



Honeysuckle Ideas

OUTCOMES REPORT

Executive Summary

APRIL 2021

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation

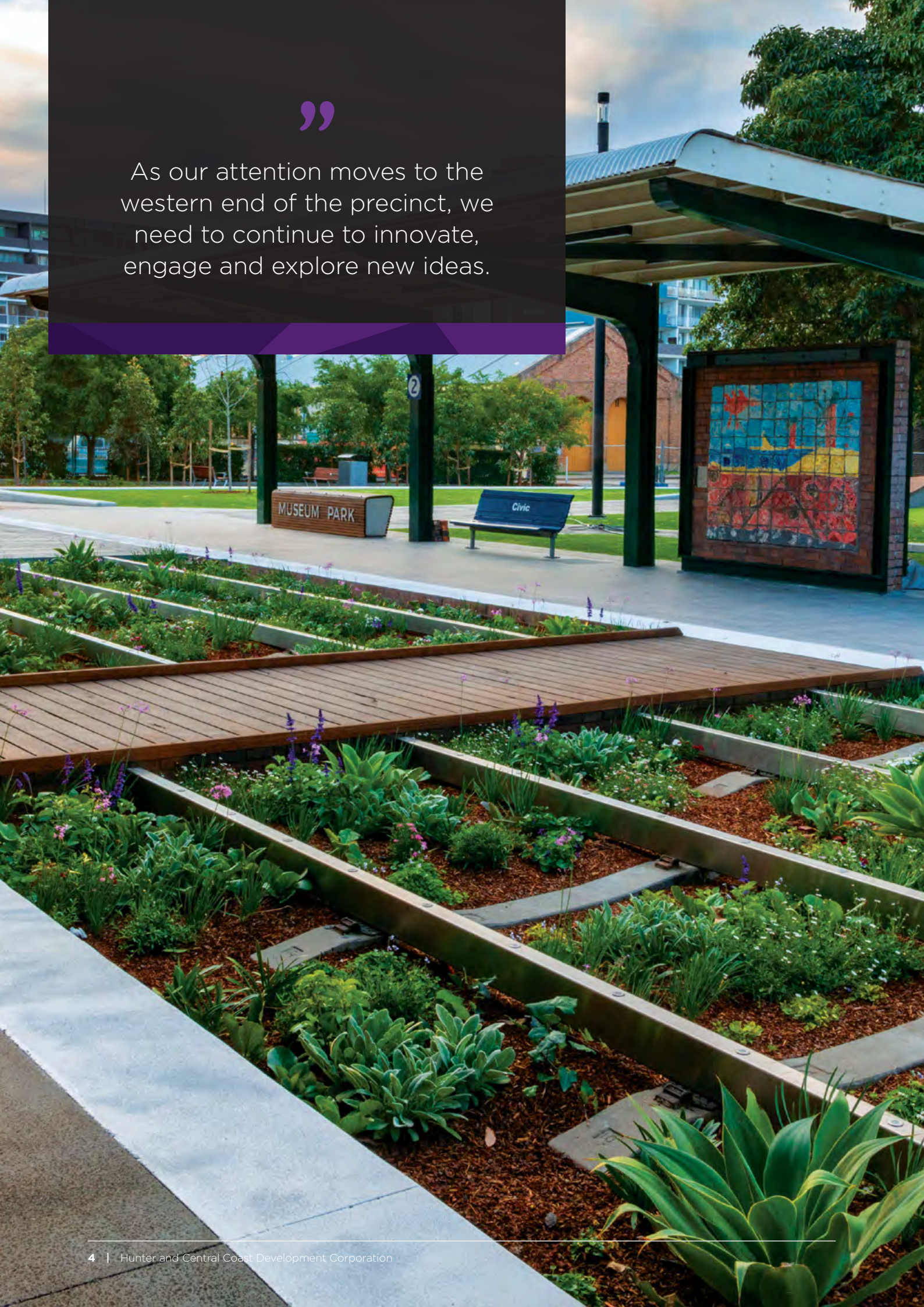
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Message from Valentina Misevska

Chief Operating Officer
Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation

The transformation of Newcastle’s harbourside into an accessible, useable and popular urban space, linking the waterfront with the city has been almost 30 years in the making.

From the creation of a new housing development at Linwood, the replacement of the Cowper Street bridge and the construction of a shared pathway connecting Carrington to the city through to the adaptive reuse of old rail sheds into Newcastle Museum and the creation of the residential, dining and commercial hub at Honeysuckle – the changes have transformed Newcastle’s harbour front areas into places where people want to visit, work and live.

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) has been at the helm throughout and it’s important that as we approach the end of the project, we continue to focus on what the city needs and what the community wants.

As our attention moves to the western end of the precinct, we need to continue to innovate, engage and explore new ideas. We want to ensure we are creating great places where people want to spend time, and showcase Newcastle as a smart, liveable and sustainable global city.

This is why we undertook the Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program which sought input from our community on how the final development in the precinct should emerge, with a special focus on environmental, social and economic outcomes.

With five hectares of land remaining, HCCDC has already set aside two hectares for public domain. Informed by public engagement undertaken in 2018, the public domain will include a waterfront promenade, two new parks and the naturalisation and greening of Cottage Creek.

The final three hectares of land remaining for development has the potential to transform this area into an iconic gateway to the city as the future CBD, which is why community feedback about future use is so important.

The feedback we heard was diverse and we have reviewed all the comments to develop key themes and a set of objectives to guide future development in the precinct.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the program, I am pleased to share the Honeysuckle Ideas Outcomes Report with you.



Executive summary

Honeysuckle Ideas was a community engagement program delivered by Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation from September to November 2020.

The engagement program sought to understand community and stakeholder aspirations for the future use and function of the remaining lands at Honeysuckle West.

The community engagement program was delivered in two phases with participation from more than 300 people across activities.

Phase One

Phase one gathered input from a broad cross-section of the community. The discussion was framed by the future divestment of the land. Participants acknowledged the land should be developed into a precinct that brings people to Newcastle and keeps them there while supporting a mix of businesses, activities, and attractions. There was also discussion around the need to incorporate green elements and have accessible connections to both transport and the harbour. There was also commentary around innovation, building design and heritage along with creating a place with a sense of community.

Phase Two

The feedback provided in phase one was grouped into categories that were then translated into themes. During phase two, the focus groups confirmed that the themes were consistent with the community feedback captured in phase one. As part of phase two, the focus groups were then asked to respond to draft objective statements, which were derived from the themes, and discuss how these could be incorporated into the draft project objectives.

Social pinpoint ideas

The below represents a range of ideas raised by the community. This visual display doesn't represent popularity or commonality.



Map of project area

The remaining lands include two parcels of land shown in the figure below.



Honeysuckle Ideas pillars

The engagement activities, including survey questions and ideas wall visual guides, were shaped around HCCDC's three key pillars:

-  **social**
-  **economic**
-  **environmental**

People were asked to share their aspirations including ideas that encouraged improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for the Throsby and Wickham development sites. Brief explanations of the pillars were included in activities to try and help focus the discussion, see below.

Description of three pillars and examples



The ideas for creating cities that are vibrant, accessible and inclusive are endless. Some examples include:

- buildings connected to open space where people of all ages and abilities can interact
- places to visit at all times of the day and night with great atmosphere
- end of trip facilities to encourage active transport
- housing choices
- places that showcase our indigenous and non-indigenous heritage and culture
- be easily accessible by a range of transport options.

Social



There are many ways to help support economic development, jobs and growth in a sustainable way. Some examples include:

- opportunities that encourage a range of retail options
- creating a financial and commercial precinct
- mixed-uses that create jobs
- iconic buildings that attract visitors 24 hours/7 days
- street fronts that encourage visitors to stay in the precinct.

Economic



There are so many different ways that a development could incorporate environmental initiatives into the buildings and spaces around the buildings. Some examples include:

- green buildings that reduce or eliminate negative impacts and enhance positive impacts on the climate and natural environment
- efficient use of water, energy and other resources
- sustainable cities and communities.

Environmental

Participants were also advised that the engagement was not focusing on:

- any ideas focused outside the project area
- any ideas that relate to the non-development of the land (including retention of temporary car park and re-use or removal of existing buildings)
- any recommendations to change zoning, height of buildings or density
- any ideas that relate to on-water development / uses.

How were people engaged?

The Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program gathered feedback from a diverse cross section of the Newcastle and the Hunter community.

Phase one activities

Included a range of consultation activities to encourage participation from a broad demographic. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, activities were hosted online including facilitated discussions, a digital ideas wall and a survey.



Digital ideas wall

The digital ideas wall provided participants the opportunity to share suggestions and participate in discussion about other people's comments and pictures. The wall was populated with three visual guides that reflected the three pillars – social, economic and environmental – to stimulate a discussion.

Survey

The survey provided questions to enable participants to provide more detailed feedback on priorities and preferences for future use and function of the remaining lands. The detailed questions were aligned with each pillar. The direct phone and email contact information was provided on all materials and advertising to ensure people were able to provide ideas and comments directly to the engagement team.

Facilitated discussions

Three facilitated discussions were also held to provide an overview of the project and provide interested participants with a better understanding of the constraints and non-negotiables for the site.

Phase two activities

Key themes were confirmed and draft objective statements were discussed with stakeholders and community members in the focus group sessions during phase two.

Focus groups and workshop

There were two focus groups with key stakeholders and interested community members as well as a workshop with staff from across HCCDC.

Themes

The final themes and objectives were finalised in collaboration with HCCDC to ensure the feedback gathered was reflective of the community engagement. The project themes are:



Magnetic destination

Uses that create a vibrant lifestyle precinct with attractions and offerings that encourage people to visit, join in and linger from the ground level to the rooftops.



Natural environment

Multi-use spaces that feature natural green elements in, on and around buildings and infrastructure that supports biodiversity and a connection with the natural elements of the area.



Economy

A diverse mix of business offerings and opportunities that creates jobs and supports a vibrant, inclusive and successful commercial and visitor economy, with activity day and night.



Quality connections

A well-connected precinct with buildings and infrastructure that showcase and enhance access and views towards the river and harbour, while enabling and encouraging active transport and easy connectivity to transport nodes, waterfront promenades and city attractions.



Heritage

Future uses and functions that celebrate the region's heritage and connect people to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history and the city's cultural, maritime and industrial roots.



Excellence

Innovative, iconic and exciting buildings that feature design excellence in built structures, environmental sustainability, safety and accessibility for all.

Objectives

The project objectives will guide the future divestment of the Throsby and Wickham land parcels. The project objectives are:

- 

Create a magnetic mixed-use destination

A landmark precinct that attracts people to work, live and play.
- 

Create a great place that is connected

An enviable destination that links people to transport, place and the waterfront.
- 

Respect and acknowledge heritage and culture

Care for Country and embrace the unique culture and history of Newcastle's waterfront.
- 

Demonstrates excellence in design and sustainability

Quality urban and architectural design incorporating best practice sustainability.
- 

Be people focused and accessible

A place for the whole community.

What's Next

The Outcomes Report and Objectives will be used to inform ongoing project decision making as we work to realise an exciting outcome for the final parcels of Honeysuckle lands.

Over coming years, HCCDC will work to divest the remaining parcels of land in Honeysuckle to create great places that will underpin the growth of the western CBD, and become a vibrant destination that the community can enjoy and be proud of.



Hunter & Central Coast
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