



December 2012

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHAT IS THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR NEWCASTLE?

- The NSW Government will transform and revitalise Newcastle's city centre to boost economic activity, making Newcastle a more vibrant place for locals and visitors.
- It has announced a strategy with a range of initiatives, an implementation plan to help drive urban renewal and improved links between Newcastle's city centre and its waterfront.
- The initiatives will create a revitalised Hunter Street with activity focused in three key hubs to form a dynamic city centre offering a range of experiences for the wider region as well as eight new crossings to provide better access between the city centre with the foreshore.
- Significant upgrades are planned for Wheeler Place and Hunter Street Mall and a new transport interchange will be built at Wickham to serve the city's commercial hub and provide more travel options and better connectivity for people outside Newcastle.

### HOW DOES THE URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGY REVITALISE NEWCASTLE?

- New retail, residential and lifestyle activities across different precincts will stimulate the city centre and surrounding areas.
- The strategy includes economic and physical improvements as well as new planning controls to encourage a more dynamic city centre capable of accommodating the 12,600 additional residents and 10,000 extra workers expected by 2036.
- Significant public domain upgrades are proposed to rejuvenate the city centre and reconnect the Newcastle CBD to the waterfront.

### WHAT CHANGES WILL PEOPLE SEE IN THE NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE?

- A revitalised Hunter Street will feature three modern hubs offering diverse experiences:
  - **East end** — will become a lively mixed retail, leisure, entertainment and residential precinct with a revitalised Hunter Street Mall
  - **Civic** — physical improvements to Wheeler Place will strengthen this precinct as Newcastle's main civic, educational and cultural hub
  - **West end** — employment land will be protected and physical improvements promoted around Birdwood Park and to Cottage Creek to help position the west end as the city's new commercial hub.



## **WHAT OTHER IMPROVEMENTS ARE PROPOSED?**

- Hunter Street will be a destination in its own right, as well as a key link to other areas with upgraded footpaths, a new cycle path and street plantings.
- Upgrades will enhance and improve Birdwood Park, Cottage Creek, Devonshire Street, Crown Street and the section of Hunter Street near the new transport interchange.
- Innovative re-use of heritage buildings will be encouraged.

## **HOW WILL NEW PLANNING CONTROLS HELP REVITALISE NEWCASTLE?**

- New planning controls will concentrate activity around the city centre's three hubs, define more clearly the commercial core, mixed use and residential zones and encourage more homes and jobs.
- More homes are being encouraged by increasing the allowable floor space for mixed use development across the city centre.
- Mixed use development – the most feasible investment option – will be encouraged in order to deliver more housing and boost economic activity.
- Simplified floor-space ratios (FSR) controls will be easier to interpret, providing greater certainty and encouraging investment.
- It is proposed to include the new controls in council's local planning framework.

## **HOW WILL THE GOVERNMENT ENSURE NEW PLANNING CONTROLS ARE FEASIBLE?**

- These planning controls are based on economic feasibility testing combined with an understanding of mine subsidence and flooding constraints.
- The strategy includes an implementation plan for all urban renewal initiatives to set a clear and measurable delivery framework.

## **WHAT INITIATIVES ARE PROPOSED TO BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY?**

- Initiatives proposed to help diversify and grow the Newcastle economy include:
  - a university campus in the city centre with 8,000 students and 1,000 staff
  - providing sufficient employment land and promoting the city centre as the main location for commercial offices



- promoting public domain improvements to encourage additional retail trade in the city centre (boutique, specialty, supermarket and department stores in the east end, and bulky goods retailing in the west end), and
- appointing a City of Newcastle local business coordinator.

## **HOW WILL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS ENCOURAGE GROWTH AND RENEWAL?**

- To facilitate this major revitalisation, rail services separating the city centre and the waterfront will be replaced by bus services from Wickham.
- Eight new north-south links will be created over the superseded rail corridor, connecting the city centre to the waterfront and providing a stronger basis for renewal initiatives.
- A new bus/rail interchange will be built at Wickham, west of Stewart Avenue. Bus services will be coordinated with the rail timetable from the new interchange to ensure smoother journeys to the city centre and to other areas within Newcastle for professional, commercial, educational and social purposes.
- These changes are expected to take three to five years.

## **HOW WILL THESE CHANGES IMPROVE TRANSPORT OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE IN MAITLAND, LAKE MACQUARIE AND THE UPPER HUNTER?**

- People arriving from outside the Newcastle CBD will enjoy more seamless travel to destinations within the city centre and beaches because bus services will be coordinated with the rail timetable at the new Wickham bus/rail interchange.
- These new bus services will take travelers to a wider range of places in the city centre than was previously possible with the rail-only service, enabling them to arrive closer to their final destination than before.
- These new arrangements will improve connectivity and accessibility for people travelling to the Newcastle city centre for professional, commercial, educational and social purposes.

## **HOW WAS THE STRATEGY PREPARED AND HOW WILL IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

- The draft urban renewal strategy was developed in consultation with the City of Newcastle and key state government agencies.
- Actions identified in the strategy are linked to a clear implementation plan by a range of stakeholders for the short, medium and long terms.





## HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY BE CONSULTED?

- The urban renewal strategy will be on public exhibition until **17 March 2013**. Community information forums will be held during the exhibition period to allow the community to speak with departmental and council planners (times and venues will be publicised).
- The community is encouraged to read the strategy and provide feedback to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people of Newcastle and the surrounding region.
- Documents are available online at [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/revitalisnewcastle](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/revitalisnewcastle)
- Hard copies of the strategy are available from:

Department of Planning & Infrastructure  
Level 2, 26 Honeysuckle Drive  
NEWCASTLE

City of Newcastle  
Administration Centre  
282 King Street  
NEWCASTLE

Department of Planning & Infrastructure  
Information Centre  
23-33 Bridge Street  
SYDNEY

- Written submissions must be received by **17 March 2013**. Submissions can be sent to:

Department of Planning & Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

or emailed to [urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au)