

# revitalising newcastle

## Engagement Outcomes Report

DECEMBER 2015



# Table of contents

Executive summary	4
What were people engaged on?	4
What did people say?	6
What's next?	7
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 What were people engaged on?	9
1.2 How people had their say	19
1.3 Objectives of this report	20
<b>2. Program context</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Urban Transformation of the Newcastle city centre	21
2.2 Planning context	22
2.3 Relationship context	22
<b>3. Feedback on revitalisation objectives, opportunities and outcomes</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Program objectives	23
3.2 Program opportunities	30
3.3 Potential outcomes	38
<b>4. Feedback on transport</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1 What was done with feedback on transport?	47
4.2 Access and connectivity	47
4.3 Public transport	47
4.4 Active transport	48
4.5 Rail truncation	48
4.6 Light rail	49
4.7 Traffic, parking and local infrastructure	50
<b>5. Feedback on Revitalising Newcastle community engagement</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>6. Next steps</b>	<b>53</b>
Appendix A: Methodology for data collection, analysis and reporting	55

# Figure index

Figure 1	Engagement activities, reach and participation	8
Figure 2	Urban transformation objectives	10
Figure 3	Opportunity 1 – Greenway	12
Figure 4	Opportunity 2 – Harbour West City	13
Figure 5	Opportunity 3 – Harbour Play City	14
Figure 6	Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City	15
Figure 7	Potential Civic Link, before and after	16
Figure 8	Potential Hunter Street activation, before and after	17
Figure 9	Potential Entertainment Precinct, before and after	18
Figure 10	Spectrum of engagement activities and participation	19
Figure 11	Program study area	21
Figure 12	Stakeholder groups	22
Figure 13	Favourability of the revitalisation opportunities	31
Figure 14:	Likes/dislikes for the four different urban transformation opportunities (phone survey)	32
Figure 15:	Likes/dislikes for the urban transformation opportunities (phone, online and business surveys)	33
Figure 16:	Attitudes to the Civic Link, by survey channels	38
Figure 17:	Attitudes to the Hunter Street Revitalisation, by survey channels	41
Figure 18:	Attitudes to the Entertainment Precinct, by survey channels	43
Figure 19:	Feedback on Revitalising Newcastle	51
Figure 20:	Overview of concept proposal	54
Figure 21:	Revitalising Newcastle report methodology	55

# Executive summary

Revitalising Newcastle was part of the NSW Government's Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program (the Program). The Program is being led by UrbanGrowth NSW in collaboration with Transport for NSW (TfNSW), the Hunter Development Corporation (HDC) and Newcastle City Council (NCC).

The engagement program was overseen by a steering group comprising representatives of UrbanGrowth NSW, HDC and NCC, as well as an independent advisor. The independent advisor oversaw all aspects of the engagement program including data collection, analysis and reporting. This role reported to the steering group.

## What were people engaged on?

Revitalising Newcastle followed an earlier round of community engagement, known as Design Newcastle, which was held in June–July 2014 and involved 950 stakeholders. That engagement gathered feedback on people's vision and aspirations for a thriving city centre. Revitalising Newcastle was the next step and enabled people to provide their feedback and ideas on the following aspects of revitalisation.

<b>Vision</b>	Tell us more about your vision and aspirations for Newcastle city centre.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Share feedback and ideas on the guiding objectives for urban transformation.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>BRING PEOPLE BACK TO THE CITY CENTRE</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>CONNECT THE CITY TO ITS WATERFRONT</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>HELP GROW NEW JOBS IN THE CITY CENTRE</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>CREATE GREAT PLACES LINKED TO NEW TRANSPORT</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>CREATE ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC DOMAIN &amp; COMMUNITY ASSETS</p> </div> </div>
<b>Opportunities</b>	Provide feedback and ideas on 'opportunities' for urban revitalisation including different uses. These uses ranged from primarily open space to a combination of open space and residential, commercial and retail uses.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Provide feedback and ideas on the creation of a Civic Link between the Civic Precinct and the harbour, the revitalisation of Hunter Street, and the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the city's East End.

### What is the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program?

In 2013, the NSW Government committed \$460 million to revitalise Newcastle city centre by delivering new transport, creating jobs and connecting the city to the waterfront. The Program will:

- Provide a new transport interchange and light rail system linking Wickham to Pacific Park
- Revive Hunter and Scott Streets
- Revitalise the heavy rail corridor with new public spaces, housing, commercial and retail uses.



## Face-to-face engagement

**Three** community forums

Future leaders forum  
(young people 12–25 years)

Business breakfast

**Eight** pop-up engagements at community events and shopping centres

Intercept surveys at University of Newcastle and Hunter TAFE

**250** door knocks and surveys of city centre businesses

**15** briefings and focus groups: special interest groups

## Electronic engagement and communications

**600+** respondents to telephone survey

**700+** respondents to Newcastle Voice: survey (NCC's community reference panel)

**1,200+** respondents to online and paper-based survey

**11,000+** visitors to project website

**130+** online discussion forum comments

**6,300+** Facebook likes

## Print communications

Print media, radio and TV: across Newcastle and Lower Hunter

**400,000+** newsletters to homes and businesses

**Eight** noticeboards in city centre

**10,000+** postcards distributed

## Submissions

**285** submissions received



**11,000+**  
WEBSITE VISITORS



**6,300+**  
FACEBOOK LIKES



**2,500+**  
SURVEYS



**1,400+**  
PEOPLE ENGAGED FACE-TO-FACE



**285**  
SUBMISSIONS

# What did people say?

People said they are proud of their city and want to see it revitalised. People pointed to the natural beauty of the city centre – its heritage buildings, world-class harbour and beautiful beaches. People said the city was once a thriving place and that it would benefit from attracting more people to live, work, play and study there.

People held a range of strong views about previous government decisions on transport and the development of land in the rail corridor. There was clear direction from members of the public on the following issues.

## Revitalisation objectives

People supported the Program objectives:

- People strongly supported the objectives to bring people back to the city, grow new jobs and connect the city to its waterfront.
- There were a range of suggestions for place making, public domain and community assets.
- People wanted the heritage and character of the city centre to be respected in the revitalisation. Some people wanted heritage to be included in the Program objectives.

People supported maintaining and enhancing the character of the city centre's three precincts:

- **West End:** the commercial hub for the Hunter region, with relatively higher density commercial and residential development.
- **Civic:** the city's art, education and cultural heart, supported by some commercial and residential development.
- **East End:** a thriving urban community with tourism, entertainment and some sensitive residential development that respects the heritage nature of the precinct.

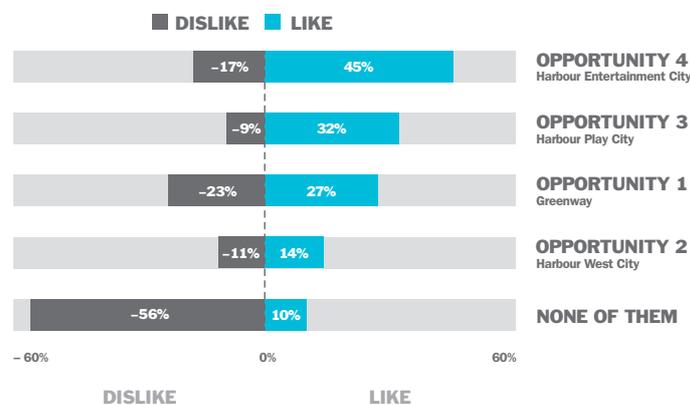
## Revitalisation opportunities

People favoured opportunities three and four (see page 5): these combine mixed use development with open space and new community assets. People also had a range of suggestions and ideas on how these opportunities could be enhanced and integrated with broader renewal of the city centre.

### More than three in four responses to a statistically-valid phone survey of more than 600 Newcastle and Lower Hunter residents favoured the Harbour Entertainment City and Harbour Play City opportunities<sup>1</sup>

613 adult residents of the Newcastle, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Cessnock local government areas (LGAs) participated in a random telephone survey. Respondents represented the demographic profile (age, gender, housing tenure, education, income etc) of the area.

The same survey was undertaken online and face-to-face (1,215 respondents) and by NCC through its online community reference panel Newcastle Voice (710 respondents). The results were consistent across all survey formats.



<sup>1</sup>The survey was conducted by an independent research company, which is an accredited supplier to state and local governments across NSW. Random sampling error for the phone survey was +/- 3.9% at the 95% confidence level. This effectively means that if we conducted the same random survey 20 times, results should be representative of the sample population to within a +/- 3.9% margin of error in 19 of those 20 surveys.



*More than 200 people from across Newcastle and the Lower Hunter attended three community forums*

## What's next?

Drawing on feedback from members of the public, UrbanGrowth NSW will:

- **Acknowledge heritage:** We will add an objective that demonstrates our commitment to preserving and enhancing the unique heritage of the city centre.
- **Outline our plans:** We will lodge a Planning Proposal with NCC in early 2016. The proposal will include a preferred concept for the rail corridor which draws on community input. People will have another opportunity to provide feedback when this proposal is placed on public exhibition by NCC later in 2016.
- **Start to deliver great places for the community.** Working in partnership with NCC, we will:
  - 1) Deliver new public domain next to Queens Wharf: remediate the land, deliver new open space and a ground-level walk and cycleway on the waterfront between Perkins and Newcomen Streets. We will investigate the removal of the Market Street pedestrian bridge as a result.
  - 2) Look at options to refurbish and adaptively reuse the railway signal box and introduce temporary activities, such as art and performance, for the public to enjoy.
  - 3) Work with the community to refine our ideas for Newcastle Station and the forecourt: to create a drawcard destination for the community that respects the station's heritage values. We will also investigate temporary uses while we prepare a final proposal for community feedback.
  - 4) Ongoing engagement: Continue to inform and engage with members of the public on our activities.

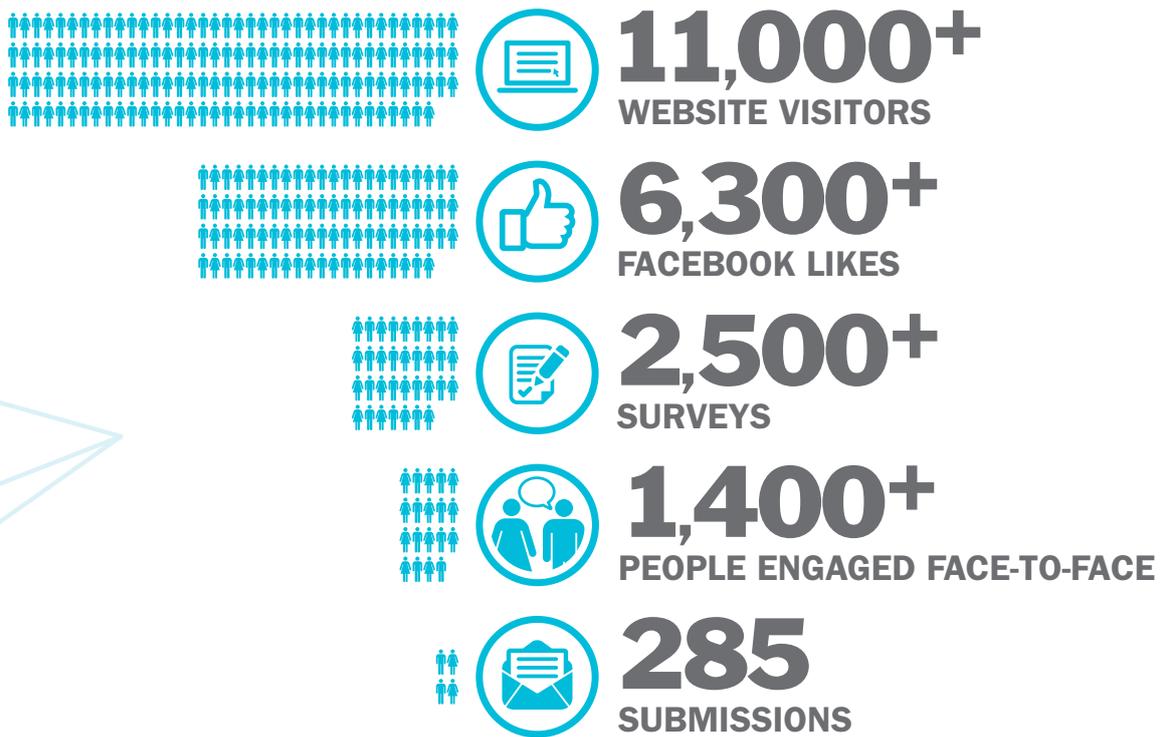
# 1. Introduction

The purpose of Revitalising Newcastle was to involve people from across Newcastle and the Lower Hunter region in sharing their ideas and providing feedback on the revitalisation of Newcastle city centre.

Between 10 August and 18 September 2015, UrbanGrowth NSW in partnership with Newcastle City Council (NCC) ran the Revitalising Newcastle community engagement program (Revitalising Newcastle). Revitalising Newcastle was outlined in a community engagement plan prepared jointly by UrbanGrowth NSW and NCC and endorsed by the elected Council in July 2015. The approach to engagement was aligned with NCC's best practice Community Engagement Charter (2012). The design, delivery and reporting of the engagement program was overseen by an independent advisor and a Steering Group comprising membership of UrbanGrowth NSW, NCC and the Hunter Development Corporation (HDC).

There were high levels of participation in Revitalising Newcastle. More than 1,400 people from more than 40 Hunter postcodes participated in 13 face-to-face community events, which included community forums, pop-up engagement stalls and door knocking city centre businesses. More than 2,500 people participated in phone and online surveys, and online engagement was popular, with thousands of people engaging with the Revitalising Newcastle website, Facebook and Twitter channels. 285 submissions were received via the website, email and post.

**Figure 1: Engagement, reach and participation**



Revitalising Newcastle was a component of the NSW Government's Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program (the Program), which is being led by UrbanGrowth NSW, in collaboration with NCC, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and the Hunter Development Corporation (HDC).

UrbanGrowth NSW is the NSW Government's urban transformation delivery organisation. Our ambition is to transform city living so that it is more vibrant, connected, and healthy for all, for now and many years to come. NCC is a key delivery partner for the Program and will be the main consent authority for urban transformation works undertaken as part of the Program.

Specifically, Revitalising Newcastle sought to:

- Ensure that a **broad** range of members of the community were **reached** through the engagement program.
- Ensure that members of the community are well **informed** about the commitments and opportunities available as part of the Program and feel **respected and included** in planning for urban transformation of the city centre.
- **Consult** with a range of people in identifying concerns, issues and opportunities to improve and progress the Program.
- **Involve** members of the community and other stakeholders to maximise the benefits for the people of Newcastle and surrounding communities as a result of the delivery of the Program.

## 1.1 What were people engaged on?

Revitalising Newcastle followed an earlier round of community engagement, known as Design Newcastle, which was held in June-July 2014 and involved 950 stakeholders. That engagement gathered feedback on people's vision and aspirations for a thriving city centre.

Revitalising Newcastle was the next step. It sought to:

- Further understand the public's vision and aspiration for Newcastle city centre.
- Build on the understanding of the community's preferences for city centre renewal gained through previous community engagement undertaken by UrbanGrowth NSW and NCC.
- Seek feedback and other ideas on guiding **objectives** for urban transformation, including the identification of any additional objectives that should be considered.
- Seek feedback and other ideas on four **opportunities** for the use of heavy rail corridor lands. These uses ranged from predominantly open space to a combination of open space and mixed use (residential, commercial and retail) development.
- Seek feedback and other ideas on three potential **outcomes** as a result of the urban transformation Opportunities: the creation of a Civic Link between the Civic Precinct and the harbour, the revitalisation of Hunter Street, and the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the city's East End.

The Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program will deliver new transport and renew sites in the city centre (the Program is described in Section 2.1 of this report). The scope of this engagement program was the urban revitalisation of Newcastle city centre, specifically the areas made available by the NSW Government's decision in 2012 to truncate the heavy rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations.

The process did not engage people on previous transport-related decisions made by the government. However, given the strength of views on these issues, a commitment was made to enable people to lodge submissions to be passed on to Transport for NSW. A summary of transport-related feedback gathered through this engagement process has also been included in Section 4 of this engagement report.

## 1.1.1 Revitalisation vision and objectives

Drawing on feedback from Design Newcastle and engagement with NCC and city renewal experts, UrbanGrowth NSW developed a vision statement for the revitalisation of Newcastle city centre.

*Our vision is an activated city centre and waterfront that attracts people, new enterprises and tourism. Over time, we see great opportunities to build on the strengths of the city centre to encourage innovative and enterprising industries to thrive. In the longer term, we see an opportunity to strengthen Newcastle's position on the regional, national and international stage, with a view to stronger ties with the Asia Pacific.*

The vision is underpinned by five objectives that have been identified to encourage the successful and equitable revitalisation of the city centre.

**Figure 2: Urban transformation objectives**



### **BRING PEOPLE BACK TO THE CITY CENTRE**

Re-imagine the city centre as an enhanced destination, supported by new employment, educational and housing opportunities and public domain, that will attract people.



### **CONNECT THE CITY TO ITS WATERFRONT**

Unite the city centre and the harbour to improve the experience of being in and moving around the city.



### **HELP GROW NEW JOBS IN THE CITY CENTRE**

Invest in initiatives that create jobs, with a focus on innovative industries, higher education and initiatives to encourage a range of businesses to the city centre.



### **CREATE GREAT PLACES LINKED TO NEW TRANSPORT**

Integrate urban transformation with new, efficient transport to activate Hunter and Scott Streets and return them to thriving main streets.



### **CREATING ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND COMMUNITY ASSETS**

Leave a positive legacy for the people of Newcastle. Ensure that new public domain and community facilities can be maintained to a high standard into the future.



*More than 200 people from across Newcastle and the Lower Hunter attended three community forums*

## 1.1.2 Revitalisation opportunities

A series of revitalisation 'opportunities' were prepared prior to the engagement program and are shown on the following pages. The opportunities included a combination of open space, mixed use development (residential, commercial and retail) and new community assets in the former rail corridor, to demonstrate how the city centre could be renewed over time.

The opportunities were provided to people as thought starters. People were asked to identify which aspects of each opportunity they liked and disliked (if any), and what they felt should change and stay the same. People were encouraged to think about their own needs and preferences and those of other people in the community. They were asked to think about what the city centre should offer residents, workers, students and visitors in the short, medium and longer term. They were asked to think big and imagine the city centre as a thriving regional capital.

The opportunities draw on feedback from the community during Design Newcastle, as well as Council and city renewal experts. In that previous engagement, there was a mix of views including that the land should be retained as a heavy rail corridor; that it should be mainly green space; that it become an active recreational and cultural hub for temporary and permanent arts, culture and leisure activities, cafes, restaurants and fresh produce outlets; and that it should be used for enterprises that stimulate the economy and attract investment to the city centre.

Figure 3: Opportunity 1 – Greenway



**THIS OPPORTUNITY COULD DELIVER:**

Green open space from Worth Place to Watt Street  
 Mixed-use development on Hunter Street near Darby Street

**1 – GREENWAY**

Green space could be established from Worth Place to Watt Street in the heavy rail corridor. This would be predominantly grassland. Also included here is the opportunity for some mixed-use development and an additional pedestrian access to the parkland on the eastern side of Hunter Street near Darby Street. The development could be a mix of retail, commercial and residential to support the anticipated revival of this area through the new University and Law Courts.

The former Newcastle Railway Station would be maintained in its current state.

This meets the Revitalising Newcastle objective of **Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport**.

Figure 4: Opportunity 2 – Harbour West City



**THIS OPPORTUNITY COULD DELIVER:**

- Green open space from Merewether Street to Watt Street
- Mixed use development on Hunter Street near Darby Street
- + Civic Link
- + West End mixed-use development
- + Access from the city to the waterfront at Market Street

**THE POTENTIAL OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF THE DELIVERY OF THIS OPPORTUNITY ARE:**

The creation of a Civic Link

**2 – HARBOUR WEST CITY**

Green space could be established along the rail corridor from Merewether Street to Watt Street with a new Civic Link from the city to the waterfront around the current Civic Station site. This link would provide direct access to the harbour from the University, City Hall, Civic Theatre and Law Courts. Market Street could also be extended across the rail corridor to provide access between the city centre and the waterfront.

Included here is some mixed-use development to stimulate economic activity west of Civic. New housing options would support increased activity generated by the new University and Law Court precinct. This would be a mix of retail, commercial and residential.

The former Newcastle Railway Station would be maintained to ensure it doesn't deteriorate.

This meets the Revitalising Newcastle objectives of **Connecting the City to its Waterfront, Helping Grow Jobs in the City Centre** and **Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport**.

Figure 5: Opportunity 3 – Harbour Play City



### 3 – HARBOUR PLAY CITY

Building on the opportunities outlined in Harbour West City, the Play City would feature a regional playspace, revitalisation of Hunter Street and potentially the relocation of the bus terminal to the West End.

The regional playspace could see land around the former Newcastle Railway Station revitalised with a major playground attraction as well as range of recreational features (a splash park for example). This proposal would require relocation of the bus terminal, possibly to an area between Merewether and Argyle Streets.

To ensure adequate car parking is provided for the anticipated increased activity in this area, Wharf Road could be realigned and additional car parking created.

Harbour Play City proposes revitalisation of Hunter Street by providing opportunities for mixed-use development along the eastern side of Hunter Street between Crown and Perkins Streets. This could provide some

accommodation to support the University nearby, as well as retail and commercial space to generate economic stimulus for the city centre.

Additional access between the city centre and waterfront could be created at Perkins Street and Newcomen Street.

The former Newcastle Railway Station would be partially refurbished to expand the opportunities for its reuse, creating potential for hosting activity and enterprise. The heritage integrity of the Station would be fully respected. Refurbishment would open the Station up for access between Bolton Street and the waterfront.

This meets the Revitalising Newcastle objectives of **Bringing People back to the City Centre, Connecting the City to its Waterfront, Helping Grow Jobs in the City Centre, Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport and Creating Economically Sustainable Public Domain and Community Assets.**



### THIS OPPORTUNITY COULD DELIVER:

- Civic Link
- Green open space from Perkins Street to Watt Street
- Mixed-use development on Hunter Street near Darby Street and in the West End
- Access from the city to the waterfront at Market Street
- + Partial restoration of Newcastle Railway Station
- + Regional Playspace
- + Revitalisation of Hunter Street
- + Relocation of the bus terminal to the West End
- + Access from the city to the waterfront at Perkins Street, Newcomen Street and Bolton Street

### THE POTENTIAL OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF THE DELIVERY OF THIS OPPORTUNITY ARE:

- The creation of a Civic Link
- Revitalisation of Hunter Street
- Creation of an entertainment precinct at the East End

Figure 6: Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City



## 4 – HARBOUR ENTERTAINMENT CITY

Repurposing the Newcastle Railway Station to a hallmark destination would be the feature of a Harbour Entertainment City. The Station would become the centrepiece of the city's play and entertainment precinct, and would accommodate enterprises and activities that attract visitors and stimulate the economy. This site has the potential to become a significant tourism destination. The community has suggested a refurbished Station would be ideal to showcase world-renowned Hunter Valley produce. Refurbishment would fully respect the heritage integrity of the Station.

The area around the Station could also become a dedicated entertainment hub that could be programmed for pop-up and permanent entertainment. It could be a thriving hub of arts and culture. Community feedback has supported an area like this where activities ranging from giant games of chess and volleyball to movies, live music and concerts, could be hosted. An enterprise adjacent to the station site is also a possibility.

Potential mixed-use development could be provided on the eastern side of Hunter Street between Perkins and Wolfe Streets to encourage further activity in the city centre.

This meets the Revitalising Newcastle objectives of **Bringing People back to the City Centre, Connecting the City to its Waterfront, Helping Grow Jobs in the City Centre, Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport and Creating Economically Sustainable Public Domain Community Assets.**



### THIS OPPORTUNITY COULD DELIVER:

- Green open space from Perkins Street to Watt Street
- Mixed use development on Hunter St near Darby Street and in the West End Civic Link
- Access from the city to the waterfront at Market Street, Perkins Street, Newcomen Street and Bolton Street
- Regional Playspace

Revitalisation of Hunter Street

Relocation of the bus terminal to the West End

- + Creation of a dynamic destination at Newcastle Railway Station
- + Entertainment Precinct

### THE POTENTIAL OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF THE DELIVERY OF THIS OPPORTUNITY ARE:

The creation of a Civic Link

Revitalisation of Hunter Street

Creation of an entertainment precinct at East End

CIVIC LINK



- Open space
- Paved pedestrian area
- Proposed pedestrian link
- Potential mixed use development
- Proposed light rail stop
- Public building / destination
- State heritage registered items
- Local heritage registered items

### 1.1.3 Potential revitalisation outcomes

Working with feedback from the community, business and industry, Newcastle City Council, city renewal experts and Government agencies, UrbanGrowth NSW has identified three potential outcomes that could be delivered as a result of the revitalisation of the city centre.

People were also asked to comment, and provide any other ideas, on these three potential outcomes that could be realised if the opportunities were delivered. The outcomes are:

#### CIVIC LINK

##### Description of the area today

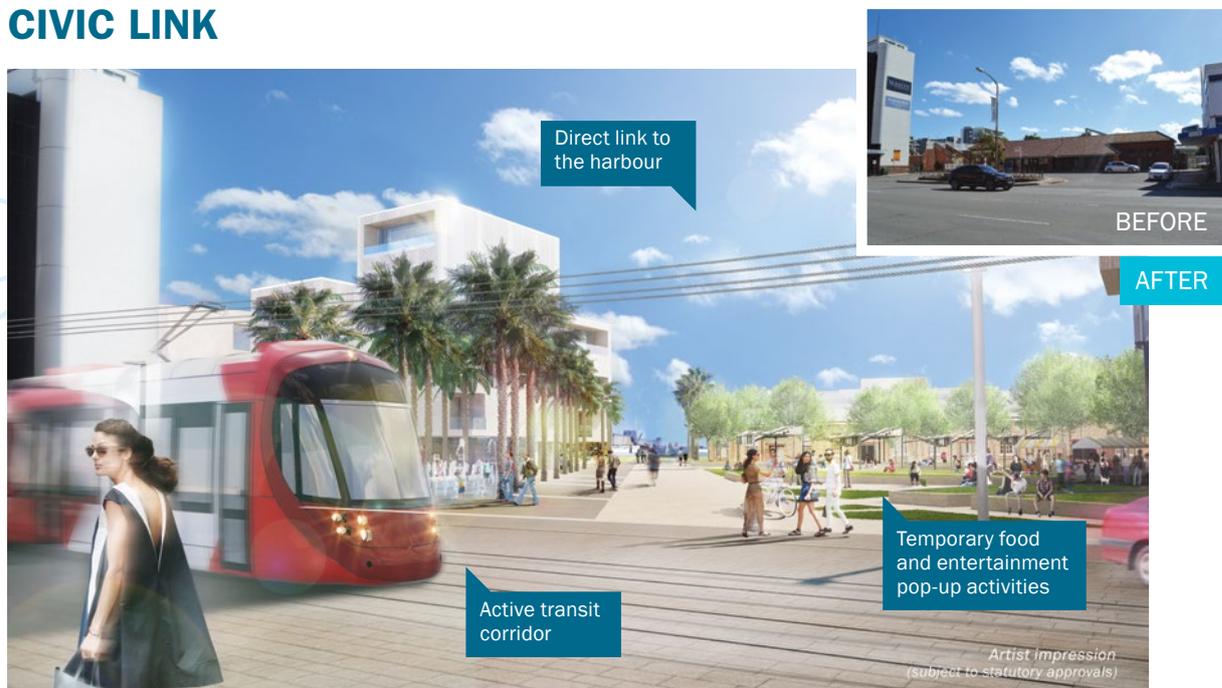
This area is the civic heart of Newcastle. It includes Civic Park, City Hall, Civic Theatre and Newcastle Museum. New investment in the area includes the \$94 million future law courts and \$95 million University of Newcastle NeW Space campus.

##### What could happen here

- Create new open space and walking and cycle ways that link Newcastle's civic buildings to the waterfront
- Open up views to the harbour from the civic area
- Create an enhanced civic destination, linked to the new light rail.

Figure 7: Potential Civic Link, before and after

#### CIVIC LINK



Civic Link before and after

## HUNTER STREET ACTIVATION

### Description of the area today

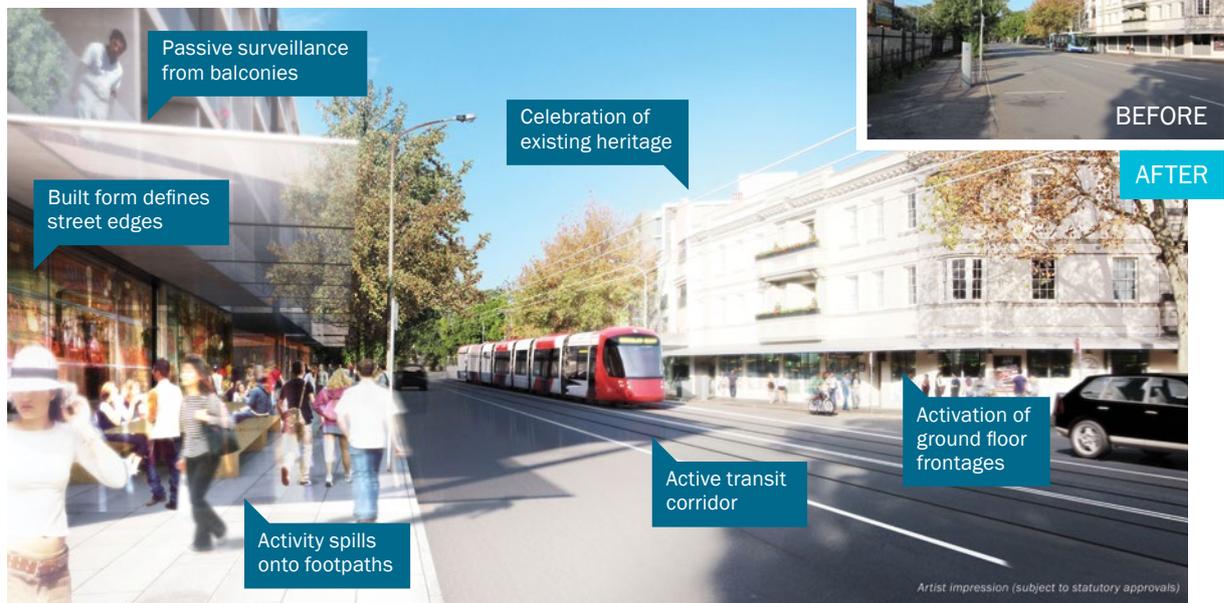
Hunter Street features some of Newcastle's best heritage buildings and offers a mix of shops, cafes, restaurants and other local businesses. Once Newcastle's main street, Hunter Street has experienced a decline in recent years.

### What could happen here

- Reinstating Hunter Street as Newcastle's 'main street' with light rail, shop front improvements and upgrades
- Maintain and celebrate heritage buildings along Hunter Street
- Create linkages from Hunter Street to the harbour
- Attract new investment and create jobs with a lively main street.

Figure 8: Potential Hunter Street activation, before and after

## HUNTER STREET ACTIVATION



Hunter Street Revitalisation before and after

## ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

### Description of the area today

The heritage-listed Newcastle Station is a valued part of the city centre. The building and its surrounds could be adaptively reused for a community or commercial use.

### What could happen here

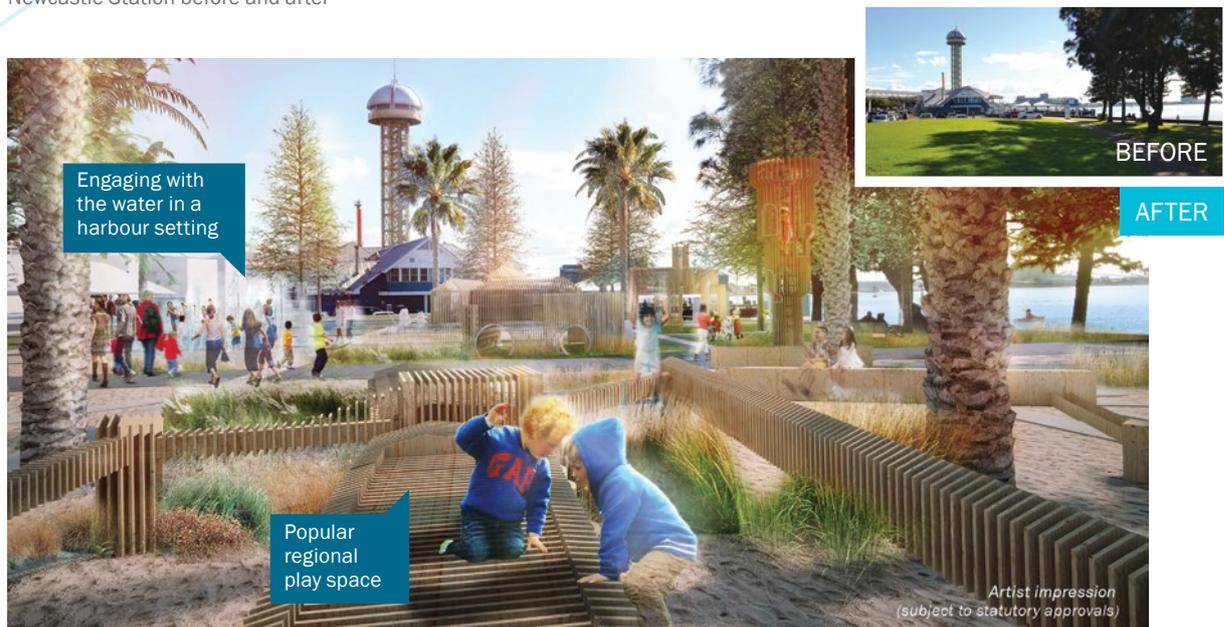
- Create spaces to play, relax and reconnect with the Harbour, with recreation activities for all ages and abilities
- Create a regional playspace – a regional tourist attraction and local asset close to transport, cafes and the water
- Adaptively reuse Newcastle Station as the precinct’s centrepiece, to ensure its heritage values are maintained and accommodate enterprises and activities to attract visitors and stimulate the economy
- Create a dedicated entertainment hub around Newcastle Station with pop-up and permanent entertainment.

Figure 9: Potential Entertainment Precinct, before and after

## ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT



Newcastle Station before and after



Regional playspace before and after

## 1.2 How people had their say

The Revitalising Newcastle engagement program included a broad range of activities, shown in [Figure 10](#) below, to encourage participation by people across Newcastle and the Lower Hunter region. Activities sought to reach broadly, to ensure that a diverse range of people – by geography, age, gender, background and interest in the project – could be involved in the engagement program. Targeted activities were also run to encourage the involvement of groups in the community who don't traditionally come forward, for example young people, members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people with a disability.

**Figure 10: Spectrum of engagement activities and participation**

Face-to-face engagement	Electronic engagement and communications	Print communications
<p><b>Three</b> community forums</p> <p>Future leaders forum (young people 12–25 years)</p> <p>Business breakfast</p> <p><b>Eight</b> pop-up engagements at community events and shopping centres</p> <p>Intercept surveys at University of Newcastle and Hunter TAFE</p> <p><b>250</b> door knocks and surveys of city centre businesses</p> <p><b>15</b> briefings and focus groups: special interest groups</p>	<p><b>600+</b> respondents to telephone survey</p> <p><b>700+</b> respondents to Newcastle Voice: survey (NCC's community reference panel)</p> <p><b>1,200+</b> respondents to online and paper-based survey</p> <p><b>11,000+</b> visitors to project website</p> <p><b>130+</b> online discussion forum comments</p> <p><b>6,300+</b> Facebook likes</p>	<p>Print media, radio and TV: across Newcastle and Lower Hunter</p> <p><b>400,000+</b> newsletters to homes and businesses</p> <p><b>Eight</b> noticeboards in city centre</p> <p><b>10,000+</b> postcards distributed</p>
		<p><b>Submissions</b></p> <p><b>285</b> submissions received</p>

In order to best understand and validate the broad spectrum of community views, a statistically-valid telephone survey was also undertaken

Participants were provided with a pre-survey information pack to ensure that they could meaningfully participate. The information pack was also made available online and at the community forums.

## 1.3 Objectives of this report

This report has been prepared collaboratively between UrbanGrowth NSW and NCC. It has been prepared as a record of public feedback received by UrbanGrowth NSW during Revitalising Newcastle. The main objectives of this report are to provide:

- an overview of the **engagement activities** and channels that were used to seek feedback from members of the community and stakeholders during Revitalising Newcastle
- an overview of the level of community and stakeholder **participation** in Revitalising Newcastle
- a summary of the feedback received during Revitalising Newcastle
- an overview of how this feedback will **guide the preparation of plans** to revitalise Newcastle city centre
- an overview of how this feedback will guide the UrbanGrowth NSW's approach to ongoing **engagement and communication** with people on the revitalisation of Newcastle city centre.

The methodology for preparing this report was workshopped and agreed with NCC Officers and the independent advisor and endorsed by the Steering Group. The methodology is outlined in Appendix C.

It is worth noting that the feedback received through the engagement program was largely qualitative in nature. All feedback has been treated equally, with no preference or weighting given to any idea, regardless of who it was from or how it was received. People's feedback has not been reported verbatim; comments of a similar nature have been grouped and summarised to reflect the essence of what was suggested by the feedback.

Other than the telephone survey, the feedback generated by the engagement activities is not statistically-valid. Analysis has been undertaken to identify the strength of feelings associated with the responses received – this strength of feeling has been determined by analysing the number of responses on a particular theme.



*More than 200 people from across Newcastle and the Lower Hunter attended three community forums*

## 2. Program context

### 2.1 Urban Transformation of the Newcastle city centre

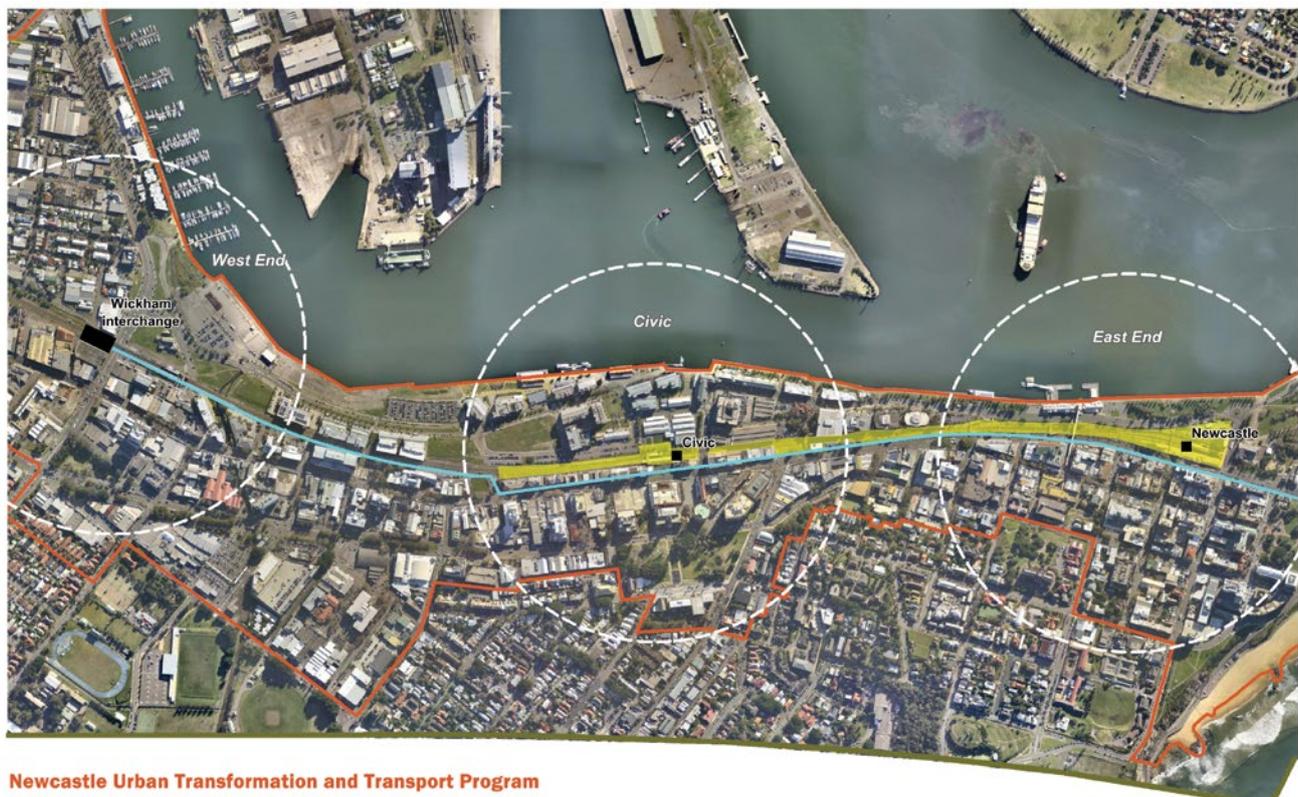
Newcastle is the capital of the Hunter region, the second largest city in New South Wales (NSW) and one of Australia's largest regional economies.

UrbanGrowth NSW and NCC are working in partnership, within their respective governance frameworks, to deliver high quality urban transformation which will stimulate activity, jobs, development and investment in the Newcastle city centre.

In 2013, on the basis of the strategic directions outlined in Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy, the NSW Government committed \$460 million to revitalise the Newcastle city centre (the study area is shown in Figure 11). The Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program seeks to revitalise the Newcastle city centre by strengthening connections between the city and waterfront, creating employment opportunities and delivering new transport connectivity. The Program is comprised of three elements:

- the introduction of a new light rail system linking Wickham to Pacific Park
- the activation of Hunter and Scott Streets linked to the delivery of light rail, and
- the urban transformation of the heavy rail corridor, the delivery of housing, and the delivery of improved public domain, including parks, entertainment precincts and public spaces, consistent with NCC's vision for the city centre.

Figure 11: Program study area



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. While every effort has been made to make this product correct as at the date of its indication, UrbanGrowth NSW will not be liable in any event for any losses or damages, including incidental or consequential, resulting from the use of the product or any material referred to in it.

UrbanGrowth  
NSW

Newc\_15\_A3 23/07/2015  
urbangrowth.nsw.gov.au

## 2.2 Planning context

UrbanGrowth NSW is proposing to rezone heavy rail corridor land from zoning SP2 (railway facilities) to zones that accommodate a range of urban land uses. The planning pathway will be determined jointly with NCC and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DP&E) and will involve a further stage of community consultation on land uses and design outcomes. Community and stakeholder feedback generated during the Revitalising Newcastle engagement process is informing the production of a Planning Proposal (rezoning application) which will be lodged with NCC in early 2016.

The Planning Proposal will be accompanied by a preferred concept plan based on community and specialist feedback, technical studies, a Voluntary Planning Agreement, which will include commitments to local infrastructure contributions (EP&A section 94) and an update to the Newcastle City Centre Development Control Plan (DCP).

Members of the community will have another opportunity to provide feedback on the Planning Proposal, through a statutory consultation process managed by NCC.

## 2.3 Relationship context

UrbanGrowth NSW is leading the delivery of the Program, working with partner organisations including NCC, Transport for NSW, HDC, and members of the community.

Urban transformation of the city centre has the potential to deliver economic and social outcomes in the form of job creation, economic growth and renewed public domain, which can benefit the city of Newcastle as a whole, as well as the broader Hunter region. Therefore, a range of other organisations and members of the community are key stakeholders for the Program and were encouraged to participate in the engagement program. See [Figure 12](#) for a list of these organisations and community members.

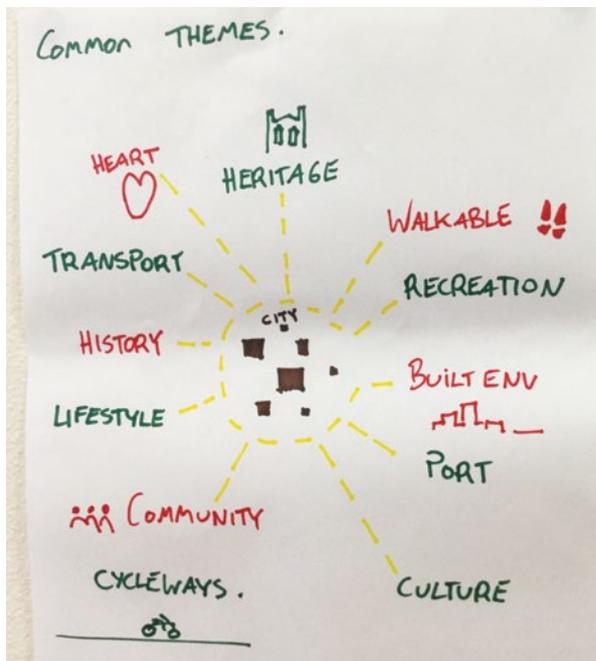
**Figure 12: Stakeholder groups**

Local Government	State Government Agencies and Corporations	Community and Special Interest Groups	Business and Industry
City of Newcastle Council	Hunter Development Corporation	Residents of the city centre	Businesses in the city centre and surrounds
Cessnock City Council	Hunter New England Health	Residents of Newcastle	Business and industry groups: including Hunter Business Chamber, Newcastle Business Club, Wallsend Chamber of Commerce, Lambton Chamber of Commerce
Lake Macquarie City Council	Hunter TAFE	Residents of the lower Hunter and surrounding areas (Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Port Stephens)	Newcastle Now (Newcastle Business Improvement Association) and Precinct Groups
Maitland City Council	Hunter Water Corporation	Schools in Newcastle	Renew Newcastle
Port Stephens Council	NSW Department of Education and Communities	Council advisory committees, e.g. youth, cultural diversity	Property Council of Australia
Hunter Region Organisation of Councils (HROC)	NSW Department of Planning and Environment	Resident action groups	Urban Development Institute of Australia
	NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet	Active transport groups	Others as appropriate
	NSW Trade and Investment	Young people, including those represented via e.g. Newcastle City Council's Youth Council, Hunter Young Professionals, PULSE	
	NSW Treasury	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) communities	
	Office of Environment and Heritage	Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities	
	Port of Newcastle	People with a disability and service providers	
	Regional Development Australia	Newcastle Voice, Newcastle City Council's Community Reference Panel	
	Roads and Maritime Services	Others as appropriate	
	Transport for NSW		
	University of Newcastle		
	Utilities, such as Ausgrid		
	Others as appropriate		

# 3. Feedback on revitalisation objectives, opportunities and outcomes

## 3.1 Program objectives

### 3.1.1 Overarching findings



There was strong support for the objectives of bringing people back to the city, connecting the city to its waterfront, and growing new jobs. There was mixed feedback on the two objectives relating to the delivery of public domain: creating great places linked to new transport and creating economically sustainable public domain and community assets. There was also a consistently held view that the city's heritage and character should be respected as part of the revitalisation and should be specifically referenced in the objectives.

*Students from the University of Newcastle's School of Architecture and Built Environment sketched ideas at the community forums*

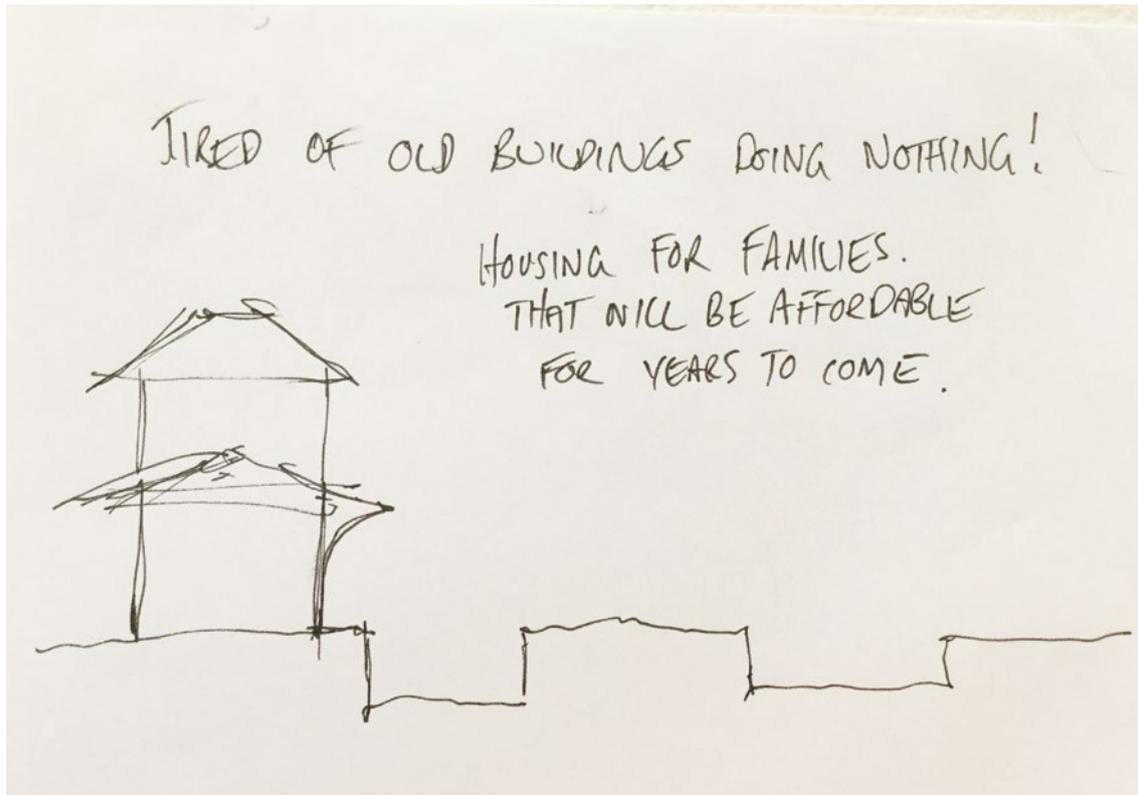
### 3.1.2 Bring people back to the city

*Feedback consistently supported this objective.*

People said they were proud of their city and wanted to see it revitalised. People pointed to the natural beauty of the city centre – its historic buildings, world-class harbour and beautiful beaches. There was a consistently held view that the city was once a thriving and attractive place and that it would benefit from attracting more people to live, work, study and undertake leisure activities. Some feedback suggested that people struggled to find places to take friends or family who were visiting Newcastle, beyond the beach or existing cultural institutions, such as the Newcastle Museum and Regional Art Gallery. Some feedback suggested that a

**People wanted to ensure that any revitalisation of the city centre encourages a mix of people to live, work and visit there.**

permanent Visitor Information Centre be included at Newcastle Station. Some feedback from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, particularly newly-settled migrants and refugees, suggested that the activities in the city centre did not attract them. They sought free and affordable family activities, such as music, performance and food-related events.



*Feedback from the community forums*

People wanted to ensure that any revitalisation of the city centre encourages a mix of people to live, work and visit there. A consistent theme was that any housing provided as part of the revitalisation should not only be the domain of the wealthy. People said that consideration should be given to a mix of options including affordable and social housing and student housing, to contribute to a diverse range of people living and working in the city. A consistent preference was for higher density buildings to be located in the West End and, to a lesser degree, Civic. The East End was seen as being more suited to lower density buildings, open space, public domain and entertainment activities. They also wanted to see the city active both day and night and suggested that creating new jobs that bring workers into the city during the day, as well as day and night-time activities, needed to be considered.

There was a consistent view that improvements were needed to public transport and parking, walking and cycle paths, open space, signage and wayfinding, to cater to increased student, worker and resident populations. Young people, in particular, said they wanted the city centre as a safe and attractive place to visit day and night. They suggested that this could be achieved by having more late night shopping and food venues, diverse street lighting and light shows against buildings or in open spaces, and after dark events that weren't just alcohol-related.

**There was a consistent view that improvements were needed to public transport and parking, walking and cycle paths, open space, signage and wayfinding, to cater to increased student, worker and resident populations.**

**People's comments on this objective included:**

*We need an "event" that Newcastle holds annually that defines us – that will bring others to our city.*

*People enjoy the lifestyle and vibe of Newcastle. People don't want to live in a 'little Sydney' or 'NSW's Gold Coast'.*

*If people choose to live in the city they have to accept that it is an active place.*

*The city centre needs to have a POINT OF DIFFERENCE (no Coles, Woolies, Kmart that is everywhere else). Maybe the FOCUS needs to change to tourism, entertainment and unique shopping opportunities.*

### 3.1.3 Connect the city to its waterfront

*Feedback consistently supported this objective.*

People said they highly value Newcastle's harbour and beaches and felt that these aspects of the city define its unique character. A consistently held view was that improving public access between Newcastle's civic and commercial precincts and the waterfront would benefit residents, workers and visitors, as well as attract tourists. People wanted to be able to move around the city centre easily, whether by public transport, private car, bicycle or on foot.

People wanted cycle and walking tracks to be delivered as part of the light rail. They wanted improved north-south connections linking from the foreshore through the city to significant areas and sites such as Hunter and King Streets and the Christ Church Cathedral. Feedback suggested that recent initiatives such as the Bather's Way, linking Foreshore Park with Newcastle Beach via Nobbys Beach, and the temporary rail crossings are well-used. Some submissions called for the installation of more crossings to increase connections between the city centre and foreshore and removal of the fences around the heavy rail corridor. People wanted to ensure that any new development did not block important view corridors to the Cathedral or create a barrier to the foreshore. This feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining publicly accessible spaces along the foreshore.

#### **People with a disability noted that if the city was more accessible for people with a disability then it would be more accessible for all people in the community**

People with a disability noted that if the city was more accessible for people with a disability then it would be more accessible for all people in the community, including older people, families with small children and others, such as tourists with luggage. Young people, in particular, wanted improved connections between different activity areas in the city including the beaches and shops, and restaurants and bars in the Honeysuckle precinct and on Darby Street.

There were a range of comments on the alignment of Wharf Road. Some feedback suggested the areas between Market and Watt Streets adjacent to Newcastle Station and the proposed Regional Playspace should be a pedestrian and cycle only zone, paved to further enhance connectivity with the waterfront. Further feedback on this issue is provided in the discussion on the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in Section 3.3.4.

Some feedback indicated that access and connections between the city and harbour foreshore are adequate; this feedback generally also supported the reinstatement of the heavy rail line.

#### **People's comments on this objective included:**

*Have a green corridor along length of light rail with cycle and walking tracks linking suburbs around the harbour by ferries to the city.*

*The waterfront is the heart of the city. I would like to see corridors to view the water from Hunter St. I would love to see a path from the waterfront to Christ Church Cathedral.*

*No more developments like the ugly Crowne Plaza and nearby apartments. No more walls of hideous buildings with no engagement with their sites, which just cut off views and access to the waterfront.*

*It needs to be more disabled and elderly friendly. At the moment [there are] too many stairs and having to walk to crossing points.*



Feedback from the community forums

### 3.1.4 Help grow new jobs in the city

Feedback consistently supported this objective.

People said that the creation of new jobs in the city centre is an important guiding objective for the Program. People held a range of views as to the level of intervention required to encourage the growth of new jobs. Some feedback suggested that jobs would grow organically with more people living and visiting the city creating demand for shops, services, entertainment, cafes, bars and the like.

**Young people had a strong desire to build a career in Newcastle after their studies and wanted to see a similar range of opportunities available as there are in larger cities, to keep them in the region.**

Other feedback suggested that the revitalisation activities should proactively support the growth of jobs across a range of industries and job types. Suggestions ranged from supporting small businesses already operating in the city centre by upgrading streetscapes and public domain; revitalising Hunter Street, including the mall, to attract boutique businesses; encouraging larger businesses to relocate to the city centre through tax incentives; and locating more state and federal government jobs in the city centre. Some feedback supported the creation of job-generating uses at Newcastle Station; suggestions included a hotel, conference centre, co-working spaces, an innovation hub, arts and cultural tourism. Feedback pointed to the need to create new jobs and not displace jobs from one part of the city centre to another. Some feedback suggested that jobs that had been created in the Honeysuckle precinct were displaced from the East End. Feedback pointed to the opportunity to build on existing strengths of the city and region in education, health, agriculture, arts and culture.

Young people had a strong desire to build a career in Newcastle after their studies and wanted to see a similar range of opportunities available as there are in larger cities, to keep them in the region. People said that revitalisation of the city centre would allow for the creation of new jobs for graduating students. Suggestions included developing more partnerships between businesses and the University of Newcastle to implement graduate programs. Feedback highlighted opportunities associated with the construction of the University's NeW Space campus in the Civic precinct, including the creation of education, business and innovation hubs. Some feedback supported an increased presence by the University – or a second university – in the city centre. People saw the opportunity to strengthen the Civic Precinct as a cultural hub, linking the university, new law courts, Newcastle Museum and Civic Theatre. Further feedback on this issue is provided in the discussion on the creation of a Civic Link in Section 3.3.2.

Business owners and operators pointed to the unique heritage character of the city as an attractor for boutique-style businesses. Their feedback generally supported population growth in the city centre alongside improved public transport and increased parking.

**People with a disability and people from CALD backgrounds, particularly newly arrived migrants and refugees, highlighted the need for a range of job opportunities and structured support programs to assist them to enter and progress in the job market.**

People with a disability and people from CALD backgrounds, particularly newly arrived migrants and refugees, highlighted the need for a range of job opportunities and structured support programs to assist them to enter and progress in the job market. Suggestions included developing partnerships with centres of excellence on the employment of people with a disability to incentivise local government and business to increase opportunities for employment, approaching Auslan which runs a hospitality industry training program for people with deafness or a hearing impairment, subsidising rent for people with a disability to start businesses. There was a view that these activities could assist to position Newcastle as a progressive city, with a versatile and diverse workforce – a great place to live and do business.

People said that jobs growth needed to be supported by efficient and effective transport between the Hunter region and the city centre. The provision of additional public transport options, parking and park and ride facilities, and additional parking were seen as important to enable people to access new job opportunities in the city centre. People also felt that additional social infrastructure such as childcare, pre-schools and primary schools, and medical facilities would be required to support an expanded city workforce. People also wanted the light rail and urban transformation activities to employ local people and buy materials from local businesses. Some people felt that consideration should be given to the promotion and use of energy efficient, environmentally sustainable and innovative technologies within the revitalisation project and that these should be bought locally, to assist the region to transition from a coal-based economy. Some feedback supported the location of a hub at Newcastle Station to seed small innovative, businesses.

**People's comments on this objective included:**

*I would love to live in Newcastle and have a career. I think the corridor could be used for commercial space to encourage private companies and investors to move into the space.*

*Transition from coal industries to new industries. New jobs provide a future for my children to be able to STAY in the city. Again diversity of jobs to provide resilience. I want JOBS for university graduates so they don't have to move away.*

*Encourage [a] start-up culture and co-work spaces and "new" industry uses for older industrial buildings.*

*We need to increase our population and to do that we need to steal corporations from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. We need to grow our tourism so people come here for more than one day.*

### 3.1.5 Create great places linked to new transport

*There were mixed views on this objective.*

People had mixed views on this objective. Much of the feedback related to the truncation of heavy rail and a view that returning heavy rail to the city centre would achieve this objective.

People said they highly value the existing public domain and places in Newcastle city centre, including beaches, parks, arts and cultural facilities, and heritage precincts. Other people felt that Newcastle city centre needs a new destination and improved public domain to attract people into the city centre. Overall, people wanted a mix of spaces for community uses – such as community meeting spaces, men’s shed, youth centre and pop-up libraries – and larger gatherings – such as art galleries and studios, outdoor performance spaces and leisure activities including yoga. People pointed to similar spaces nationally in Southbank, Brisbane; Broadbeach, Gold Coast; and New Acton, Canberra; and internationally in Park Guell, Barcelona; Chicago’s Pritzker Pavilion and Bryant Park in New York for example.

**Some feedback demonstrated a concern that the creation of new places and public domain in the city centre would mean the privatisation of this land. People said they would prefer to enhance and preserve what is already there.**

People saw an opportunity to revitalise the area around Civic Station to create new gathering and leisure spaces for students at the NeW Space campus and nearby TAFE, workers and visitors. Other feedback suggested that great spaces needed to be programmed with activities to attract people. Suggestions included arts, food and performance festivals, an outdoor cinema, community meeting spaces, temporary and permanent sculptures and public art.



*Feedback from the community forums*

**People's comments on this objective included:**

*Get the transport right and great places will be created.*

*Newcastle has a lot of green space - the Honeysuckle waterfront, Foreshore Park...However, lots of this space seems to be under-utilised. Public art, including sculptures and other items of interest should be added to our parks to make them more interesting to walk around for tourists. Think Park Guell in Barcelona.*

*Develop unique eateries utilising rail carriages within the Station space, have light shows (such as Vivid Sydney), outdoor art including repurposed train carriages or art on buildings (such as those that exist in Kurri Kurri).*

*Have small amphitheatre style spaces that facilitate street performances such as buskers, dancers [and] artists. I feel like on a Saturday or Sunday the foreshore could become much more alive.*

### **3.1.6 Create economically sustainable public domain and community assets**

*There were mixed views on this objective.*

There was robust debate in relation to this objective, which seeks to “Leave a positive legacy for the people of Newcastle. Ensure that new public domain and community facilities can be maintained to a high standard into the future”. People held a range of views on whether public domain and community assets should be economically sustainable. Some feedback suggested that these facilities should be subsidised by public funds while other feedback indicated that this was not feasible – particularly for local government and rate payers. There was a consistent theme in the feedback that public assets should be held in public hands and not privatised.

#### **Feedback pointed to the need to program activities on a changing schedule so that they generate continued interest and participation.**

There were a range of suggestions for creating economically sustainable public domain and community assets including creating flexible spaces and places that work for a range of audiences, at different times of the day and night and for a breadth of activities. Feedback pointed to the need to program activities on a changing schedule so that they generate continued interest and participation. A broad range of activities that attract all people in the community, across ages, interests and abilities should be held. Some feedback supported pop-up and temporary structures to enable flexibility in the use of new public domain. Darling Harbour in Sydney, Southbank in Brisbane and Federation Square in Melbourne were identified as good examples from which to draw inspiration for activities and facilities.

**People's comments on this objective included:**

*[Create] play spaces for families that are safe and accessible, with appropriate amenities such as toilets, cafes, parking, public transport. Think Darling Harbour or Cooks River Marrickville play spaces with [a] mix of water play, sensory play and active play.*

*Create great spaces with free and fee-paying activities. [Include] venues that offer activities [at] lower fees for people with a disability to gather in groups.*

*Public domain should not necessarily have ECONOMIC value. What is wrong with keeping public assets in public ownership for FUTURE GENERATIONS?*

*I would love to see the railway station become a contemporary arts and cultural facility. This could be economically sustainable and bring jobs and people into the city centre.*

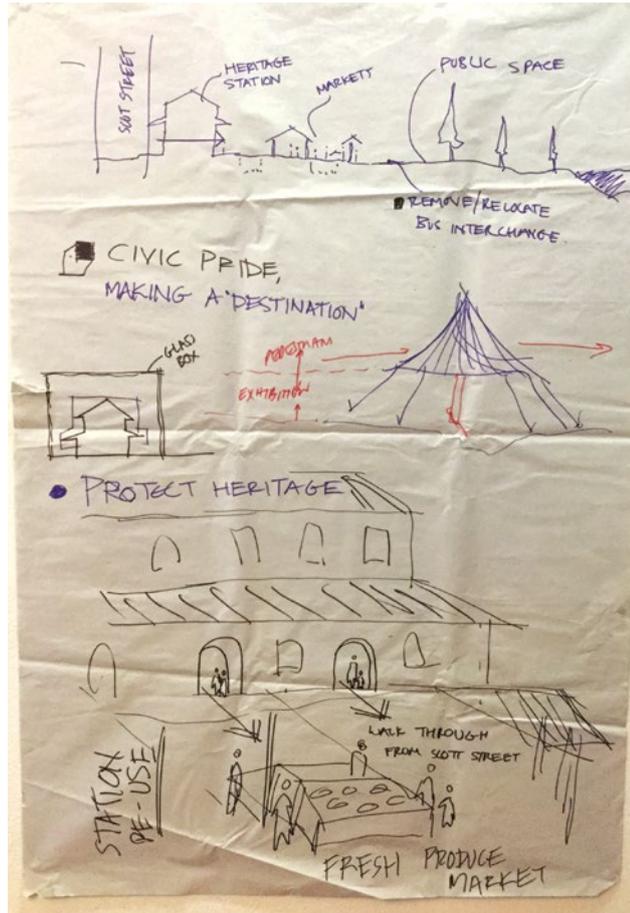
## 3.2 Program opportunities

Four opportunities for the revitalisation of the city centre were presented for discussion. People were encouraged to identify the components of each opportunity which they liked and disliked; they did not have to choose one opportunity as is. People were also asked to share any other ideas for the revitalisation of the city centre.

### 3.2.1 Overarching findings

There was a wide range of views on the opportunities for urban revitalisation, which are outlined in this section of the report. Some themes were consistently raised by people when discussing the opportunities:

- **We want outcomes that balance heritage preservation and new development:** people wanted to enhance and preserve the city centre's unique history, heritage and way of life, whilst strengthening its economy, supporting tourism, attracting people to visit, and improving the experience of being in the city. People wanted to see a balance of open space and mixed use development delivered as a result of the revitalisation. People wanted building heights and densities to respect the heritage nature and character of the city and preserve view corridors.
- **We want Newcastle Station to be celebrated and conserved:** people wanted the important architectural and cultural heritage of the station to be celebrated and conserved. They saw opportunities to repurpose the station to generate jobs, leisure and tourism activities. Suggestions for repurposing the station included use as a creative space with potential for restaurants, food venues, a hotel, conference centre, art space and entertainment venues.
- **We want effective transport and additional parking in the city centre:** People felt that more parking was required to sustain a growing population of city dwellers, students, workers and visitors. A high volume of feedback on the truncation of heavy rail and the delivery of light rail was also raised in the feedback, particularly through the submissions and the third community forum. These people said that the rail corridor should be returned to its former use. A summary of feedback on transport is included in Section 4 of this report.



Feedback from the community forums

## 3.2.2 Comparative views on the opportunities

People expressed a range of views and ideas about the opportunities for revitalisation of the city centre. A snapshot of people's responses is provided in [Figure 13](#).

**Figure 13: Favourability of the revitalisation opportunities**

<b>1. GREENWAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-range across all surveys</li> <li>• Polarised phone survey respondents (equally liked and disliked)</li> <li>• Mixed views in community forums</li> </ul>
<b>2. HARBOUR WEST CITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowest across all surveys</li> <li>• Low in community forums</li> </ul>
<b>3. HARBOUR PLAY CITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-range across all surveys</li> <li>• Polarised online survey respondents</li> <li>• Components most favoured in community forums</li> </ul>
<b>4. HARBOUR ENTERTAINMENT CITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Components most favoured in statistically valid phone survey</li> <li>• Polarised online survey respondents</li> <li>• Polarised community forums</li> </ul>

Opportunity four, Harbour Entertainment City, was most favoured across the surveys, between 38% (business survey) and 45% (statistically-valid telephone survey) of respondents said they favoured this opportunity. However it was also the most disliked opportunity in the online survey (equally with opportunity one Greenway), suggesting it was a polarising option amongst online respondents. This opportunity was also polarising in the community forums. People who liked this opportunity highlighted its potential to stimulate the local economy and create new destinations that attract people of all ages to the city centre. People particularly supported the adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station. People who disliked this opportunity generally wanted the rail returned, felt that the opportunity needed more open space and felt that it included too much mixed use development, particularly in the East End.

Opportunity three, Harbour Play City, was the most favoured opportunity in the community forums (with the exception of community forum three, which favoured opportunity one). In the surveys, between 25% (online survey) and 32% (telephone survey) of respondents favoured this opportunity. Again, people who favoured opportunity three thought that it incorporated a good balance of open space and mixed use development. As with opportunity four, people also liked the inclusion of family friendly attractions that would stimulate the economy. There was a consistent view that this opportunity should include the adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station. People's reasons for disliking opportunity three were the same as for opportunity four.

### **More than 3 in 4 responses to the statistically-valid phone survey favoured the Harbour Entertainment City and Harbour Play City opportunities.**

Opportunity one Greenway was the most disliked opportunity in the statistically-valid telephone survey (equally with opportunity four Harbour Entertainment City). In the surveys, favourability ranged from 25% (online survey) to 33% (business survey). This was the most favoured opportunity in the third community forum but was relatively disliked in the first two community forums. People who liked this opportunity generally wanted the rail corridor returned to its previous use, run light rail or be open space only. People who disliked this opportunity thought it would not create new destinations or employment and would be too costly to maintain.

Opportunity two, Harbour West City, was least favoured across the surveys, ranging from 14% (telephone survey) to 24% (business survey). People who liked this opportunity supported the delivery of green space and the concentration of mixed use development west of the Civic precinct. People who disliked this opportunity thought it would not create new destinations, new jobs or economic development.

In the face-to-face engagement, the third community forum showed distinctly lower favourability across all four opportunities and, to a lesser degree, across the outcomes than the preceding two community forums. In summary, forum one (attendance randomly selected to be demographically representative of the Newcastle and lower Hunter communities) most favoured opportunity four Harbour Entertainment City followed by opportunity three Harbour Play City; day two (open attendance) had no clear opinion on the opportunities; and day three (open attendance) showed low favourability for all four opportunities, with the lowest favourability for opportunity four.

### 3.2.3 Snapshot of survey findings

The engagement program comprised four separate but parallel surveys. In total, more than 2,500 survey responses were received:

- A random telephone survey of 613 adult residents in the Newcastle, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Cessnock LGAs (conducted by Jetty Research)
- Random sampling error for the phone survey was +/- 3.9% at the 95% confidence level. This effectively means that if we conducted the same random survey 20 times, results should be representative of the sample population to within a +/- 3.9% margin of error in 19 of those 20 surveys.
- A self-selecting online survey (with paper-based option) for residents of the Newcastle and surrounding LGAs (administered by UGNSW), which gained 1,215 responses
- A self-selecting online survey (with paper option) for businesspeople within the Newcastle and surrounding LGAs (also administered by UGNSW), which gained 94 responses
- An online survey administered by NCC through its Newcastle Voice community reference group, which gained 710 responses. That survey is being reported on separately by NCC.

**Newcastle residents who participated in surveys**

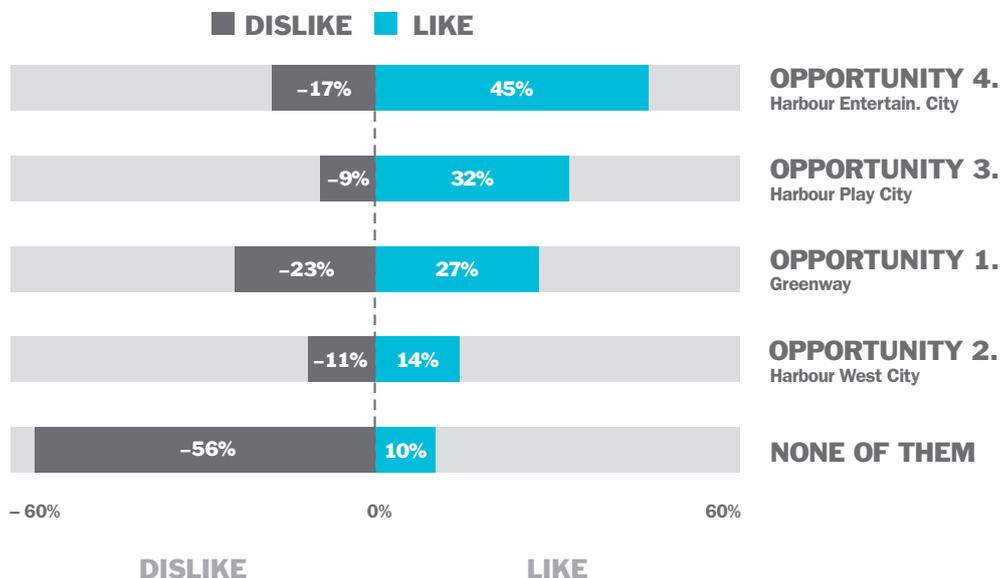
**Telephone survey**  
 Newcastle LGA: 356 (58% of sample)  
 2300 postcode: 62 (10% of sample)

**Online (inc. paper-based) survey**  
 Newcastle LGA: 846 (=69% of sample)

Looking more closely at the survey results, despite their different methodologies and sample sizes, results across the three surveys channels were, for the most part, similar. Looking at the results for the statistically-valid telephone survey, favourability was highest towards opportunity four Harbour Entertainment City (with 45% of those surveyed liking this option), followed by opportunity three Harbour Play City (32% favourability), opportunity one Greenway (27% favourability) and opportunity two Harbour West City (14% favourability).

Figure 14 provides the degree of like/dislike for the four opportunities in the statistically-valid telephone survey.

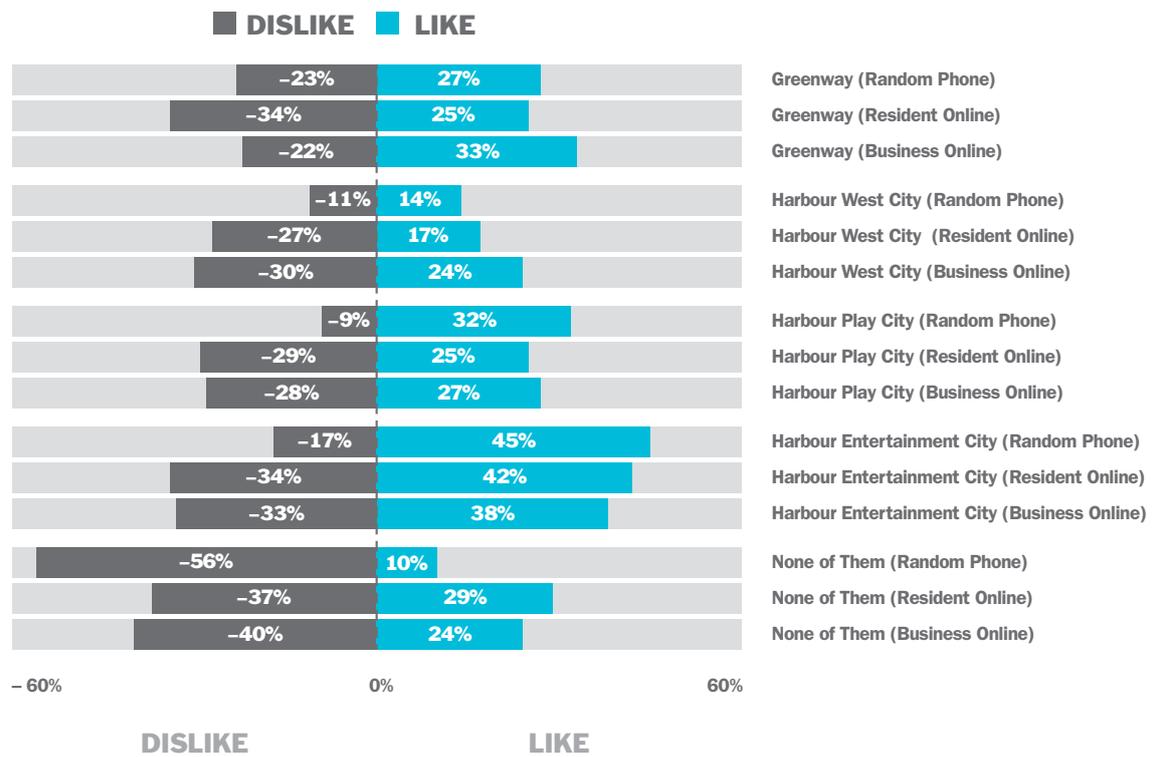
**Figure 14: Likes/dislikes for the four different urban transformation opportunities (phone survey)**



The main difference across the survey channels was the ranking of liking proportions of opportunity one Greenway. While the phone survey positioned opportunity one in third place (following opportunity four – Harbour Entertainment City and opportunity three Harbour Place City), the online surveys both positioned opportunity one in 2nd place (behind opportunity four Harbour Entertainment City).

Figure 15 shows the level of like/dislike for the opportunities across all of the survey channels.

**Figure 15: Likes/dislikes for the urban transformation opportunities (phone, online and business surveys)**



## 3.2.4 Opportunity one: Greenway

*There was very mixed feedback on this opportunity.*

People said the level of open space in this opportunity would not facilitate urban revitalisation, job creation or tourism opportunities. People noted that the city centre has significant amounts open space some of it underutilised; they felt that, without programmed activities or entertainment to encourage its use, this green space would be underutilised and would not create a positive community outcome. They expressed concern that this opportunity would not be economically viable in the long term, given the need to maintain it. In addition to open space, people wanted to see pedestrian pathways, cycleways, and an end of journey facility at Newcastle Station. Other suggestions were BBQs, seating, shading, and temporary facilities such as pop-up cafes, food vans using former rail carts, artist studios, and an outdoor amphitheatre or cinema. Some people noted that, while parts of the corridor are well-located for open space (for example, adjacent to the stations) other parts were overshadowed by existing buildings (for example, Hunter Street between Crown and Brown Streets).

Other people said that the only acceptable use for the former rail corridor was for transport uses or as publicly accessible green space.

### **People's comments on this opportunity included:**

*The lack of jobs created by this option makes it not viable. With an expanding city we need more attractions for this city. Newcastle already has a lot of parks. Trees and grass don't employ people.*

*I think the green foundation is a good start as it will be visually appealing, however some attractions are important.*

*This option at least retains the rail corridor in public ownership. We should not lose the opportunity to leave the corridor open and unbuilt on. The FUTURE of public transport will depend upon this corridor.*

*Green space alone does not create a liveable city. Sympathetic and appropriate development is required to make the economic proposition workable.*

## 3.2.5 Opportunity two: Harbour West City

*People generally disliked this opportunity.*

People felt that the level of green space in this opportunity would not revitalise the city centre. People generally felt that the mixed use development was appropriately located. Some people felt more development was needed to activate the rail corridor while other people wanted no development to occur. People wanted entertainment and leisure activities to occur in the open spaces. Some feedback also highlighted a desire to see the restoration and repurposing of Newcastle Station under this opportunity. The feedback supported the inclusion of a pedestrian and cycle link extending Market Street to the foreshore, linking the city centre to Queens Wharf (also a feature of opportunities three and four). There were a range of views on removal of the existing pedestrian overbridge in this area. There was a more consistent desire to demolish the Queens Wharf observation tower, which is outside of the scope of this Program.

Feedback suggested support for the creation of a Civic Link between the Civic precinct and foreshore. There were a range of views on whether to retain or (fully or partially) demolish Civic Station to realise this outcome. Feedback suggested the building is of cultural and social value and visually appealing, other feedback suggested it is not valued by the community. People who wanted to retain some or all of the building felt it could be used as a community meeting venue, art space or library, linked to an outdoor reading space. Feedback on the Civic Link is included in Section 3.3.2.

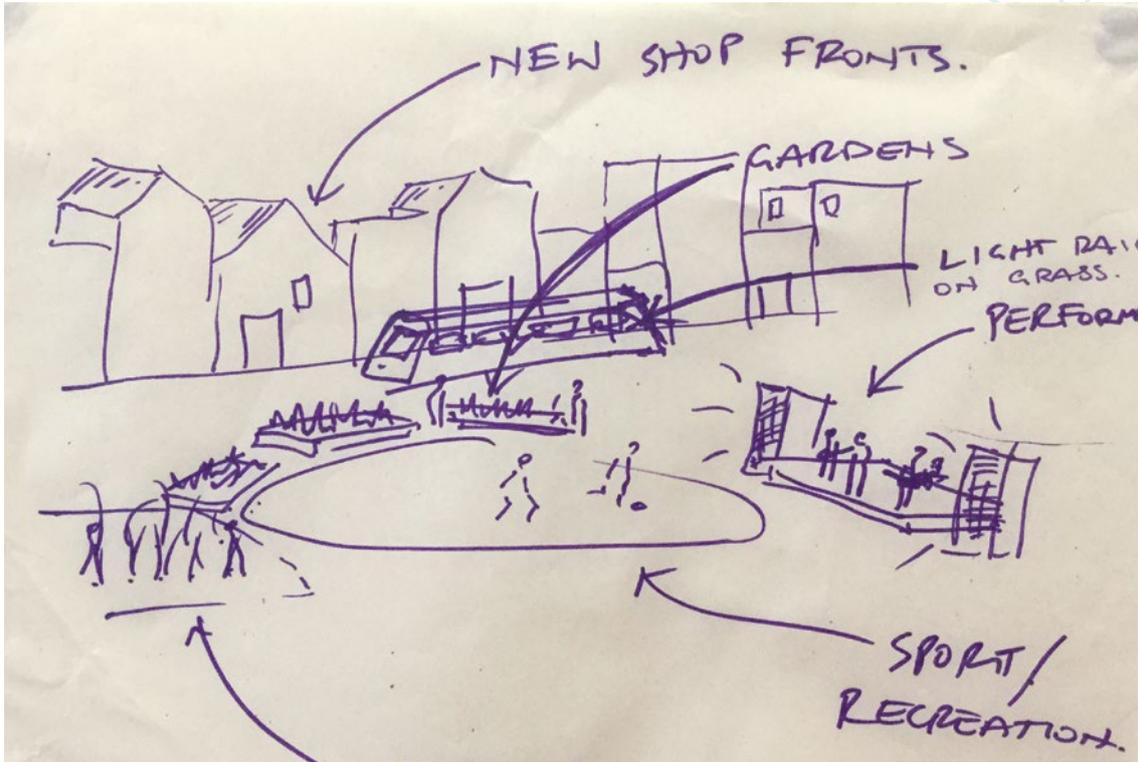
### **People's comments on this opportunity included:**

*[This] is a more appropriate mix of green space and development. I would like to include the repurposing of Newcastle Railway Station as an Arts Public Space.*

*[There is] still a little too much green space. [This opportunity] requires investment to drive [it] forward.*

*Darby Street needs to be connected to the waterfront as does Brown Street to Perkins Street, as they are natural pedestrian spill points. Darby Street because it's a popular restaurant zone and Brown to Perkins [Streets] because of its current open space and bus stop.*

### 3.2.6 Opportunity three: Harbour Play City



Feedback from the community forums

There was mixed feedback on this opportunity.

Some feedback indicated it had the right balance of open space, mixed use development and attractions. This feedback indicated that opportunities one and two were too heavily focused on open space, whereas opportunity four contained too much mixed use development. Feedback generally supported the location of mixed use development, between Worth Place in the west and Perkins Street to the east. Some feedback suggested that this opportunity should include the adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station.

People had mixed views on the inclusion of a Regional Playspace in the East End. People felt that further consideration needed to be given to public and active transport and parking to support the playspace and mixed use development shown in this opportunity. There were a range of views on the realignment of Wharf Road and the inclusion of parking to the north to allow for the creation of the playspace. Some feedback suggested that Wharf Road should be made a pedestrian and cycle link only, some feedback supported continued access by cars, other feedback did not support car parking this close to the foreshore. People said they liked the proposed north-south walking and cycle paths connecting the city to the harbour along Perkins, Wolfe, Market, Newcomen and Bolton Streets. Further feedback on the Regional Playspace is included in Section 3.3.4 of this report

#### People's comments on this opportunity included:

*It's my choice...because it doesn't block view[s] from Perkins to Wolfe Streets and has green space to [Newcastle] Station.*

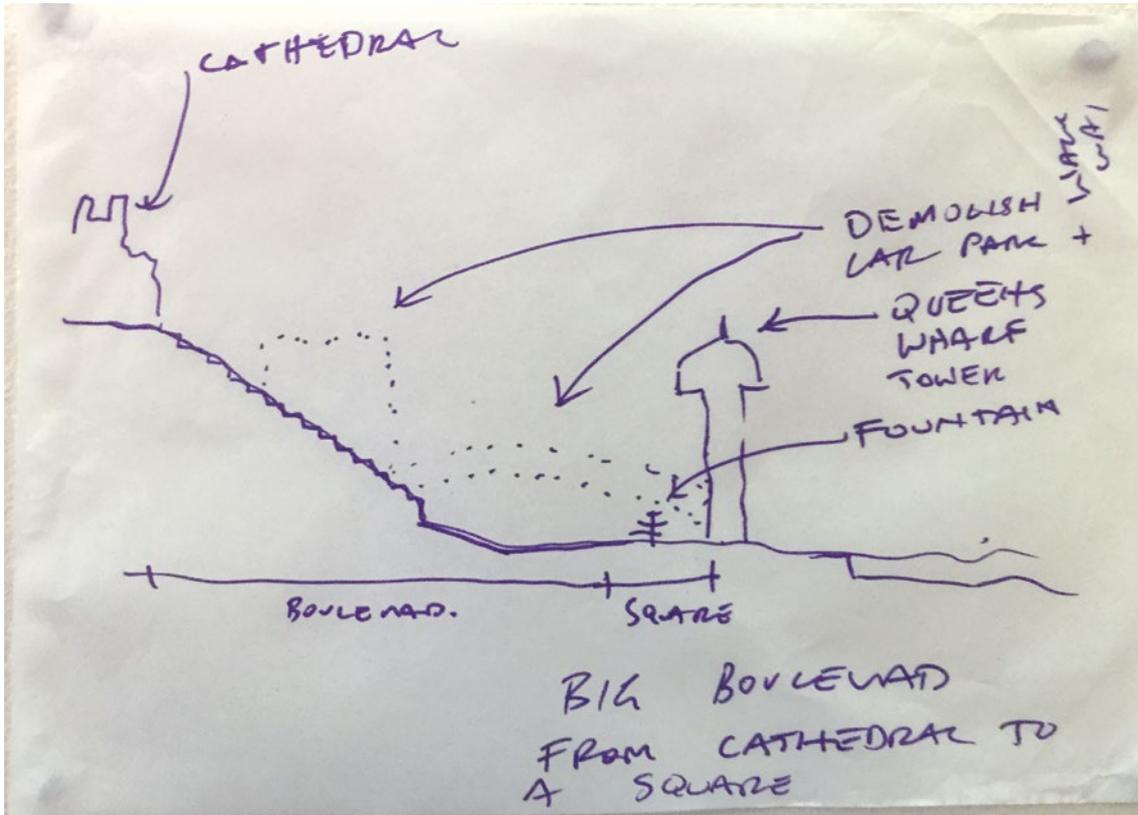
*This is probably the best but should be centred around an art or cultural hub at [Newcastle] Station.*

*Combination of everything residential, leisure, transport and future development of transport options into future. Add development of train station.*

*Great idea! [The proposed] carparking on Wharf [Road] creates another barrier – perhaps incorporate [parking] into [the] railway station. Perkins Street requires maintaining views to Dyke Point and Nobbys [sic.]. Landscaping KEY!! PLAYSPACE awesome!!*

<sup>4</sup>Civic Station is listed in Section 170 of the NSW State Agency Heritage Register, a record of the heritage assets owned or managed by a NSW government agency. It is not listed on the NSW State Heritage Register or NCC's Local Environmental Plan 2012.

### 3.2.7 Opportunity four: Harbour Entertainment City



Feedback from the community forums

*There was mixed feedback on this opportunity.*

People felt that this opportunity had the greatest potential to create new jobs. There was general support for the inclusion of an Entertainment Precinct in the East End. People supported the heritage preservation and adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station. People wanted to see a mix of community uses and sensitive commercial (revenue-generating) uses at the station. They had a range of ideas for what could happen there, including restaurants, cafes, art galleries and artist studios, a hotel and conference centre. There was a low level of support for the inclusion of a produce market at the station. People considered parking and traffic access, particularly truck access, to be insufficient and felt that the market would cannibalise trade from the existing Farmer's Market. Feedback and ideas for the adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station are included in Section 3.3.4 of this report.

Young people wanted to see their city pulse day and night with activity. They wanted a safer night life with choices beyond bars and clubs, to encompass late night cafes (they called for "coffee after 5pm"), theatre and music, and major public art and installations such as water and light shows. They called for the city to have a "city icon" or "weekend destination". They also wanted to see the revitalisation deliver a range of housing for all types of people, including students.

Young people who attended the Future Leaders Forum shared their ideas for a revitalised city centre. Feedback indicated limited support for the inclusion of mixed use development east of Perkins Street. Some people felt that any development east of Crown Street was not keeping with the character of the East End. As with the opportunities two and three, people wanted to ensure that building heights and densities respected the heritage and character of the city centre, in particular the East End, did not block views and respected the street layouts of the Dangar Grid. The inclusion of additional transport access and parking was also raised in response to this opportunity.

**People's comments on this opportunity included:**

I appreciate [that] the Newcastle Station is a centrepiece of the city plan. [This opportunity] includes sufficient green space for community and commercial/residential development [and] will inspire/ promote economic growth and enterprise investment.

[I] support infill development from Worth Place to Brown [Street]. From Brown to Watt [Streets] protect views and green space between the city and harbour...conserve views to Dyke's Point. [This opportunity] needs vehicle north-south link to prevent long east-west travel, say at Wolfe Street.

The Market idea at Newcastle Station will fail like other markets have over the years. For the 1 storey part of the station some restaurants and cafés would be nice, with the rail parts filled in. Where the 2nd and 3rd storey buildings are there could be boutique accommodation with the centre platform converted into a marquee and lawn.

[The station should be a] mixed use, arts precinct. Newcastle has Australia's 4th largest arts community - capitalise on this.



Feedback from the future leaders' forum exercise

## 3.3 Potential outcomes

Members of the public were asked to comment on the outcomes that could be achieved as a result of the revitalisation of the city centre. People did not have to choose one outcome, rather they were asked to identify aspects they particularly liked and didn't like about each outcome. People were also asked to share any other thoughts or ideas on the revitalisation of the city centre.

### 3.3.1 Overarching findings

The creation of a Civic Link had a very high level of support across the telephone and online surveys. Reasons for support centred on the vibrancy that would be added to the city through this opportunity.

Feedback gathered from the community forums suggested that some outcomes were more favoured than others and people made suggestions to improve outcomes. In the face-to-face engagement, the majority of people supported the creation of a Civic Link. People saw an opportunity to better connect the civic precinct and the harbour and to enhance the current civic precinct. People expressed a range of views on the retention of Civic Station. The majority of people supported the revitalisation of Hunter Street. However, some people also expressed concerns about the construction of high rise buildings, particularly in the East End and Civic and about the running of the light rail on Hunter Street. The majority of people also supported the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the East End and a wide range of suggestions were made as to what this could include, from an arts and cultural hub to a conference centre. There was stronger support for the adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station than for the regional playspace component of this outcome in the face-to-face engagement. .

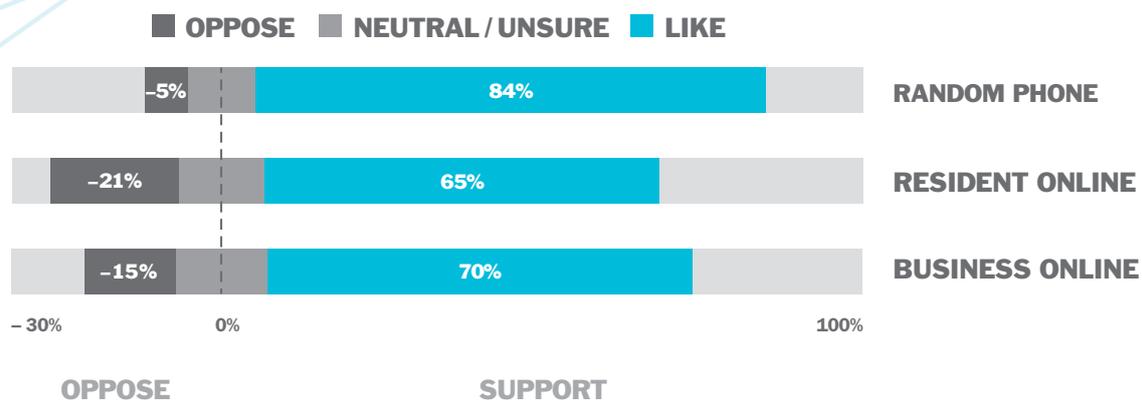
### 3.3.2 Civic Link

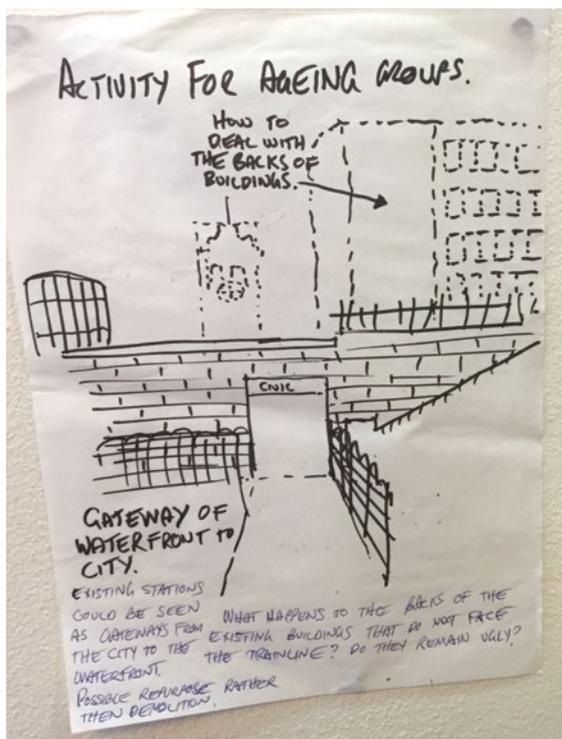
*Feedback consistently supported the creation of a Civic Link, new public domain connecting the civic precinct and the waterfront. There were a range of views on how to deliver this outcome.*

There was strong support for the concept of a Civic Link across all three survey channels, with between 65-84% of people supporting it. The highest level of support was in the statistically-valid phone survey, followed by the online business and online resident surveys (at 84%, 70% and 65% support respectively). There was also strong support for this outcome in the face-to-face engagement.

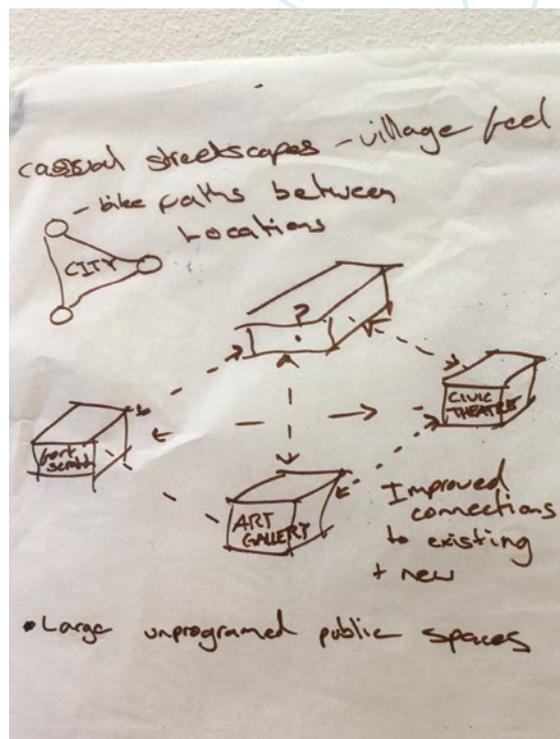
Figure 16 shows the level of support across the three survey channels for the Civic Link.

**Figure 16: Attitudes to the Civic Link, by survey channels**





Feedback from the community forums

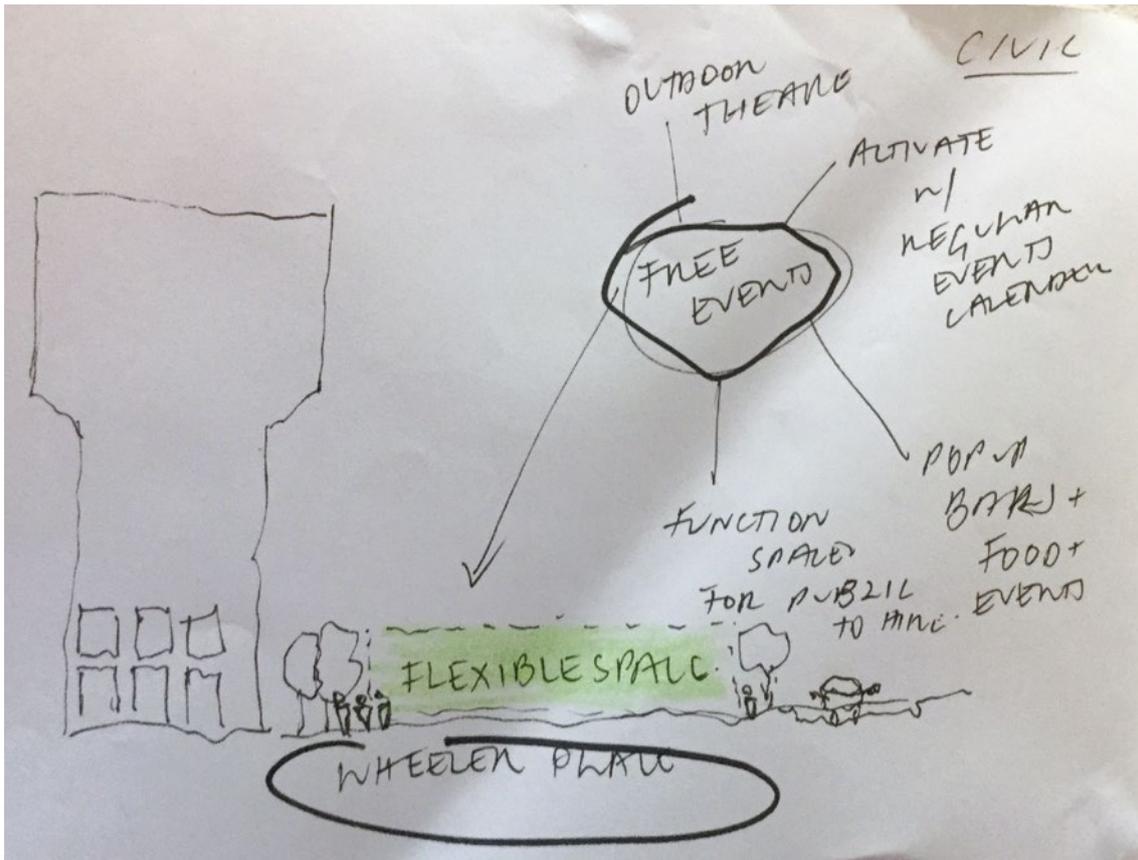


Feedback from the community forums

People liked the improved linkages and public domain allowed for in this outcome. They saw an opportunity to enhance the existing civic and cultural precinct and create an art, history, educational and entertainment hub linking the NeW Space campus, Newcastle Museum and Civic Theatre. People saw an opportunity to create the new “cultural heart” of the city. They wanted to see high-quality public domain and leisure areas delivered for city centre residents, workers and students at the adjacent NeW Space and nearby TAFE campuses. They wanted these areas to be connected through safe cycle and pedestrian paths. Generally, people wanted the area to be well-shaded with passive recreation space for relaxing and reading. Ideas for the area ranged from a small, mobile library in the existing station to allow for outdoor reading; community and youth meeting spaces in the station building; outdoor areas for temporary performance, string concerts and garden demonstrations; public art and installations that reflect the Indigenous, transport, maritime and industrial heritage of the area; installations powered by wind or tides. They wanted to see improvements to the façade of buildings on Hunter Street at Civic backing the rail line; some people suggested vertical gardens. People said that parking needed to be considered and there was some concern about the parking provision at NeW Space not being adequate.

### **There were a range of views on whether to maintain and adaptively reuse Civic Station or whether to remove it to allow for increased connection between the civic precinct and the harbour.**

There were a range of views on whether to maintain and adaptively reuse Civic Station or whether to remove it to allow for increased connection between the civic precinct and the harbour. Some people said the building, whilst not listed on the local or state heritage registers, held social and cultural values linked to its history and transport use and was visually appealing. Some people felt that parts of the building could be retained and incorporated into the public domain, potentially as an entrance façade, small café or visitor information desk, or that the footings could be retained to pay tribute to its role in Newcastle’s history. Other people felt that the building could be demolished to better open up the area and improve linkages with NeW Space and the law courts. If the station were to be adaptively reused, people said that it should be made accessible. People saw an opportunity to run a call for ideas or design competition to further develop concepts for the Civic Link. They wanted to see students and the community involved in generating ideas and outcomes for this site.



Feedback from the community forums

**People's comments on this outcome included:**

Look at keeping part of Civic Station infrastructure for the museum to utilise. Or deconstruct part of the buildings to leave a sculptural element of what was there.

The Civic Railway Station building deserves to be retained. It is interesting architecturally – the brick work is amazing and it still provides low key community use. The building is art deco, is low rise, not intrusive.

Move Civic Station to the west. Provide [an] open concourse, automatic gates, water features – links Art Gallery, Civic Park, Town Hall, Civic Theatre, Maritime Centre. This way Civic Station would not be demolished but placed behind existing buildings to allow better cross access.

Civic Station's historical bridge should be kept as a remembrance, arts walk, or even hold a band on a warm summer night while people watch from the park below. It could tell the story of Newcastle's past...into the future. The community could be allowed to take parts of the Civic Station platform to remember or make into art.

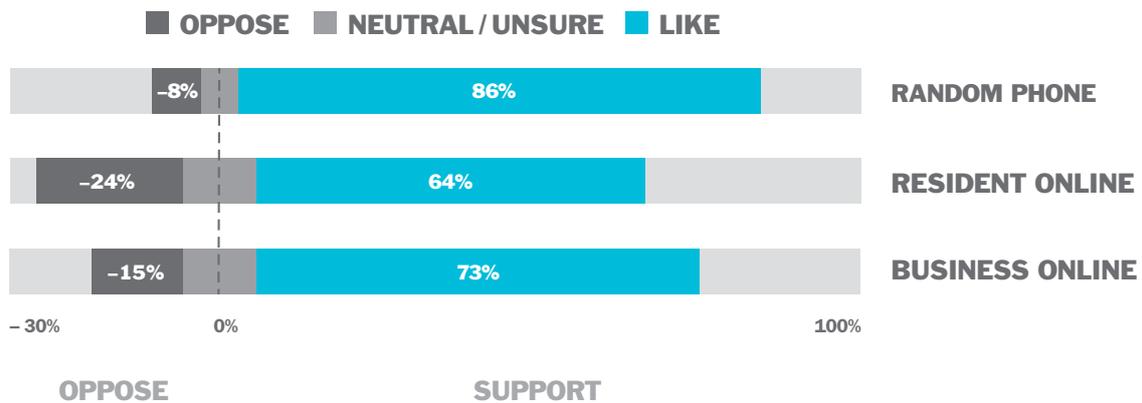
### 3.3.3 Hunter Street Revitalisation

Feedback consistently supported the revitalisation of Hunter Street, to return it to Newcastle's premier street. There were a range of views on how to deliver this outcome.

There was strong support for the revitalisation of Hunter Street across all three survey channels, with between 64-86% of people supporting this outcome. The highest level of support was in the statistically-valid phone survey, followed by the online business and online resident surveys (at 86%, 73% and 64% support respectively). There was also strong support for this outcome in the face-to-face engagement.

Figure 17 shows the level of support across the three survey channels for the revitalisation of Hunter Street.

**Figure 17: Attitudes to the Hunter Street Revitalisation, by survey channels**

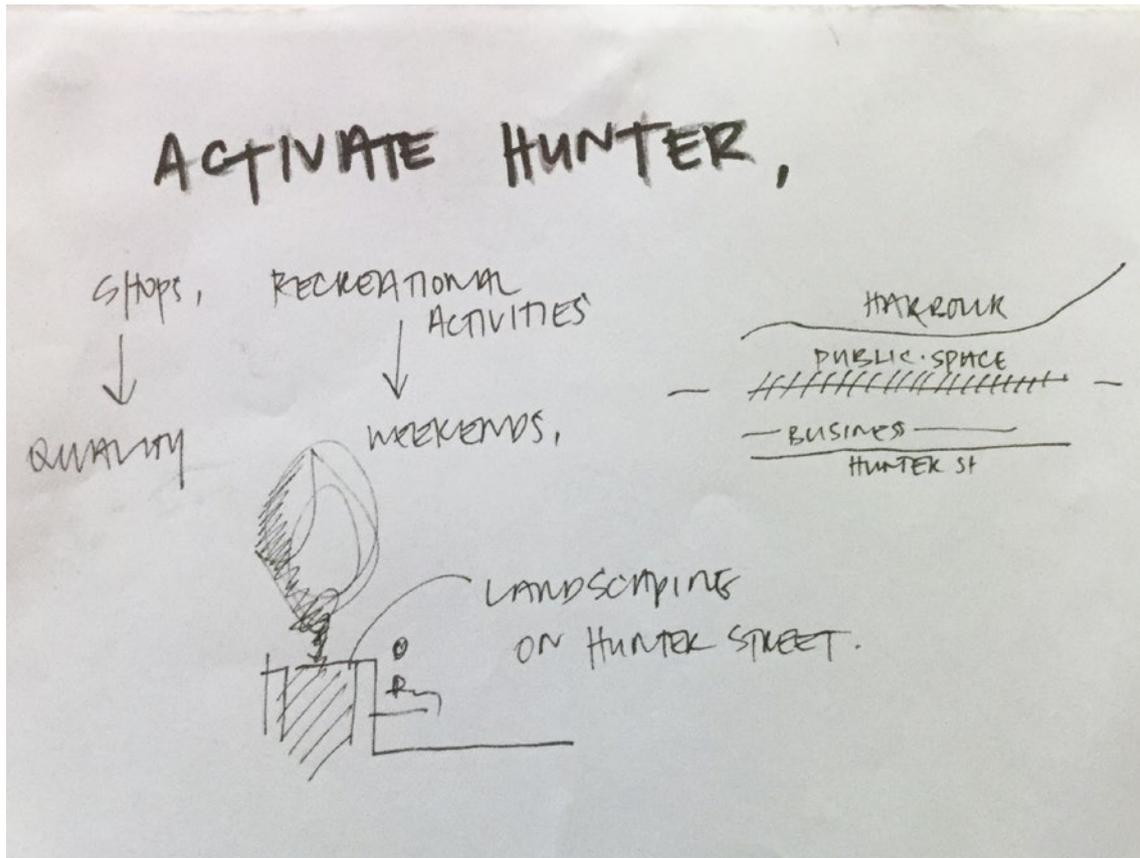


People wanted to see Hunter Street return to a thriving main street. People imagined a tree-lined boulevard – a hub of jobs, culture, enterprise and activity. They wanted to see a range of retail and entertainment offerings, effective public transport, walking and cycle connections, accessible places and spaces, and adequate parking. There was a consistently held view that the street's heritage and character should be maintained, existing facades and footpaths should be upgraded and the height and density of new buildings should be consistent with local planning controls. Some people wanted to ensure that design controls stipulated the style of buildings and façades, in keeping with the street's existing character, while allowing for grassroots design such as street art and dedicated mural walls.

**People wanted to see Hunter Street return to a thriving main street.  
People imagined a tree-lined boulevard – a hub of jobs, culture, enterprise and activity.**

Some people felt that revitalisation was happening organically and pointed to initiatives such as Renew Newcastle and a burgeoning small bar and café scene. Other people felt that more investment was needed, they felt that creating new commercial and residential areas adjacent to Hunter Street would attract high quality cafés, wine bars and restaurants and lead to further investment in shop and building upgrades.

There were mixed views on the delivery of light rail along Hunter Street, some people saw this as critical to activating the street; other people questioned the capacity of Hunter (and Scott) Streets to sustain both light rail and private vehicles and were concerned about congestion, safety and potential conflicts of use; while other people wanted light rail to run in the heavy rail corridor, to maintain that corridor for transport and save on costs. People also expressed concerns about the impact of the construction of light rail on city centre businesses. Small business representatives wanted to know more about the potential for assistance and compensation during construction.



Feedback from the community forums

**People's comments on this outcome included:**

*I would love to see a main street in Newcastle and tourists could stroll through and get a good idea of what Newcastle can offer. This street must have links to the waterfront.*

*Hunter St should become the new hub of the city, new jobs, developments, and buildings, increased living and population density.*

*Hunter and Scott Streets desperately need activation...from Crown St through to Bolton St. [We] need...a day and night economy - a living city, like Darling Harbour!*

*The Hunter Street activation...should consider integrating building services across the whole site to promote resources efficiency and resilience. Mechanical services, solar generation and battery systems, grey water, and recycling waste services...could work to make a sustainable precinct.*

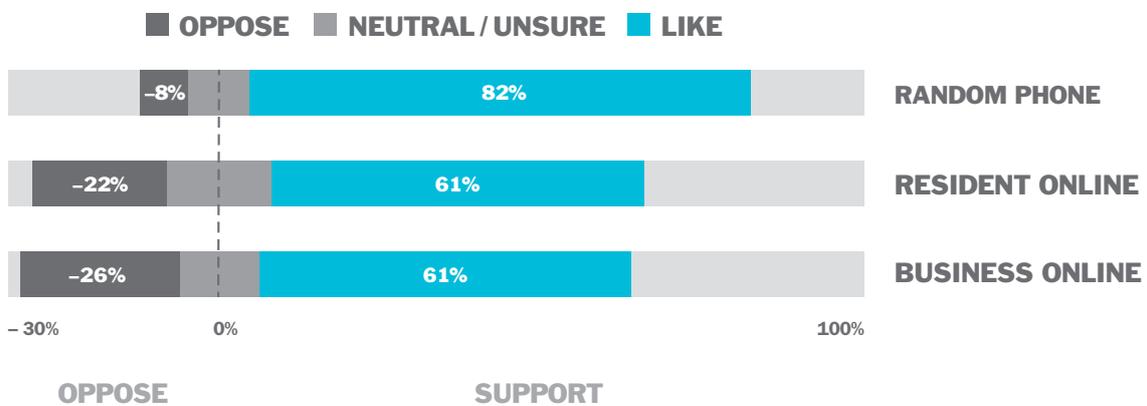
### 3.3.4 Entertainment Precinct

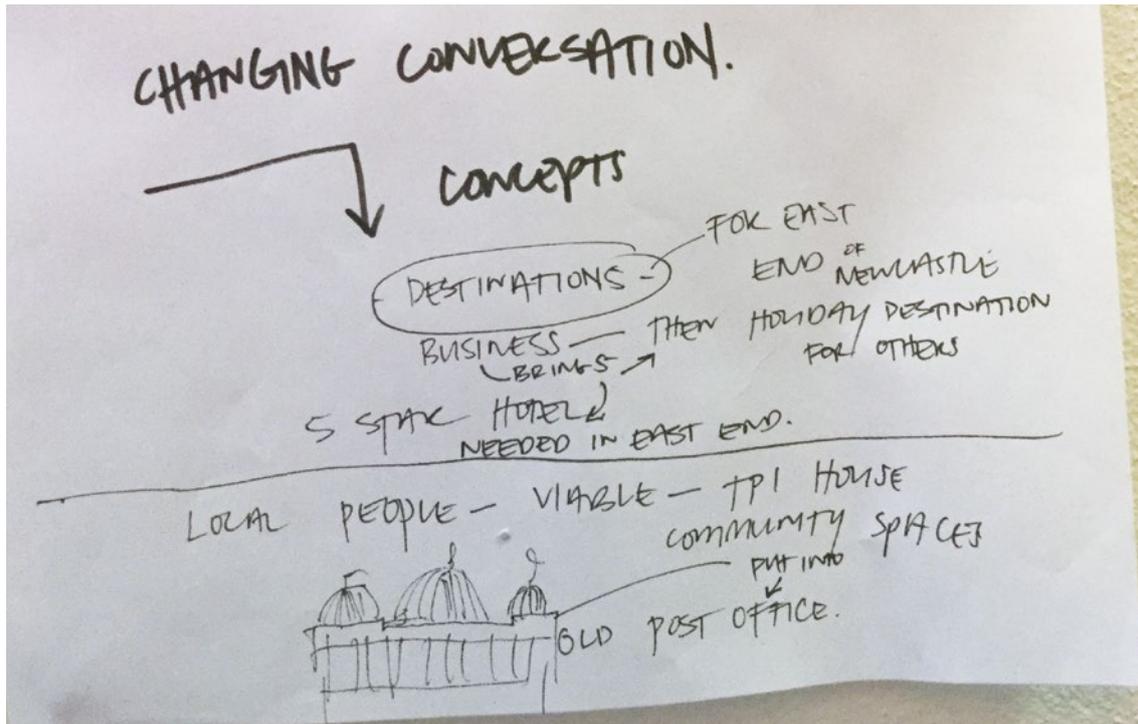
Feedback consistently supported the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the East End. There was stronger support for the adaptive reuse of Newcastle Station than the delivery of a Regional Playspace.

There was also strong support for the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the East End through the surveys, although slightly lower than for the other outcomes. Between 60-82% of people supported this outcome. Support was highest in the statistically-valid phone survey, followed by close results in the online resident and business surveys (at 82%, 61% and 60% support respectively). Close to one-quarter of online survey respondents did not support this outcome. There was relatively strong support for this outcome in the face-to-face engagement.

Figure 18 shows the level of support across the three survey channels for the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in Newcastle's East End.

Figure 18: Attitudes to the Entertainment Precinct, by survey channels





Feedback from the community forums

### Regional Playspace

Overall, there was limited support for, and a range of views on, the idea to create a Regional Playspace on the foreshore adjacent to Newcastle Station.

Some feedback indicated strong support for a facility that includes structured play equipment and activities, such as water play. People pointed to examples they liked at Darling Quarter, in central Sydney; Southbank, Brisbane; and Broadbeach on the Gold Coast. Some people described their vision for the playspace as “Speers Point Park on steroids”. This park in Lake Macquarie is a multi-use facility that includes play equipment for all abilities, access to the lake and water sports, and a community hall. These people saw the playspace as a great way to attract people of all ages to the city centre. Other people felt that existing parks satisfied this need and were concerned about the costs of maintaining the facility. People felt that Council could not be expected to maintain the playspace without adequate revenue or funding. People were concerned that the playspace could fall into disrepair, which would detract from its regional significance.

### Feedback suggested that the playspace should cater for people of all ages and abilities.

Feedback suggested that the playspace should cater for people of all ages and abilities. Suggestions included a kid’s area and a designated adult area that may have programmed activities such as Tai Chi and yoga classes, an outdoor cinema, children’s games or reading sessions. Other suggestions included water play, a skate park, merry-go-rounds, BBQ area, a water area, a harbour pool, and a Lego land. There were also suggestions of a themed space, for example trains and transport or water play. Other people thought this might seem ‘artificial’ or tacky. There was a lack of support for a sandpit due to health and safety concerns. People felt that the playspace should be adequately shaded and serviced by adequate parking. There were a range of views on the realignment of Wharf Road and provision of parking to support the playspace; this feedback is included in Section 3.2.6.

#### People’s comments on this outcome included:

[Create] a ‘wow’ playspace, not just swings and slides. [Create a] playspace catering to all children including special needs and a sensory play area.

But would Wharf Rd traffic be booming through within metres of young kids playing? We need to address Wharf Rd as default highway

We should leave some area for future generations. The playground area, I don’t feel is necessary.

[I] love the idea of a playspace for all ages. [I] would love to see an outdoor cinema in summer.

## Newcastle Station

*There was a high level of support to conserve and repurpose Newcastle Station.*

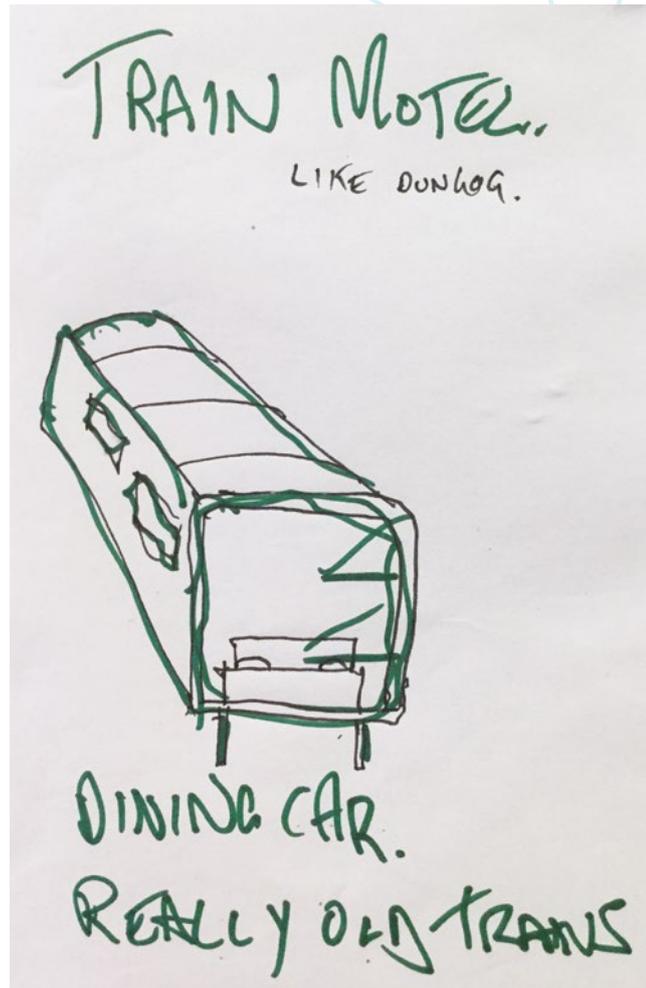
People wanted the heritage and social significance of the station to be preserved and celebrated. Feedback generally supported Newcastle Station becoming a vibrant 24-hour space with galleries, fresh food and event spaces. The majority of feedback suggested the station should house a mix of community and small-scale commercial uses for the community to use and enjoy.

Suggestions for repurposing the station included use as a creative space with galleries, artist studios, restaurants, cafes and entertainment venues; a children's museum; a hotel; and conference centre. Some people noted that the station previously accommodated travelers and could reprise that use. Other ideas included use as a visitor information centre. People suggested that temporary uses, such as artist studios or pop-up performances, could be undertaken whilst a more permanent purpose is being established.

## **There was limited support for the idea of a produce market at Newcastle Station.**

There was limited support for the idea of a produce market at Newcastle Station. Feedback pointed to a lack of parking and poor access for delivery vehicles as well as concerns that this use would jeopardise existing markets. People were mostly optimistic about the potential for the station in terms of tourism and visual appeal.

Some feedback was that the station should be returned to servicing heavy rail.



*Feedback from the community forums*



More than 200 people from across Newcastle and the Lower Hunter attended three community forums

**People's comments on this outcome included:**

*Need to make use of the train station as quickly as possible to ensure it doesn't go into disrepair. Investigate temporary uses of the station until a permanent use is developed*

*Develop a new culture economy for Newcastle that embraces the vision of Newcastle with a working harbour... [this is] the perfect opportunity to develop artist studios, art retail spaces, cafés, or a Visitor Information Centre. The Newcastle Art Station could be built into a destination worthy of repeat visits and support.*

*I believe that there should be a landmark pavilion located in the entertainment hub and be similar to Frank Gehry's Chicago Pritzker Pavilion. Not in the same style but able to perform the same functions. People could come here...to watch major significant events especially sports...cultural events or music concerts. It would create a great atmosphere in the heart of the city.*

## 4. Feedback on transport

A significant volume of feedback was received on transport issues outside the scope of this engagement process. Specifically, on the truncation of heavy rail, the delivery of light rail, and the transport interchange. Whilst these issues are outside the scope of the engagement program, in order to accurately reflect the range of feedback raised, a summary has been included in this report.

### 4.1 What was done with feedback on transport?

Given the strength of views in the community on transport, a commitment was made to enable people to lodge submissions on these issues to be passed on to Transport for NSW (TfNSW). All feedback provided on transport, including copies of all submissions, has been provided by the Newcastle Urban Transformation Steering Group to TfNSW for review and response where appropriate.

Further community consultation on the light rail will be held in early 2016, prior to the commencement of construction. An overview of government decisions and previous community consultation on Newcastle light rail is included in Appendix A.

### 4.2 Access and connectivity

*People recommended that an 'access for all' approach be taken to revitalising the city centre.*

People with disabilities and older people discussed difficulties in moving around the city created by overhead rail crossings, kerb design, the city's topography and the design of some heritage buildings. Some feedback also noted difficulties with changing modes and, specifically, the temporary shuttle buses between Hamilton and Newcastle Stations; other people felt these buses are more accessible, frequent and safer than the heavy rail. People with disabilities noted that light rail is generally more accessible for less mobile passengers, due to street level platforms, limited gaps between platform and carriage, flat entry, no internal stairs and automatic doors.

Further feedback on this theme is included in Section 3.1.3 of this report.

#### People's comments on this theme included:

*Make access easy for everyone. Understand the diverse needs of people with disability in [terms of] way-finding, mobility, access and communication.*

*Signage should be easily understood by deaf-blind people. [Consider] signed guide tours [led by] deaf people, signing staff at [a new visitor] information centre – have festivals and events for people with a disability.*

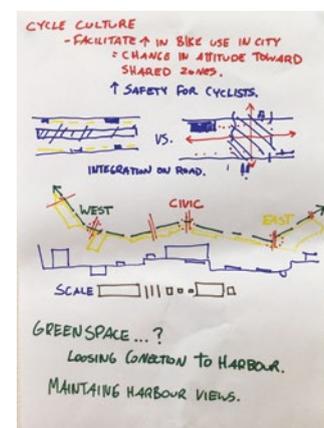
*To revitalise Hunter St will need excellent connections to Honeysuckle and better pedestrian access across the street. Wider footpaths are imperative to enable activation. Keep [the] street open i.e. no on street parking which hinders sight lines and increases the feeling of enclosure.*

### 4.3 Public transport

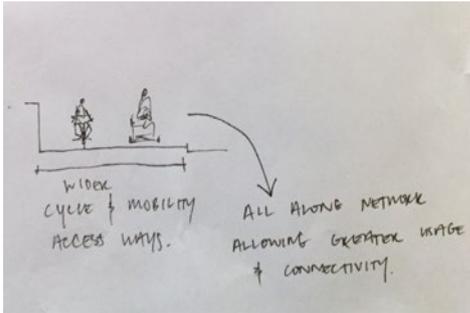
A consistent theme in the feedback was that the provision of public transport should be one of the highest priorities for the revitalisation of Newcastle city centre. People wanted to see a regional, long-term approach to transport planning and delivery.

#### People wanted to see a regional, long-term approach to transport planning and delivery.

People wanted the city centre to be well-connected to Newcastle's centres and suburbs, facilities such as the University of Newcastle Callaghan Campus, John Hunter and Mater Hospitals, and the wider Hunter region. They wanted a public transport system that is accessible, frequent, reliable and integrates different modes (heavy rail, light rail, bus and bicycle). People wanted to be kept informed of transport decisions and consulted on these decisions.



Feedback from the community forums



Feedback from the community forums

There was a high level of frustration and suspicion about the way that previous transport decisions had been made and communicated. People were also concerned about the social equity impacts of the government's decision. In the Hunter Valley, in particular, people explained that the truncation of heavy rail had impacted on their ability to access services and jobs in the city centre.

People provided a range of suggestions to improve public transport connections between the city centre, greater Newcastle and the Hunter region. These suggestions included more frequent and more direct bus services; introducing discounted fares for public transport when light rail is introduced to encourage patronage; expanding

the existing ferry service from Stockton to Queens Wharf to service waterfront suburbs such as Carrington, Maryville and Fern Bay and beyond to Maitland, Morpeth and Hexham; and introducing park and ride facilities at the new interchange and in outer suburbs.

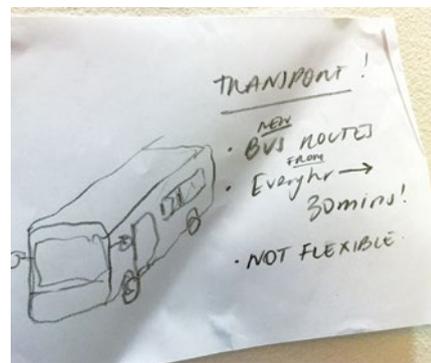
#### People's comments on this theme included:

*[We need] improved public transport – a planned, integrated [approach to] public transport integrating Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Charlestown etc.*

*It's not about the light rail – we need better and more frequent bus services from all the suburbs to the city and links between the suburbs. Nothing will work without transport.*

*The existing precincts like Darby St, Hamilton and Merewether need to be linked by transport. This could be a "tourist ticket" so visitors can get around to the best parts of Newcastle.*

*Free bus to circle city and University and TAFE. More links to outer areas up valley, Central Coast, Nelson Bay, Tea Gardens etc.*



Feedback from the community forums

## 4.4 Active transport

*People wanted the revitalisation plan to include infrastructure and facilities that encourage the use of active transport (walking and cycling).*

People said that consideration should be given to the provision of cycle paths, end-of-trip facilities including cycle storage and showers, and park and ride facilities. To encourage the use of new facilities, people recommended that they be adequately promoted and sign-posted.

#### People's comments on this theme included:

*Prioritise streets parallel to car streets to allow bikes to access the city safely e.g. Davison Street – [make it a] bike priority [street] parallel to Darby St/Union St.*

*Apart from being the artistic capital of NSW, Newcastle can be the bicycle capital of Australia. The existing [rail] corridor could co-exist perfectly with light rail, open spaces, dedicated bike tracks and walking tracks. Bike tracks...[introduce] "public use bikes" [using a] "tap on tap off" system, like our OPAL card.*

*Young Australians are getting their licenses to drive cars later and later in life. Good quality apartment living is reasonable, but high quality transport is needed to support this...Young students, faced with \$100,000 degrees aren't looking to own a car just yet, so bicycle transport is essential.*

## 4.5 Rail truncation

*The truncation of heavy rail was consistently raised in the feedback.*

At the time of engaging with the public, a Supreme Court appeal was being heard into the legality of the closure of the rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations – that decision was subsequently handed down and is outlined in the addendum below. The feedback received demonstrates that the decision to truncate the line continues to be a polarising one in Newcastle and the Hunter region.

Close to half of the 285 (48%, n=137) submissions opposed rail truncation<sup>2</sup>. This theme was also raised frequently in the community forums, in particular day three, and in the pop-up engagement activities, particularly in the Hunter Valley. People said that the decision had not been adequately consulted on and was not made in the interests of Newcastle and Hunter communities. People pointed to concerns about the social equity of the decision, the cost of light rail, and the sale of corridor land. Feedback suggested that more frequent public transport users were most impacted by the decision, for example young people, people with disabilities and older people. There were mixed views on this feedback in the engagement held with young people and people with disabilities many of these people supported the introduction of light rail due to its higher frequency and easier accessibility.

Some anecdotal feedback suggested that, since truncation, there had been an increase in use of private vehicles to and from the city centre leading to traffic congestion and impacts on parking. Some businesses in the city centre said that their business had decreased since truncation, whilst others said they were doing more business since renewal of the city and truncation of the rail line had commenced. Reoccurring suggestions were to run light rail on the heavy rail corridor and, to a lesser extent, suggestions to run heavy rail underground between Wickham and Newcastle and revitalise the heavy rail corridor above. One suggestion was to run a rail viaduct (similar to Sydney's North West Rail Link Skytrain) to separate rail from road at Stewart Ave, with additional pedestrian crossings and automatic safety gates. There was also a proposal to retain the heavy rail line to Newcastle Station and run special tram-train rolling stock as used in parts of Europe.

Other feedback on the truncation supported the decision and saw it as a necessary step to connect the city and harbour and bring activity to the city centre. Other people said they had previously opposed the truncation of heavy rail but accepted the decision and were now excited about the revitalisation of the city.

**People's comments on this theme included:**

*[Our] table [is] not happy about [the] State Government's plan to truncate heavy rail and implement light rail; [this decision was] not clearly communicated or consulted on.*

*The removal of the heavy rail is the first step, it now needs to be cleared so people can cross at almost any point and there are zero obstructions to walking seamlessly to the harbour.*

*I am a Newcastle person and...work in Watt St. WORST DECISION EVER WAS TO GET RID OF TRAIN LINE . No contingency plan for workers in heart of city. 8 hr parking spots are being taken by the week by council. I used to catch the train daily as did most of our office.*

*I have had a business in the city for over 30 years. The train didn't bring in clients. And the staff often left to work in the big city of Sydney, as Newcastle was so boring and lacklustre for so long. Now, the city is alive and thriving. So many of our clients come from city dwellers who have taken to living in new apartments. Our staff no longer leave as they love the new city life of small bars and thriving nightlife. The train added nothing. The tram...will allow for easier access and movement.*

**Addendum:** On 14 October 2015, the NSW Legislative Council passed the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line at Newcastle) Act, allowing the closure of the heavy rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations, the removal of rail infrastructure, and the sale of the land. On 10 November 2015, the NSW Supreme Court of Appeal found that the NSW Government acted lawfully in truncating the rail line. Removal of rail infrastructure and closure of the line has commenced.

## 4.6 Light rail

*Light rail was also consistently raised in the feedback.*

Light rail was also consistently raised in the feedback. Close to two-thirds of submissions (63%, n=179), included feedback on light rail and it was frequently raised in the other engagement activities. There were mixed views on light rail including strong support for light rail to run in the heavy rail corridor, concerns about the cost of delivering light rail on Hunter and Scott Streets compared to the corridor, and a view that the cost savings could fund other infrastructure projects in Newcastle or the region. People also had concerns about the capacity of Hunter and Scott Streets for shared running of light rail, cars and bicycles, and concerns about the removal of parking on these streets to accommodate light rail. There was also support for the proposed route, to revitalise the city centre. Feedback from small business was mixed – there was concern about construction impacts, including traffic, noise, dust and safety, and support for activation of the city centre. Young people pointed to Melbourne and the Gold Coast as vibrant cities with light rail.

<sup>2</sup> Of the 285 submissions received, the majority (91%, n=259) stated they were submitted by individuals, with the remainder stated they were submitted by organisations or groups (9%, n=26).

People said that cycle and pedestrian paths, park and ride, and end-of-trip facilities should be delivered as part of the light rail package. People also wanted light rail to be extended in the future to cover major services and employers, such as the University of Newcastle Callaghan Campus, John Hunter and Mater Hospitals, outer suburbs, and a 'loop' from the city centre to the city beaches and Anzac Walk.

**There were mixed views on light rail including strong support for light rail to run in the heavy rail corridor, concerns about the cost of delivering light rail on Hunter and Scott Streets compared to the corridor, and a view that the cost savings could fund other infrastructure projects in Newcastle or the region.**

People with disabilities noted that the interchange, light rail stops and carriages should be fully accessible, that stops should be located close to services, that clear signage and way-finding and braille signage should be used, and that announcements of stopping patterns should be made for people with sight impairments. Platforms should incorporate wide gutters with no lip between the light rail carriage and road; signage should be in well-defined, bright colours.

**People's comments on this theme included:**

*Run light rail down [the] rail corridor, save \$100m, and not Hunter St [which is] is equally distant from shops and Harbour.*

*Light rail would be a great idea like the Gold Coast, but more importantly express trains to Sydney that take under 2 hrs would stimulate the local economy as well.*

*I find it impossible to imagine how light rail can fit into the already overcrowded and traffic grid locked Hunter St.*

*Transport ought to be built first where we need it most, which is NOT the 2kms along Hunter/Scott St. It is along the beaches (Newie to Merewether), to the John Hunter, to the airport. Buses on the existing rail corridor would work really well.*

*Using Hunter Street for the light rail will bring density to shops and businesses much needed, while using the remaining rail corridor for other development.*

*I have an idea that will revitalise Newcastle and at the same time retain the existing infrastructure...convert the truncated section of the corridor into a heritage tram line and turn Newcastle Station into a fully functioning tram museum showcasing trams from Australia and around the world.*

*If you look at European cities you see modern buildings with light rail connecting the harbour to the city. I support the proposal.*

## 4.7 Traffic, parking and local infrastructure

Parking in the city centre was consistently raised in the feedback. People said parking was insufficient and expensive. People were concerned that additional parking would not keep pace with increased activity in the city centre; there was also scepticism that the light rail would significantly decrease demand for parking in the city centre. As outlined above, people were concerned that shared running of light rail on Hunter and Scott Streets would increase traffic congestion in the city centre and be unsafe, particularly at the proposed light rail level crossing at Stewart Avenue, Wickham. There were suggestions about Wharf Road, including that it be made a pedestrian and cycle only zone adjacent to Newcastle Station. Specific suggestions of this nature are included in the feedback on each of the revitalisation opportunities in Section 3.2 of this report.

**People's comments on this theme included:**

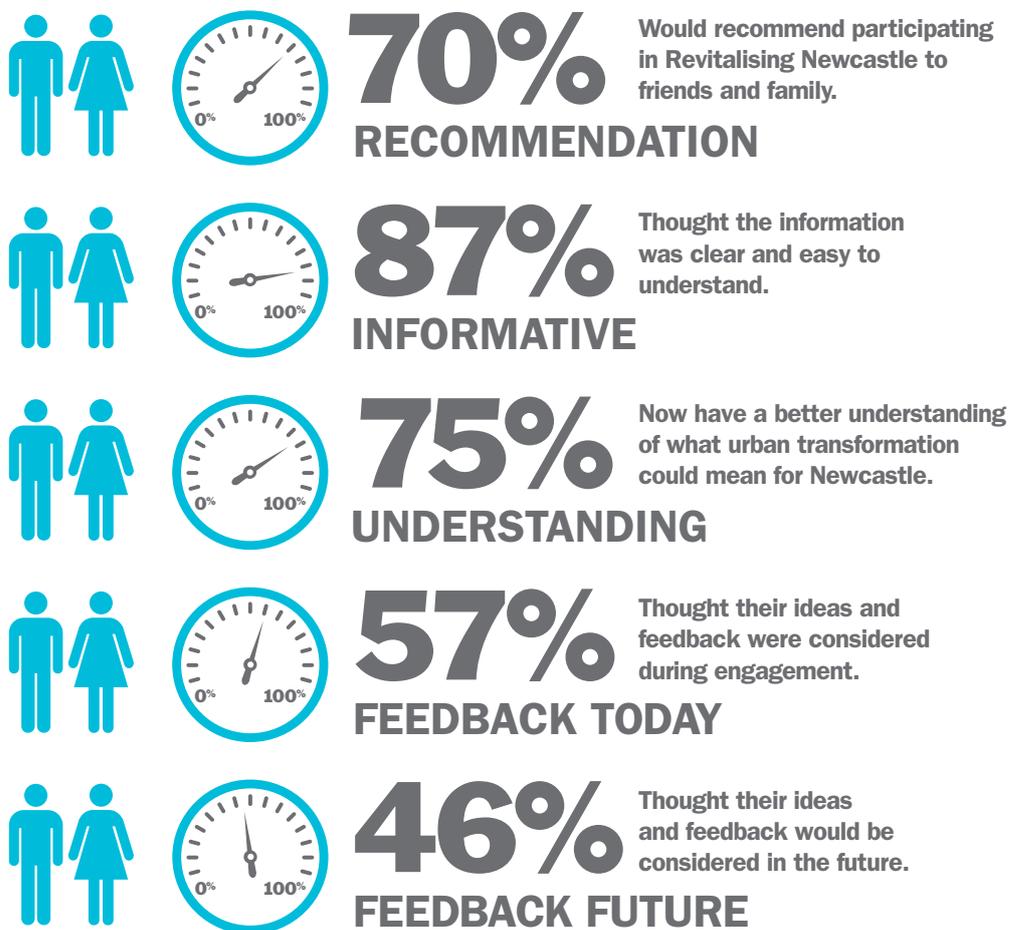
*I thought one of the major reasons for cutting the heavy rail line was to allow the traffic on Stewart Avenue to be less restricted.*

*Hunter St will be congested and dangerous with all three modes of transport - cars, bikes and light rail.*

# 5. Feedback on Revitalising Newcastle community engagement

People had the opportunity to comment on their experience of participating in Revitalising Newcastle. A total of 120 feedback forms were received through the face-to-face engagement activities.

Figure 19: Feedback on Revitalising Newcastle



### **Should others get involved in the engagement program?**

Most people (70%) agreed that they would recommend getting involved in the engagement program to friends and family. Seventeen per cent of people were undecided if they would suggest the program to others and 13 per cent said they would not.

### **Was the information provided of high-quality?**

A majority of respondents (87%) agreed that the information presented in the face-to-face engagement was clear and easy to understand. Of the remaining respondents, 8% of respondents disagreed with this and 5% said that they were undecided.

### **Did the information help you to understand the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program?**

Most people (75%) agreed that after participating in the face-to-face engagement they had a better understanding of what urban transformation means for Newcastle. Of the remaining respondents, 14% said that they were undecided and 11 per cent disagreed with this.

### **Were feedback and ideas considered during the engagement?**

When respondents were asked if they felt their opinions and ideas were considered in the face-to-face engagement, just over half (57%) responded positively. Of the remaining respondents, 28% were undecided and 15% disagreed with this. The main issue raised was a desire for transport-related feedback to be further discussed and considered during the engagement activities.

### **Will public feedback inform the Program?**

When respondents were asked if they felt their opinions and ideas would be considered in future planning of the revitalisation, less than half (46%) said they thought their feedback would be considered. Of the remaining respondents, 36% were undecided and 18% disagreed with this.

### **Other feedback received included:**

- Most people felt that the community forums were well planned and facilitated
- Some people wanted more opportunity to discuss the truncation of heavy rail and delivery of light rail in the community forums
- People want to continue to be engaged on urban revitalisation and transport issues in the city centre
- People expect more detailed information on proposed mixed uses, building heights, densities, public and active transport, parking, traffic and project staging to be included in the next rounds of engagement activities
- People said that future engagement activities should continue to include all interested groups, such as people with a disability, young people, people from A&TSI backgrounds, people from CALD backgrounds, and people from across the Hunter region.

## 6. Next steps

The feedback gathered during this engagement program is being used by UrbanGrowth NSW to help shape plans for the revitalisation of Newcastle city centre. The themes raised in feedback are being used to inform the preparation of plans which will guide the next stages of urban revitalisation.

### The revitalisation objectives

#### Our response

The preservation and enhancement of Newcastle's unique heritage is an important principle underlying each of the Program's guiding objectives.

In response to feedback from the community, UrbanGrowth NSW will include an extra Program objective that demonstrates our heritage preservation goals. In keeping with the existing Program objectives, this new objective aligns with those articulated by NCC in its Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan Framework (2010). The extra Program objective is outlined below.

Preserve and enhance heritage and culture: respect, maintain and enhance the unique heritage and character of Newcastle city centre through the revitalisation activities.

### The revitalisation opportunities and outcomes

#### Our response

Based on feedback from the public, UrbanGrowth NSW will commence creating great places for the public and improving the connections between the city and the waterfront. We will continue to work in partnership with NCC.

#### In the East End

*We will start to create great places for the public and improve the connections between the city and the waterfront.*

In the near future, remediation of the land and initial public domain works between Perkins and Newcomen Streets will see this area opened up to connect the city to the waterfront. New grassed areas and a paved walkway will connect walkers and cyclists to the water, recreating the original Dangar Grid. As people pointed out during the engagement process, this new access way will make the existing pedestrian bridge to Queen's Wharf redundant. Working with NCC, we will investigate the removal of the pedestrian bridge and the establishment of an at-grade pedestrian and cycle connection into Hunter Street Mall. Working with NCC, we will also look at options for refurbishing and adaptively reusing the railway signal box and look for temporary activation activities that will create another area of open space for the public to enjoy.

Working with NCC and other stakeholders, we will investigate temporary uses for Newcastle Station for the community to come and appreciate this heritage asset. Drawing on feedback from the public, we will refine our ideas on how to best create a drawcard destination at the station precinct. Reflecting on feedback from the public, our guiding principles will be to ensure that the station's heritage value is maintained and enhanced, and that the precinct contains a mix of community and sensitive revenue-generating activities that will provide the necessary funds for the building to be maintained over time.

We will continue to test ideas for the Station with the community and NCC over the coming months to ensure that the final proposal reflects a balance of community views. NCC will formally assess the final proposal, publicly exhibit the plans and again seek feedback from the public. We will also investigate alternative options for the green space in front of the station, as locating the regional play space in this area received minimal community support.

Working with NCC, we will investigate opportunities to improve the north/south connections and public domain at the intersection of Darby and Argyle Streets.

### In the Civic precinct

*Drawing on feedback from the public and working collaboratively with NCC, we will examine how best to create great new places that link the important civic buildings with Honeysuckle and the waterfront.*

We will look at improving north/south connections whilst retaining existing east/west connections.

Working with feedback from the public, we will prepare a series of concepts and ideas for the Civic precinct, which will include a variety of uses. We will work with NCC to ensure that the final plan meets its expectations. As with the station precinct, once lodged, this plan will be placed on public exhibition by NCC for further community feedback.

To the west of Civic Station, we will work collaboratively with HDC to examine how best to integrate land on the southern side of Wright Lane into Honeysuckle, to create new areas with a mix of residential, commercial and retail uses. Given the proximity to the University and other employment hubs, UrbanGrowth NSW will also investigate the delivery of affordable housing options in this area.

### In the West End

In November 2015, UrbanGrowth NSW purchased The Store, adjacent to the Wickham Transport Interchange site. Working with Transport for NSW, HDC and NCC, we will explore options to enhance the current interchange design. The purchase of The Store enables improved vehicle, pedestrian and cycle connections between the interchange, Stewart Avenue and Hunter Street and for greater activation of Hunter Street. It also allows for the flexibility for future enhancement of the light rail network.

#### What to expect in the next six months

- UrbanGrowth NSW will lodge a planning proposal with NCC to rezone the rail corridor land.
- NCC will put the planning proposal on public exhibition and members of the public will have the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Commencement of remediation and initial public domain works in the East End between Perkins and Newcomen Streets.
- Ongoing communication on site works and the preparation of revitalisation plans.

**Figure 20: Overview of concept proposal**

### Concept Proposal: Lodged with NCC early 2016

- Preferred concept plan and design guidelines, informed by community feedback
- Proposed light rail route
- Proposed land uses
- Proposed building heights and densities
- Technical studies, such as traffic, remediation, services and social infrastructure
- A draft Voluntary Planning Agreement, outlining the Program's contributions to funding new public domain and community assets.

**The planning proposal will be placed on public exhibition by Council and members of the community will have another opportunity to provide feedback on the plans through a statutory community consultation process managed by council.**

# Appendix A

## Methodology for data collection, analysis and reporting

This engagement report was prepared collaboratively between UrbanGrowth NSW and Newcastle City Council (NCC). The approach to collating, analysing and reporting on the data collected during Revitalising Newcastle was workshoped and agreed between UrbanGrowth and NCC Officers at a data review workshop held on Tuesday 29 September 2015. At that workshop, attendees reviewed de-identified, raw data collected during the engagement program and considered the most accurate and transparent means of reporting on the data. The team agreed to a:

- Framework of issues for coding the data: the issues included in the framework respond to the issues raised by the public in their responses
- A process for reviewing the report, to ensure that each step of the reporting process is transparent, accurate and robust. Reviews of the data and report have been undertaken by the:
  - 1) Engagement program's Independent Advisor
  - 2) NCC Officers
  - 3) Urban Growth Officers and consultant support.
- A process for informing Newcastle City Councillors of the reporting process and findings
- A process for informing members of the community of the reporting process and findings
- Structure for the report, which balances the volume of data with a need to focus on the main issues raised and provide an accurate and honest reflection of people's feedback.

An overview of the report methodology is shown in [Figure 21](#) below.

**Figure 21: Revitalising Newcastle report methodology**

DATA COLLATION	DATA ANALYSIS	REPORTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process agreed with Council Officers</li> <li>• Primary data sources (e.g. community event reporting templates, submissions and feedback forms): individually numbered and collated into spreadsheets</li> <li>• Data collation subject to two random quality assurance (QA) reviews by Independent Advisor – accuracy found to be 95%</li> <li>• Survey data collated and reported by independent research company</li> <li>• Supporting data sources (e.g. Post-It notes, community event sketch facilitator drawings, video feedback at community events): themed and photographed as supporting data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process agreed with Council Officers</li> <li>• Data analysis reviewed by Independent Advisor</li> <li>• Data analysis reviewed by Council Officers</li> <li>• Surveys reported on by third party.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process agreed with Council Officers</li> <li>• Report reviewed by Independent Advisor</li> <li>• Report reviewed by Council Officers</li> <li>• Briefings to Councillors prior to public release, November and early December 2015</li> <li>• Report released, December 2015</li> <li>• Report tabled with Council at Ordinary Meeting, December 2015.</li> </ul>
		
		



# revitalising newcastle

*Thank you to those members of the community  
who shared their ideas during Revitalising Newcastle.*

**Stay informed and involved:**

- Visit [revitalisingnewcastle.com.au](http://revitalisingnewcastle.com.au)
- Phone 1800 359 545
- Email [info@revitalisingnewcastle.com.au](mailto:info@revitalisingnewcastle.com.au)
-  #revitalisingnewcastle
-  #revitalisingncl