle, but we can't do it alone. We need to work with local communities as equal partners, drawing on their many strengths and assets and supporting them to shape their own futures. We also need to collaborate with dedicated services and organisations across Newcastle to ensure we respond to community needs and aspirations while delivering effective, coordinated actions and initiatives for social justice and inclusion.

## 1.3 Guiding principles that shape our strategy

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

### 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 4 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<sup>2</sup>.

### Relationships

Relationships are key to inclusive, socially just communities. A relational approach is a way of interacting or communicating that embodies values such as respect, inclusiveness, honesty, compassion, cooperation and humility. However, it is also about the connections between people and the planet. The **Relationist Ethos** is a concept within Aboriginal law, philosophy and culture. It explains that we are all in relationship with other people, but also places great importance on the relationship between the land (Country) and all living and non-living beings. It is these relationships and obligations to each other that form a template for our society<sup>3</sup>.

For CN, forming strong, respectful and transparent relationships 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 considering local responses to these issues, **evidence-based decision-making** and **innovative practice** are essential principles. 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>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> NSW OLG (Office of Local Government) 2021

<sup>3</sup> Graham, M. (2021), The Relationist Ethos concept is particularly associated with the work of Adjunct Associate Professor Mary Graham, Kombu-merri and Waka Waka person: <https://www.greenprints.org.au/knowledge-base/relationist-ethos/>

<sup>4</sup> OECD/Eurostat (2018)

**Regenerative society**

Regenerative means ‘able to or tending to regenerate’ – to regrow or be renewed or restored, especially after being damaged or lost. Regeneration recognises that human and planetary health are deeply interwoven, and actively seeks to enable the flourishing of human and non-human life. To strengthen the regenerative capacity of our communities, we have drawn inspiration from two models: (1) ‘Doughnut Economics’, which refers to a concept linking social needs and planetary boundaries<sup>5</sup> and (2) the Greenprints approach<sup>6</sup>.

Doughnut Economics refers to the visual and conceptual framework created by economist Kate Raworth, when she drew the needs of human societies, inside the circular “Planetary Boundaries” diagram, created by Earth System scientists<sup>7</sup>. In her work, she states that humanity’s 21st-century challenge is to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In Doughnut Economics, a society and economy is considered prosperous when all 12 social foundations are met, without overshooting any of the nine ecological ceilings. You can see the framework in Figure 1, below.

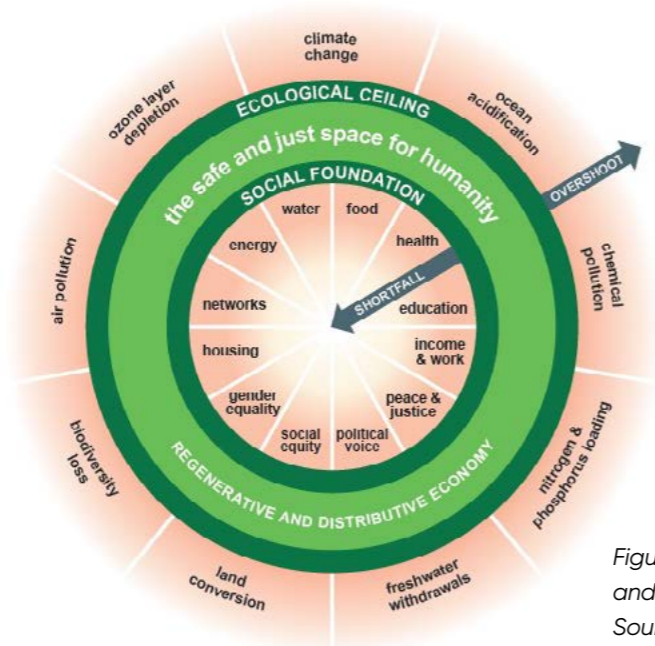


Figure 1. Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries  
Source: Kate Raworth (2017)

The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries has been designed to show the following principles:

1. That no one falls short of life’s essentials, ranging from food and housing to healthcare and political voice – the **social foundation**
2. That we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth’s life-supporting systems, such as a stable climate, sufficient fresh water or fertile soils – **the ecological ceiling**
3. That we find a **safe and just space for humanity** to exist within the green zone of the Doughnut.

Figure 2 presents the Local Social Lens, in which the Doughnut is downscaled to a city or place<sup>8</sup>. Building on the social foundation of the Doughnut, the Local Social Lens proposes 4 priorities and 16 dimensions that are needed for people to thrive. This lens has inspired the framework and name of CN’s Local Social Strategy.



Figure 2. Local Social Lens  
Source: Thriving Cities Initiative (2020)

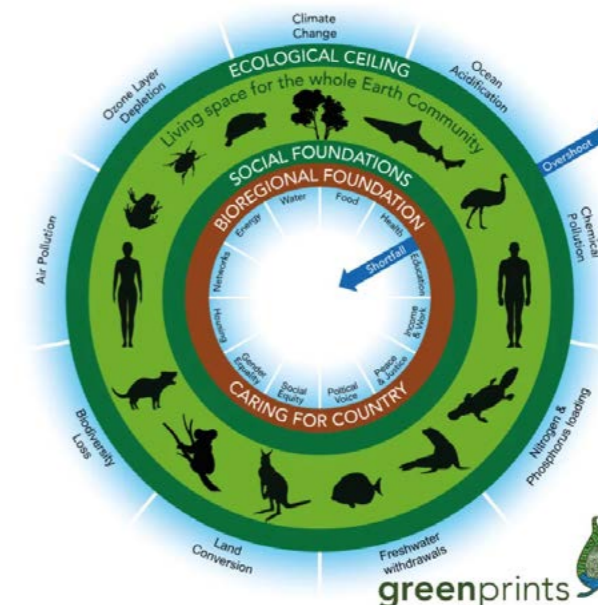


Figure 3. Greenprints Doughnut  
Source: Michelle Maloney (2021)

But how can we achieve a regenerative society and ‘live within the Doughnut’? This is where our second model is helpful. The Doughnut helps to frame the goal (for human societies to thrive within planetary boundaries), and the Greenprints approach outlines a process we can use to help us reach our goal.

Greenprints is an Australian-designed system, which provides a step by step approach for communities to achieve equitable societies and regenerative economies, within our ecological boundaries. Greenprints demystifies and connects the many concepts, models and methods that can be used to help us create sustainable and socially just communities.

In addition to the Greenprints steps<sup>9</sup>, Greenprints has its own version of the Doughnut, shown in Figure 3. This version refers to the ecological ceiling and social foundation, but has also added “the things that sustain us physically and spiritually”: our connection to place, including our bioregional foundation and the practice of Caring for Country.

**Discussion question**

Are there other principles that should be considered to shape the Local Social Strategy and its approach?

<https://www.menti.com/c79wsvxtdh>

<sup>9</sup> Greenprints Doughnut: [https://blog.earthlaws.org.au/2021/10/doughnut-economics-and-the-greenprints-approach/?fbclid=IwAR3HpOf2Yla\\_qOLBbMDgPplQQyy2OqgwEDmowPAqsVvGkJMrvVvjAGSB34I](https://blog.earthlaws.org.au/2021/10/doughnut-economics-and-the-greenprints-approach/?fbclid=IwAR3HpOf2Yla_qOLBbMDgPplQQyy2OqgwEDmowPAqsVvGkJMrvVvjAGSB34I)

## 1.4 Discussion questions for consideration

Throughout this paper, we will invite the reader to consider several discussion questions. We will seek your feedback on these questions during virtual workshops or via a short survey link. The survey link is included next to each discussion question throughout the Discussion Paper. The discussion questions will be indicated with the following image:



Image: Rising from the Embers, Land and Cultural Festival, Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle, May 2021



# 2. Understanding our communities

Newcastle is Australia's seventh-largest city. It 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 population of Newcastle is expected to grow and change in the coming 20 years, and with this growth will come many social, economic and environmental changes. This period will also include uncertainty about the recovery from and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increasing impact of climate change.

## 2.1 Demographic overviews and trends

### 2.1.1 Population and projections

In 2021, the Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA) had an estimated population of 171,307, this is projected to grow to 202,049 by 2041. Reasonably balanced population growth is projected across all age groups, but the largest growth by far will be amongst those aged 70–85 years. The current median age sits at 37 years<sup>10</sup>.

An estimated 19,450 new dwellings are needed by 2041 to meet population growth-related demand. The western corridor of the Newcastle LGA, west from Wallsend to the M1 freeway and LGA boundary at Minmi, will have significant greenfield development – largely on greenfield (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, 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.

### 2.1.2 Socio-economic disadvantage

As part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2016) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas Census (SEIFA), the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage provides a weighted index of community disadvantage on 17 indicators generally associated with social wellbeing. The SEIFA Index of Education and Occupation brings together a range of indicators associated with a community's educational and occupational wellbeing. Overall, Newcastle has a relatively positive profile on each of these indicators. It was in the least disadvantaged 33% of LGAs in Australia, and in the upper 18% of LGAs for educational and occupational status in 2016. 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.

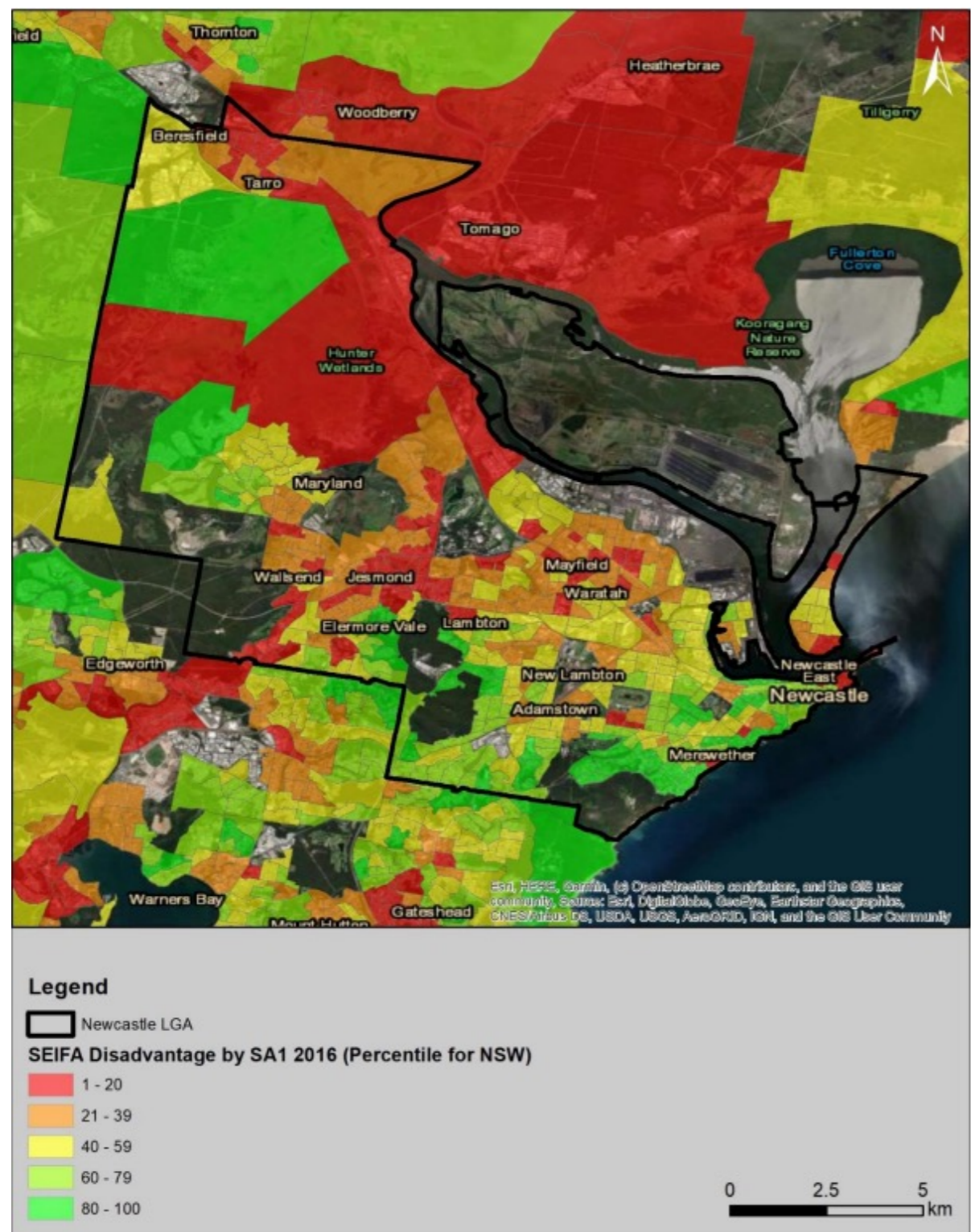
Other relatively disadvantaged areas were the Stockton area and the SA2s of Mayfield–Warabrook, Wallsend–Elernmore Vale and Waratah–North Lambton, which were all in the most disadvantaged one-third of areas in Australia. Figure 4 below maps this SEIFA disadvantage across the LGA. These areas of more 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>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> id. Consulting (2018), City of Newcastle Population and Household Forecasts 2016 to 2041

<sup>11</sup> Judith Stubbs and Associates, 2021



Figure 4. SEIFA Disadvantage for City of Newcastle by SA1



Source: Judith Stubbs & Associates 2021, based on data from ABS 2016 Census

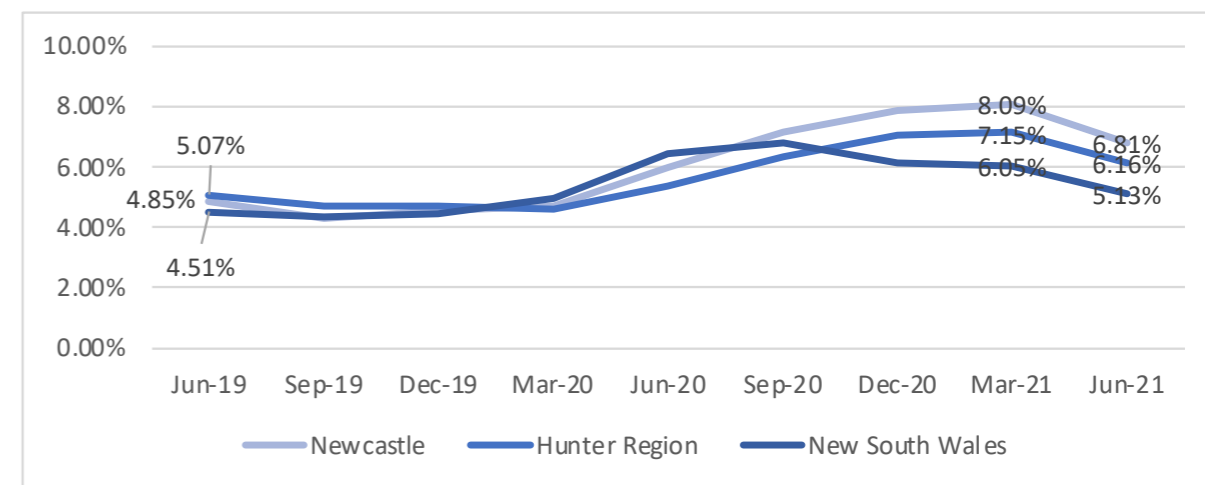
2.1.3 Employment and education

In terms of the LGA's educational profile, Year 12 completion rates were considerably higher than the rest of NSW, and a much higher proportion of people had degree or higher post-secondary qualifications. However, as noted above, there were several areas where post-secondary qualifications were much lower than average, as reflected in the SEIFA Education and Occupation measure.

In line with its younger age profile and increased employment opportunities related to its role as a major urban centre, Newcastle had a higher-than-average labour force participation rate, and a positive increase in both the size of the labour force and participation rate over the decade to 2016. However, unemployment was higher than the rest of NSW in 2016 (7.4% compared to 6.6%). There were particularly high rates of unemployment in the SA2s of Shortland–Jesmond (15.9%) and Beresfield–Hexham (11.3%), which, as noted, are particularly disadvantaged areas<sup>12</sup>.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen in the rapid increase in unemployment from March 2020, with unemployment at 8.09% in March 2021. There has been evidence of a downward trend, with unemployment at 6.81% in June 2021, but this is still higher than pre-pandemic rates and above the NSW average. Some geographic areas in the LGA are experiencing higher rates of unemployment, and younger people have been particularly affected.

Figure 5. Unemployment in Newcastle from June 2019 to June 2021



Source: REMPLAN, City of Newcastle Economy Profile

<sup>12</sup> Judith Stubbs and Associates, 2021

## 2.2 Our priority communities and groups

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 includes a focus 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. Our priority groups often experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression (such as racism, sexism, ableism and homophobia). This means we need to take an intersectional approach to promoting social justice and inclusion in Newcastle.

The following communities have been identified as priority groups in our LGA<sup>13</sup>:

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

In 2016, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 3.5% of Newcastle LGA's total population, with the NSW average sitting at 2.5%. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been identified as a priority group for CN as they continue to experience significant socio-economic disadvantage when compared to the general population of Newcastle. In 2016, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Newcastle was 15% (7% for general population); 11% had a degree or higher (25% for general population); and the average weekly income was 31% less than the general population.



More information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).

### Socio-economically disadvantaged and newly vulnerable communities

The SEIFA Disadvantage measure presented in Figure 4 shows that the Newcastle LGA scores relatively well. However, there are some very disadvantaged geographic areas, particularly in the western suburbs of the LGA. In 2016, the 'lowest' and 'medium lowest'<sup>14</sup> household income quartiles made up 54% of all households with income in Newcastle. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is also an emergence of 'newly vulnerable' community members who are experiencing housing, food and income insecurity for the first times in their lives. A study by Good Shepherd and Roy Morgan estimates that about 25% of Australians aged 14 and above, and 40% of working Australians, have seen negative employment impacts from COVID-19, in turn affecting their household finances<sup>15</sup>. Considering this, people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and newly vulnerable communities are priority groups for CN.



More information about people experiencing homelessness and insecure housing in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).

### People with disability

In 2016, 5.9% of the Newcastle LGA population was estimated to be living with disability, as reported by the census. However, in 2018, 17% of the NSW population had a 'reported disability', which suggests that the number of people with disability in Newcastle may be higher. A disability is any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions; almost 90% of disabilities are not visible. People with disability are a priority group for CN as they experience significant socio-economic disadvantage compared to the general population. In Newcastle in 2016, the unemployment rate for people with disability was 17.7% (7% for general population); 6.1% had a degree or higher (25% for general population); and the average weekly income was 39% less than the general population.



More information about people with lived experience of disability in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).

### Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities

In 2016, 14% of Newcastle residents were born overseas and 10% spoke a language other than English at home. Across the LGA, 134 different languages were spoken in homes. The most widely spoken languages were Mandarin, Macedonian, Italian, Greek and Arabic. However, the languages spoken with the greatest need for translation included Arabic, Swahili, Persian/Dari and Tibetan. CALD communities have been identified as a priority group as they experience socio-economic disadvantage. In Newcastle in 2016, of those CALD people who speak English 'not well' or 'not at all', 70% were not in the labour force and 11% had a degree or higher (25% for general population). Newcastle is a well-known humanitarian resettlement region, welcoming on average 320 - 350 people a year in the Newcastle region. Recently, 74 Afghani families have been resettled in Newcastle, and will require support to ensure they are welcomed and integrated into our city.



More information about Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).

### LGBTIQA+ communities

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) people and communities are a diverse and often underrepresented population within Australia. Unfortunately, there is a lack of detailed population-level data for LGBTIQA+ communities across Australia, which makes it difficult to appropriately respond to the needs of these communities. It is estimated that up to 11% of Australians may have a diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity. In Newcastle, this equates to 20,000 people. LGBTIQA+ communities are a priority group for CN due to the mental health, social isolation and community safety disadvantages they experience. LGBTIQA+ people are 3 times more likely to have considered suicide in the last 12 months<sup>16</sup> and 44% of LGBTIQA+ people usually hide their gender or sexuality in public.



More information about people of diverse genders and sexualities in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).

<sup>13</sup> Information for 'Our priority communities and groups' has been sourced from Fallding (2021), 'A demographic profile of diverse communities within the City of Newcastle' and the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census, unless specified otherwise.


<sup>14</sup> 'Lowest' quartile of household income is \$0 to \$750/week and 'medium lowest' quartile of household income is \$751 to \$1,481/week

<sup>15</sup> Good Shepherd and Roy Morgan (2021), 'New Vulnerable Research': <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-10/apo-nid314651.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Hill, A. O., Bourne, A., McNair, R., Carman, M. & Lyons, A. (2020). Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia. ARCSHS Monograph Series No. 122. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University

### Older people


In 2019, it was estimated that people aged 60 years and over made up 21% of the Newcastle LGA population. Older people are a priority group for CN as our community is ageing – there will be a 36% increase in people over the age of 60 years in the Newcastle LGA by 2041. To ensure older people are provided with the same opportunities as younger people to remain physically, intellectually and socially active, age-friendly infrastructure, services and support will need to be planned for and provided.



**More information about people of diverse genders and sexualities in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).**

### Young people and children

Babies and pre-schoolers (1–5 years), children at school (5–17 years) and young people (15–24 years) currently make up 43% of the Newcastle population, and numbers are predicted to increase until 2041. Children and young people are priority groups for CN as supporting our youngest community members from an early age provides them with the best opportunity to live healthy, productive and enjoyable lives. Children are prioritised by CN in terms of lifelong learning, and young people are supported in terms of employment, training and civic engagement, particularly considering that youth unemployment approached 20% in September 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**More information about people of diverse genders and sexualities in Newcastle can be found under our Community Profile [on our website](#).**

### Women and men- areas of identified risk

People who identify as women and men are considered priority groups for CN due to specific vulnerabilities they experience. The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly affected women due to the adverse impact on industries in which women predominantly work, the casualised nature of much of the paid work women undertake<sup>17</sup>, and housing insecurity faced by older women. Women are also at a greater risk of domestic and family violence (D&FV); in the year to June 2021 in Newcastle, 75% of domestic assault victims identified as women<sup>18</sup>. Addressing toxic masculinity and the mental health of people who identify as men is a priority for our community. Men are 3–4 times more likely to take their own life than women<sup>19</sup>, and a recent study found that young Australian men’s belief in rigid masculine stereotypes has a stronger impact than other factors (including their education levels, where they live or their cultural heritage) on whether they will use violence, sexually harass women or experience mental ill-health themselves<sup>20</sup>.

**Discussion question**

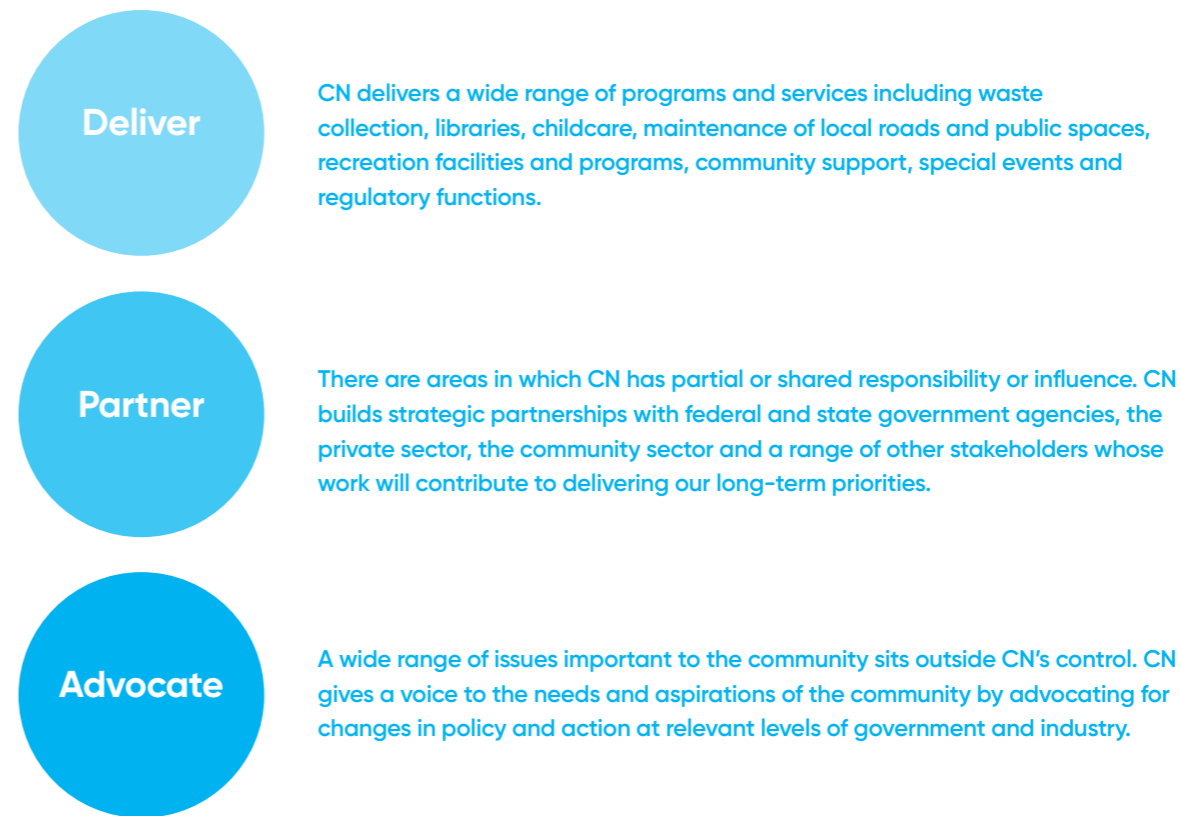
**Are any priority community groups missing? If yes, please outline which groups and why.**

<https://www.menti.com/d4bv6jo3tu>

<sup>17</sup> Dawson, E. (2020, September 4). Anti-poverty Week podcast recording. (D. Cox, Interviewer)  
<sup>18</sup> BOCSAR (2021). NSW Crime Tool: <http://crimetool.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/bocsar/>  
<sup>19</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/fe61104-dbe5-4f91-bdb2-fc50f7c55177/Suicide-self-harm-monitoring-Data.pdf.aspx?inline=true>  
<sup>20</sup> <https://jss.org.au/what-we-do/the-mens-project/unpacking-the-man-box/>

### 2.3 Our role

Many of the social issues and concerns facing Newcastle are complex and beyond the direct control and influence of CN, meaning we need to work with our community and a range of stakeholders to ensure our collective wellbeing. Depending on the activity being undertaken, CN’s role is to deliver, partner and/or advocate.



The priority social needs of Newcastle communities will be outlined in the following section of this Discussion Paper. For each issue identified, CN’s role in delivering, partnering or advocating will be noted.

Image: Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre Services Expo, May 2021



# 3. Social challenges in Newcastle

CN has developed a social needs assessment for Newcastle, with the findings grouped into 4 themes: equity, inclusion, connection and health. This assessment is based on the following evidence:

Consultation with community and key community stakeholders – 286 people	Secondary research, literature and evidence from Australia and globally
Online (1,720 respondents) and face-to-face (400 respondents) social surveys	Local social, demographic, economic and environmental trends within Newcastle <sup>21</sup>
Primary research within a single Newcastle community services sector network using Social Network Analysis – 36 participants	Global social, demographic, economic and environmental trends likely to impact Newcastle in the future
Use of PowerBI dashboard developed by CN Corporate Planning team to analysis and visualize over 2,200 data points from the online and face-to-face social surveys	

As part of the community engagement for the Local Social Strategy, the CN project team spoke to 286 people at 17 events and workshops. Priority community groups were targeted, with workshops and events designed to ensure the inclusion of the following groups:

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, including refugees	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
People from low socio-economic backgrounds	Disability community
LGBTIQA+ communities	Older people
Youth	

Community feedback was captured via 2 surveys between June and September 2021. The online survey explored community participation, access to services, wellbeing, safety, and perceptions around social matters and social justice issues. The face-to-face survey explored social matters and participation in the community. In total, 2,120 people provided their views (online survey = 1,720 and face-to-face survey = 400). A representative sample of diverse groups responded to the survey, including LGBTIQA+ communities, younger people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A full report on the community engagement, including surveys, can be accessed here.



## 3.1 Equity challenges

### 3.1.1 Housing affordability and insecure housing

Housing affordability and insecure housing is by far the greatest social issue concerning the people of Newcastle. Of the 2,120 respondents from the Local Social community surveys, 53% reported that affordable and inclusive housing is the biggest social issue in Newcastle, with 51% of online survey respondents (1,720 people) saying it is difficult or very difficult to access affordable housing. While housing was an issue for all respondents, those aged 70+ years generally found it easy or very easy to find housing, while younger people, LGBTIQA+ communities, people with disability and CALD communities had the most difficulty accessing affordable housing.

*'Lack of regulation of the housing market has resulted in rental prices and purchase prices skyrocketing. I'm 33 with a decent full-time job but owning a home is not a reality.'*  
(Survey respondent)

For Newcastle, stable and affordable housing plays a critical role in the health and wellbeing of families and individuals. Housing is considered to be 'affordable' when households pay less than 30% of their gross household income on housing costs (renting or purchase). 'Social housing' is secure and affordable rental housing for people on low incomes with housing needs. It includes public and community housing. While the provision of social and affordable housing has traditionally been the domain of the state government, local government can play a role in policy, advocacy, land use, and planning controls and guidelines, as well as property and levy programs to aid the delivery of affordable housing. However, everything we do must be done in partnership, as it is impossible for local governments to solely respond to the complexity of the housing challenge.

<sup>21</sup> Sources include: Australian Bureau of Statistics, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Bureau of Meteorology and Australian Institute for Health & Welfare

Current social and affordable housing needs in Newcastle:

**10,700** housing-stressed households<sup>22</sup>

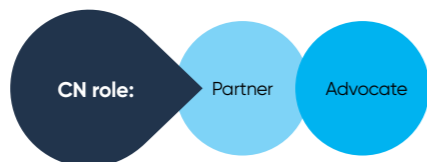
**4,780** social housing properties (public and community) understood to be fully occupied → a waitlist of **1,179** approved households on the NSW Social Housing Register

**7,000–7,500** affordable houses required by 2041 → **139** delivered to date<sup>23</sup>

In regional NSW, Newcastle (and Lake Macquarie SA4) has the highest level of projected unmet social housing need until 2036, and the second highest existing unmet need.

Further to the social housing demand, there is evidence of increasing homelessness locally. Equity Economics research on the impact of the COVID-19 recession estimated that ‘experiences in homelessness’ across Newcastle (and Lake Macquarie SA4) would increase by 40.5%, or around 470 people, based on the report’s June 2021 homelessness estimates of 1,624 people in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie<sup>24</sup>. Additionally, people ‘at risk of homelessness’ in the area were estimated at just over 6,000 in June 2021. The report notes that this reflects the combination of larger populations of at-risk individuals and local increases in unemployment.

Rising wait times of approved NSW Social Housing applicants in Newcastle are another challenge<sup>25</sup>. Of the 1,179 general and 96 priority approved applications for the Newcastle area as of June 30, 2020, wait times are between 5 years (for any form of social housing) and more than 10 years (for larger or specific-need properties).



### 3.1.2 Rising living costs

Concerns regarding rising living costs in Newcastle were reported by survey respondents. This included the cost of housing and rentals, but also referred to other living costs such as transport, food and health services, and the linkage with inadequate wages. From the online survey, most respondents were satisfied with their standard of living (66%); however, non-binary respondents had the lowest level of satisfaction (37%), followed by people with disability (42%) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (43%). When asked about satisfaction with future security (financial, housing, employment), only 42% of respondents were satisfied.

*‘As the world grows more expensive, our wages stagnate. Nothing is affordable. Not rent, sport or tertiary education. All of which are in high demand, implicating a cut in costs. Where is it?’*

*(Survey respondent)*

While Newcastle has relatively low levels of socio-economic disadvantage, there are significant differences across the LGA (as outlined in section 3.1.2), showing that high levels of disadvantage are experienced in some geographic areas and demographic groups.

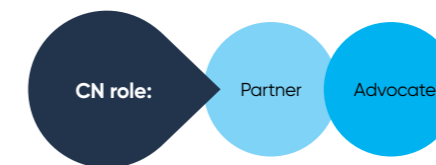
<sup>22</sup> JSA (2021). If a household is paying more than 30% of their gross household income on housing costs, they are considered to be ‘housing-stressed households’.

<sup>23</sup> City of Newcastle (2020), City of Newcastle Local Housing Strategy

<sup>24</sup> Equity Economics (November 2020), ‘A Wave of Disadvantage Across NSW: Impacts of Covid 19 Recession Report’, accessed at the following weblink: [https://www.ncoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-WAVE-OF-DISADVANTAGE-COVID-19\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ncoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-WAVE-OF-DISADVANTAGE-COVID-19_Final.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> NSW Government Communities and Justice (2018), ‘Waiting Times for Social Housing’, accessed at the following weblink: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/waiting-times>

The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted those disadvantaged groups, with newly vulnerable community members experiencing housing, financial and food insecurity for the first time. According to the Foodbank Hunger Report (2021), more than 1 in 6 adults in Australia can be categorised as ‘severely food insecure’, meaning they experience multiple disruptions to their eating patterns and often have to reduce their food intake. Concerningly, 1 in 3 of these people are experiencing this vulnerability for the first time due to COVID-19<sup>26</sup>.



### 3.1.3 Access to social infrastructure

Social infrastructure refers to the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities<sup>27</sup>. This includes ‘hard infrastructure’ such as facilities or physical structures (e.g. community centres, libraries, hospitals, schools, parks, sports fields etc.), where ‘soft infrastructure’ such as social, cultural and recreational services, programs and activities are often delivered.

From the online survey, 77% of respondents reported easy access to libraries, and this was consistent across community groups. However, only 38% reported easy access to community centres and spaces, with non-binary people (17%) and people with disability (19%) finding access most difficult. According to community members, priorities to increase the shared use and enjoyment of community facilities, services, public open spaces and recreation facilities include: equitable access to and inclusion in those facilities; affordable and well-maintained spaces; and flexible, multi-purpose spaces that cater to a range of users and interest groups.

*‘[There is] disparity in the quality of public facilities available between poorer and wealthier parts of the city.’*

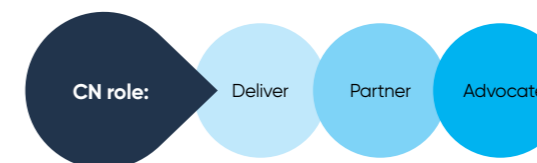
*(Survey respondent)*

Access to health, aged care and social support services was of concern to survey respondents. An increase in demand for these services over the past 5 years has been linked to increasing disadvantage (including unemployment); an ageing population and increasing social isolation; and improved communications and promotion of services<sup>28</sup>. In terms of healthcare, 59% of online survey respondents found it easy to access services; however, this was harder for non-binary people (38%) and people with disability (46%).

Some barriers to access include the geographic distribution of services, with more services located in the city centre rather than the western suburbs, and a perceived lack of connected, accessible and affordable transport that further exacerbates the issue. For LGBTIQ+, CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, a primary barrier was a perceived lack of culturally appropriate, safe and inclusive social services, including dedicated spaces for these community groups. Limited directional signage indicating key landmarks and facilities (e.g. libraries, toilets) was seen as another challenge to accessing social infrastructure.

*‘More safe places for queer people. A safe space for young queer adults to go. Newcastle doesn’t even have a gay/queer bar anymore.’*

*(Survey respondent)*



<sup>26</sup> Foodbank Hunger Report (2021): <https://reports.foodbank.org.au/>

<sup>27</sup> Infrastructure Australia (Australian Infrastructure Audit, Aug 2019)

<sup>28</sup> CN (2021), Newcastle Social Infrastructure Strategy, Needs Assessment Report

### 3.2 Inclusion challenges

#### 3.2.1 Inequality of opportunity

Across both Local Social surveys (2,120 respondents), access to meaningful and fairly paid employment was the third greatest social concern (11%). Concerns were related to job opportunities, job security and the future job market. People with disability, non-binary people and LGBTIQ+ communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, younger people, and CALD communities were particularly concerned about, and impacted by, access to meaningful and fairly paid employment.

*'Casualisation of the workforce – I work, but not enough hours. My children work casually and can't get a home loan.'*

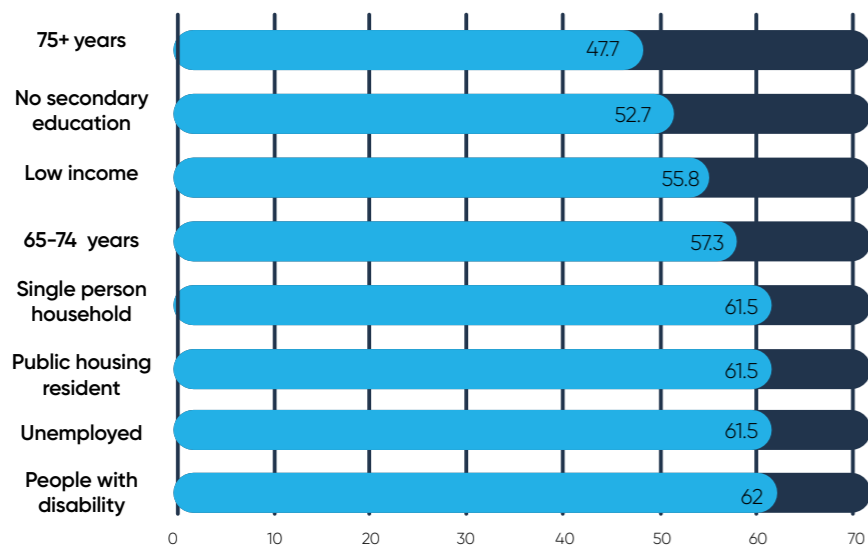
*(Survey respondent)*

*'Access to diverse, high value work opportunities. Living in Newcastle is still a sacrifice career-wise when compared to metro cities.'*

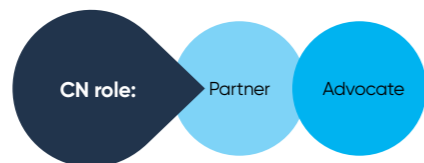
*(Survey respondent)*

While access to learning and education opportunities was perceived as easy for most online survey respondents (51%), non-binary people, people with disability and CALD communities found it slightly harder (33%, 40% and 43% respectively).

Another key aspect of equal opportunity, and a key challenge facing Australians, is digital inclusion, with digital transformation being experienced in many aspects of economic and social life. In 2021, the Newcastle LGA scored 69.0 in the Australian Digital Inclusion Index<sup>29</sup>, below the national average of 71 and the City of Sydney score of 83. However, key groups in our community are being left behind digitally, with some scoring up to 20 points lower than the Newcastle average. These groups are shown in<sup>30</sup>.



Source: Australian Digital Inclusion Index



#### 3.2.2 Discrimination

Discrimination based on race, origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age and ability was identified as an issue within the communities of Newcastle. Discrimination was seen as both overt (e.g. physical and verbal abuse) and hidden (e.g. discriminatory workplace policies). While values of respect and fairness are at the heart of Australia's culture, one in 4 Australians experience major discrimination through unfair policy, law, treatment or practices<sup>31</sup>.

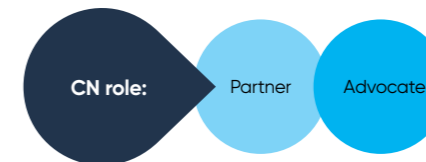
In Newcastle, a broad range of community members and stakeholders expressed concern about race-based and place-of-origin discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities impacting their economic, cultural and social life. Discrimination based on gender identity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

*'Diversity – Newcastle does not have a very diverse population, and this often manifests with exclusionary behaviour, if not outright discrimination.'*

*(Survey respondent)*

*'Access to change tables/hoists in disability toilets. Without these basic amenities these people won't go to events or Newcastle at all.'*

*(Survey respondent)*



#### 3.2.3 Limited opportunity to express and connect to culture

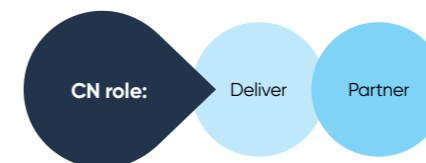
A broad range of community members and stakeholders expressed concern about the limited opportunity to express and connect to the diverse cultures that exist in Newcastle. This referred to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, multicultural communities' cultures, and artistic, intellectual and creative expression. If diverse cultures, identities and experiences are not welcomed, it can lead to people feeling excluded and experiencing a limited sense of belonging. Initiatives that embrace diversity through reconciliation activities, celebrate the richness of our diverse cultures and lived experiences, and strive to inform and educate our communities were welcomed.

*'More cultural events. We need an Awabakal and Worimi cultural centre where there are activities, tours, and information. Not just for tourism but for our mob too.'*

*(Survey respondent)*

*'Moving past monoculture. We need to welcome all nationalities to create a vibrant, diverse population full of cultural richness if we want to become truly cosmopolitan.'*

*(Survey respondent)*



<sup>29</sup> The Australian Digital Inclusion Index uses survey data to measure digital inclusion across three dimensions of access, affordability, and digital ability.

<sup>30</sup> Australian Digital Inclusion Index – Data Dashboard: <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/interactive-data-dashboards/>

<sup>31</sup> Australian Social Inclusion Index:

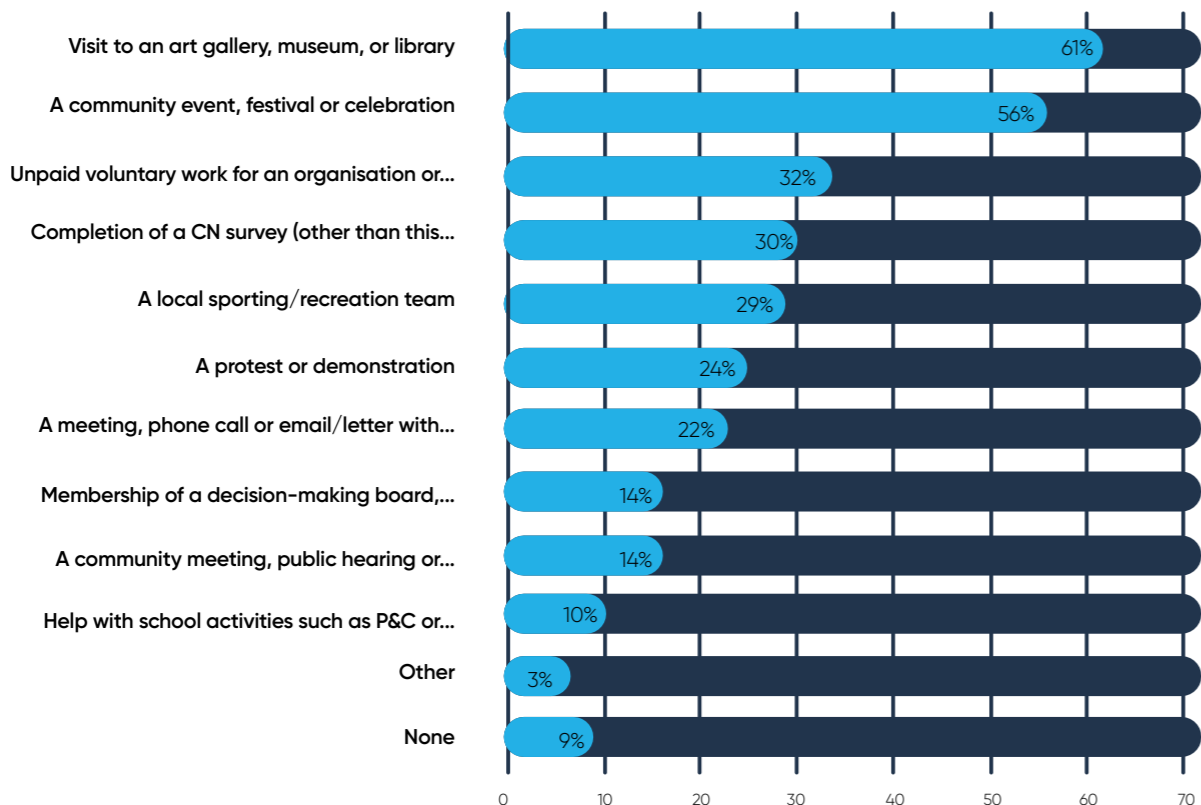
<https://inclusive-australia.s3.amazonaws.com/files/Inclusive-Australia-2020-21-Social-Inclusion-Index-mLocal Social Discussion Paper> 20

### 3.3 Connection challenges

#### 3.3.1 Community participation

Participation in community life is an essential aspect of individual wellbeing and social connection, leading to greater social cohesion. In Newcastle, visiting an art gallery, museum or library (61%) and attending a community event, festival or celebration (56%) were the top activities reported by respondents to the online survey.

**Figure 7. Community participation – Online survey, total sample = 1,720**



Respondents who identified as a non-binary or as part of the LGBTIQ+ community were more likely than other groups to have attended a community event, festival or celebration, or to have taken part in a protest or demonstration, but were less likely to be part of a local sporting team. Respondents with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage were, on average, slightly less likely to participate in the community activities included in the survey.

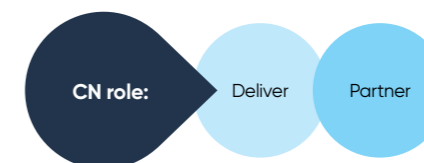
In terms of barriers to community participation, lack of time due to other commitments was the most common barrier cited, both overall and by most key groups. Respondents who identified as non-binary and those in the LGBTIQ+ community tended to report more barriers than other key groups, particularly feeling unsafe or uncomfortable attending community activities (44% and 28% respectively, vs 15% overall). People with disability also reported more barriers, though these were related to concerns for health and wellbeing (52% vs 22% overall), difficulty accessing venues (26% vs 10%), and transport issues (21% vs 8%). Barriers to participation in community activities reduce with age, with younger respondents citing more barriers than older respondents.

*'Events that are inclusive. Accepting all individuals from all environments, e.g. celebrating all cultures, affordability of events, accessibility of events through adequate transport.'*

*(Survey respondent)*

*'Lack of community activities and inclusive space for LGBTIQ+ and non-binary people. Understanding about non-binary pronouns and how to address gender diverse people and other appropriate services.'*

*(Survey respondent)*



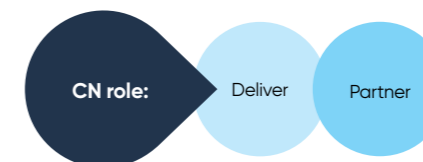
#### 3.3.2 Access to information and influence in local decisions

For some community groups, gaps in access to information and news have been identified throughout the COVID-19 pandemic response, with vulnerable groups particularly excluded due to the reliance on electronic and virtual access to information. Access to information plays a pivotal role in sustainable communities as it improves people's social, economic and political integration within their communities<sup>32</sup>.

Access to information assists community members in knowing what community activities, workshops and events are available, leading to better social and economic integration. At present, 27% of online survey respondents reported difficulty in finding information about available activities and programs as a key barrier to participation. Information related to local planning and issues assists communities' political integration through involvement in local decisions. At present, community members and stakeholders reported limited participation in local decision-making and civic engagement, with only 14% of online survey respondents taking part in local decision-making boards or committees, community meetings, public hearings or discussions.

*'Creating an inclusive, safe and connected community. Connected to decision-makers who will listen to us... We're all in this together, let's listen to everybody.'*

*(Survey respondent)*



#### 3.3.3 Social isolation and loneliness

Social isolation and loneliness can be harmful to both mental and physical health. With 29% of people living alone in Newcastle<sup>33</sup>, social isolation is fast becoming a major challenge to ensuring connection to and inclusion in the wider community. A range of community members and stakeholders highlighted this as a key issue in Newcastle.

Risk factors for social isolation and loneliness include living alone, not being in a relationship, being unemployed, receiving income support, and lack of satisfaction with one's financial situation<sup>34</sup>. Social isolation varies across age groups, with loneliness tending to be more common in young adults, males, those living alone, and those with children, either singly or in a couple<sup>35</sup>. Studies investigating the relationship between age and loneliness often have contradictory findings, with some finding higher levels of loneliness among older people while others find lower levels; this may be linked to relationship status<sup>36</sup>. Many people reported experiences of social isolation and loneliness during COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Although most regions of Australia reported improvements as lockdown measures began to ease, COVID-19 has highlighted how vulnerable our communities can be in the face of such shocks.

<sup>32</sup> UNESCO (2020), "Access to Information in Times of Crisis": <https://en.unesco.org/themes/access-information>

<sup>33</sup> idcommunity, ABS (2016): <https://profile.id.com.au/newcastle/household-size>

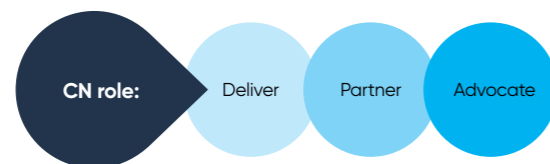
<sup>34</sup> Flood (2005); Lauder et al. (2004); Relationships Australia (2011); Baker (2012)

<sup>35</sup> Baker (2012)

<sup>36</sup> Relationships Australia (2018)

*'Social isolation in all its forms continues to impact on the wellbeing of our communities and people. This includes welcoming diversity [in all its people] – we are past just acceptance...'*

(Survey respondent)



### 3.4 Health challenges

#### 3.4.1 Health and wellbeing

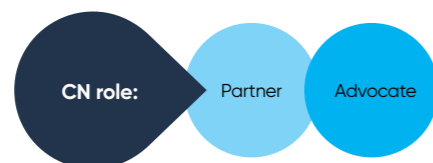
In Newcastle, and across Australia, mental ill-health and declining trends in physical health are a major public health issue. Increased demand for mental health services and concerning rates of suicide amongst younger populations have been observed. In 2019–2020, 11.2% of the Australian population received Medicare-subsidised mental health services (an increase of 6% since 2009–2010); in Newcastle, this was close to 19% of the population. In Australia, the leading cause of death for people aged 15–44 was suicide, which is reflected in the Newcastle context as well.

A trend towards less active and less healthy lifestyles has led to health and wellbeing issues. Overweight and obesity is a major public health issue and a leading risk factor for ill health in Australia. Across the country, 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>37</sup>.

Respondents to Local Social online and short surveys reported mental health and physical health as the second (19% of respondents) and fourth (6% of respondents) key areas of social concern. This was greater amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD respondents, who reported mental and physical health as the top areas of concern. Common issues included timely access, limited availability of services (particularly specialist mental health services), and cost.

*'Access to mental health services. Psychologists are too expensive therefore not accessed when required.'*

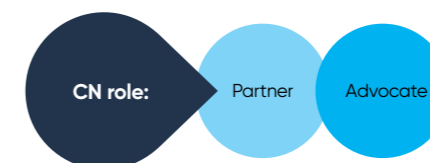
(Survey respondent)



#### 3.4.2 Social dimensions of climate change and crisis events

Climate change and crisis events such as COVID-19 challenge the health and wellbeing of Australians and 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 and higher frequency of bushfires, as well as rising sea levels and temperatures and ocean acidification. There are strong relationships between the quality of the environment (air, water and food systems) and physical and mental health and wellbeing. These relationships need attention as we continue to adapt to climate change and crisis events, and consideration of the social domain is essential.

Particular attention should 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. Around Australia, many local governments, including Newcastle, have heatwave plans in place that clarify responsibilities and outline measures for enhancing long-term community resilience<sup>38</sup>. As part of the recent community engagement for the Newcastle 2040 CSP, over 5,000 pieces of feedback were collected, with environment a high priority, specifically stronger action on climate change. (21% of respondents), highlighting the need to act.

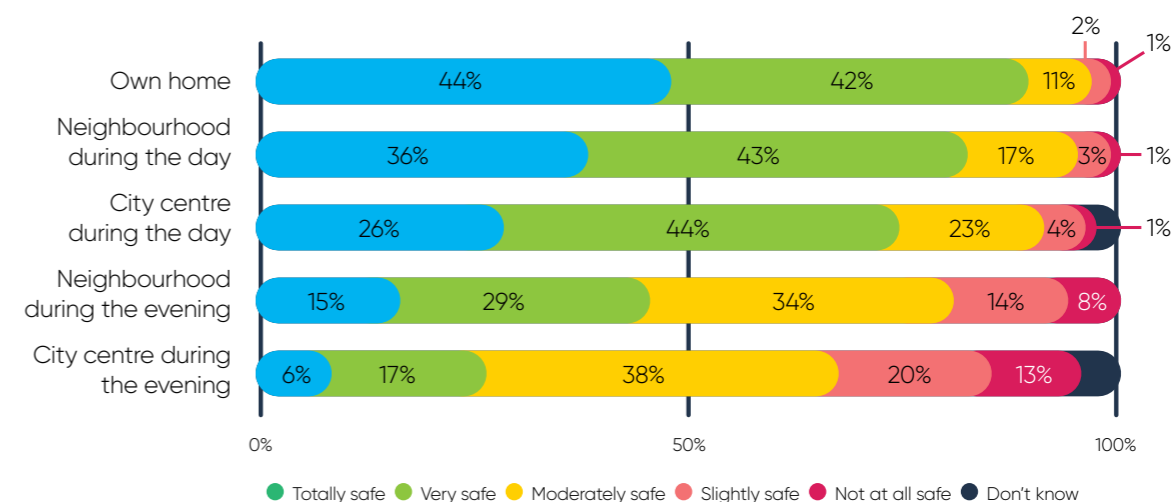


#### 3.4.3 Community safety

Community safety is a complex issue, and no single agency is able to tackle it alone. CN collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders to implement strategies for improving safety in our city and community. This section presents community perceptions of safety, a summary of crime data in Newcastle, and key community safety concerns.

Community members who responded to the online survey were asked about their safety perceptions and to rate how safe they felt in a variety of locations, using a 5-point scale from 'totally safe' to 'not at all safe'. Results are presented in .

**Figure 8. Safety perceptions – Online survey, total sample = 1,720**



Overall, most respondents felt safe at home (86% totally or very safe), in their neighbourhood during the day (79%), and in the city centre during the day (70%). People felt less safe at night, both in their own neighbourhood (44%) and in the city centre (23%). Analysis by key groups reveals people who identified as non-binary feel the least safe overall, particularly in the city centre during the day (49% totally or very safe vs 70% all respondents), and in their own neighbourhoods during the day (65% vs 79%). Older respondents (70+ years) felt less safe in the city centre than other groups, both at night and during the day, and people with disability also had weaker safety perceptions overall than most other groups.

<sup>37</sup> Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (2020), Overweight and obesity: an interactive insight

<sup>38</sup> Australian Government (2021), National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, 2021–2025



*'Safety and security in the city at all times of day and night – more diverse use of space at night to provide passive surveillance and security.'*

*(Survey respondent)*

*'Toxic masculinity and the violence it brings. Making much of the city unsafe for women and LGBTQI people. It dominates most spaces in Newcastle, creating an unsafe monoculture.'*

*(Survey respondent)*

A summary of crime data and trends in the Newcastle LGA is presented in below. Most crime categories in the Newcastle LGA are trending downwards or are stable over the 5-year period between July 2016 to June 2021, with the exception of breaching bail conditions, which has increased. However, it is important to note that for 9 of the 14 crime categories reported, Newcastle ranks in the top 20 out of 120 LGAs in NSW in terms of the rate of offending. Furthermore, there are 5 crime categories in which Newcastle experienced a higher rate of offending than that of the NSW average in 2021.

**Figure 9. Newcastle LGA local crime categories and trends in 2021**

No.	Offence type	Number of incidents	Our ranking out of 120 LGAs	Rate of offense compared to NSW (per 100,000 population) <sup>39</sup>	2-year trend	5-year trend
1	Malicious damage to property	1,956	21	1.8	Stable	-4.4%
2	Steal from motor vehicle	1,439	7	2.4	Stable	-10.2%
3	Fraud	1,417	4	1.5	-8.8%	Stable
4	Breach bail conditions	1,378	25	1.3	Stable	+4%
5	Non-domestic violence-related assault	1,166	12	1.8	Stable	Stable
6	Break and enter dwelling	858	17	2.2	Stable	Stable
7	Steal from retail store	769	8	1.8	Stable	Stable
8	Domestic violence-related assault	674	64	1.0	Stable	Stable
9	Motor vehicle theft	520	10	2.2	Stable	Stable
10	Alcohol-related assault	418	17	2.3	Stable	-5.6%
11	Sexual assault	256	29	1.6	Stable	Stable
12	Steal from person	80	12	1.9	Stable	-17.7%
13	Alcohol-related offensive conduct	60	35	1.7	Stable	-10.6%
14	Robbery without a weapon	50	3	2.1	Stable	Stable

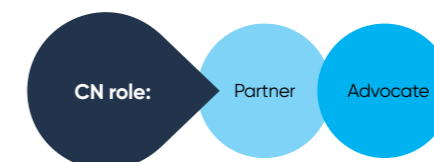
Source: NSW BOCSAR (Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research)

<sup>39</sup> The ratio to NSW rate statistics is a comparison of an NSW regional rate per 100,000 population to the NSW rate per 100,000 population. A ratio of one indicates parity with the NSW rate. Ratios indicating double the NSW rate (or more) before rounding are highlighted in red.

**3.4.3 Community safety**

Two key areas of concern were raised by community members and stakeholders throughout the engagement: domestic and family violence (D&FV) and drug- and alcohol-related crime. Several D&FV issues were identified, including a lack of availability of services such as crisis and support accommodation; a lack of safety for victims in public spaces; and the increase in vulnerability of women in becoming homeless due to leaving abusive home environments. In the Newcastle LGA, there are roughly 13 reported domestic violence incidents reported per week, 674 incidents over 2020 - 2021. These issues were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as a significant proportion of women experienced first-time and escalating violence, which many women attributed to factors associated with the pandemic<sup>40</sup>.

Drug- and alcohol-related issues occurring in public spaces were identified as another concern by community members and stakeholders. Alcohol was considered a contributor to other challenges including assaults, robberies, people consuming alcohol in public spaces (both during the day and at night), and alcohol addiction. Concerns were also raised regarding the presence of drugs within the community, including people supplying drugs in public spaces, the prevalence of addiction, and the impact of drug addiction on both mental health outcomes and crime rates.



**Discussion question**

Have we included the priority social issues and concerns affecting our communities in Newcastle? What is missing?

<https://www.menti.com/k7ngzaj889>

<sup>40</sup> Boxall, H., & Morgan, A. (2021). Intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: A survey of women in Australia (Research report, 03/2021). ANROWS: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-10/apo-nid314517.pdf> Local Social Discussion Paper 26



### 4.3 Emerging priorities and objectives for the Local Social Strategy

In response to the social needs identified through the strategy development to date, the diagram below presents a draft overview of the priorities, objectives and principles of the Local Social Strategy.

At the centre of all we do are our people and our planet. Key principles of social justice, relationships and regenerative practice, as well as evidence-based decision-making and innovative practice, inform the strategic approach (outlined in section 2.3). The 4 proposed priorities are equitable, inclusive, connected and healthy communities, with 4 objectives under each priority.

Please note: These priorities, objectives and principles are intended for further discussion as part of the community engagement process and are not yet finalised. Furthermore, this Discussion Paper does not propose the detailed strategies, actions and projects that will respond to the priorities and objectives. These will be outlined in the Action Plan of the Local Social Strategy document once we have received community feedback on this Discussion Paper.



#### 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.

To achieve this vision, 4 draft objectives (which require further development through community engagement) have been articulated:

- 1.1 Advocate and support access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing
- 1.2 Support access to essential services such as transport, health and social services
- 1.3 Work towards the equitable distribution of resources such as income, digital access and social infrastructure
- 1.4 Provide access to community programs that respond to identified needs in our communities.

#### Priority 2: Inclusive communities

**VISION:** Recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the Awabakal and Worimi peoples' strength, resilience and living culture. Champion inclusion across our community so that everyone is supported, valued and respected.

To achieve this vision, 4 draft objectives (which require further development through community engagement) have been articulated:

- 2.1 Support connection and expression of culture, particularly in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) communities and CALD communities
- 2.2 Work towards equality of opportunity, including employment, training and digital inclusion
- 2.3 Celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging and welcome in our communities
- 2.4 Combat discrimination through respect, education and commitment to change.

#### Priority 3: Connected communities

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

To achieve this vision, 4 draft objectives (which require further development through community engagement) have been articulated:

- 3.1 Facilitate creative, innovative community-led and informed participation
- 3.2 Encourage and support social connection
- 3.3 Enable political voice through local democracy and active citizenship
- 3.4 Facilitate access to information for community participation and civic engagement.

#### Priority 4: Healthy communities

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

To achieve this vision, 4 draft objectives (which require further development through community engagement) have been articulated:

- 4.1 Support the health and wellbeing of our communities
- 4.2 Enable an active lifestyle
- 4.3 Contribute to community safety
- 4.4 Facilitate community resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change and crises (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic).



### Discussion question

Are the draft Local Social Strategy priorities and objectives, which seek to respond to the key social needs in Newcastle, moving in the right direction? Why or why not, and what is missing (noting that Action Planning will occur in the next phase of strategy development)?

<https://www.menti.com/tm31rvhih6>

### 4.4 Finalisation of the Local Social Strategy

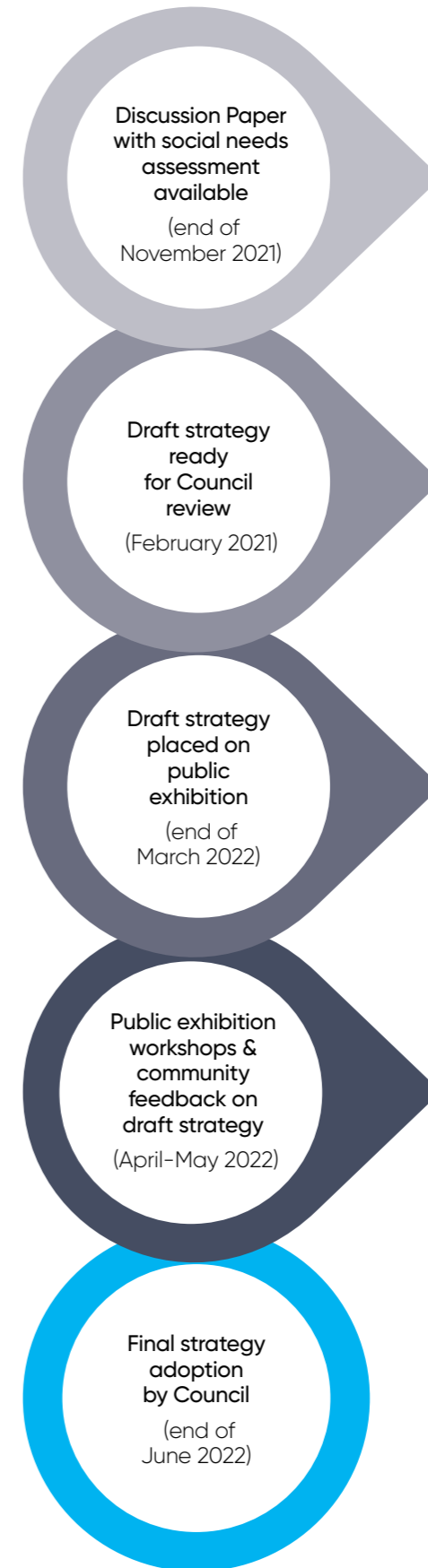


Image: Rising from the Embers, Land and Cultural Festival, Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle, May 2021

## Annex

### A. Definitions and key terminology

**Diversity:** Diversity in its broadest sense refers to the many ways in which people all differ, such as culture language, ethnicity, faith and beliefs, gender, age, ability, sexuality, gender identity, class, socio-economic status, income, education level, occupation, caring responsibility and where we live. These attributes help define who we are, our own experience and how the world sees us. They make up the various facets of an individual's identity.

**Human rights:** Derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by United Nations in 1948. It is about recognising the inherent dignity of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Human rights are universal, to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live.

**Intersectionality:** Refers to a way of seeing people's experiences as shaped by (but not limited to) their individual characteristics such as age, race, socio-economic background, religion, sex, gender, sexuality and more. This overlap or combination of characteristics makes up a person's unique identity. Intersectionality recognises that people's lives and experiences are shaped and influenced by this diversity of characteristics and experiences – resulting in power and privilege for some people and discrimination and oppression for others. While some people may have added layers of power and privilege due to characteristics such as gender and race, others experience compounding layers of discrimination.

**Social capital:** Social relations that have productive benefits for the community. It is an outcome of community engagement and community capacity building processes. Elevated levels of social capital assists in the creation of social cohesion and reduce inequalities in communities.

**Social cohesion:** A socially cohesive community is one where people from all backgrounds are welcome, valued and have a sense of belonging. Cohesive communities are also safe, resilient and share a sense of solidarity.

**Social inclusion:** Social inclusion is a universal human aspiration. It means being included in the life of the community around you, with full access to the opportunities and resources available, having a sense of belonging and feeling respected and valued for who you are. It has positive flow-on effects on individual and community health and wellbeing. Human rights are fundamental to overcoming discrimination and promoting inclusion.

Image: 'Count Us In' Festival, March 2021



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Figure 5. Unemployment in Newcastle from June 2019 to June 2021



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