



Founded in 1908

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**Dear Sir/Madam**

**SUBMISSION REGARDING THE NEWCASTLE URBAN RENEWAL  
STRATEGY 2012**

We refer to the draft Renewal Strategy for Newcastle currently on exhibition. Commencing in 1908 and being an important part of the social infrastructure of Newcastle since, Newcastle Surf Life Saving Club (NSLSC) understands the importance of the draft renewal strategy for the City and supports the Department's initiative to revitalize and reshape the CBD13 March 2013

. Given that the current clubhouse and Newcastle Beach form part of the urban renewal area in the draft strategy, it is expected that the intended future outcomes for the city will have a direct effect on the future operation of NSLSC .

The Club has taken the opportunity to undertake a detailed review the Urban Renewal Strategy and wishes to commend the Department on the broader principals and strategies and initiatives, and its overall vision for Newcastle. Given the long history of the Club IN Newcastle, its members support the revitalisation of Newcastle and the potential positive benefits to the Club and the broader community. The Strategy acknowledges the importance of the city centre social infrastructure, and recognises the need for additional

social infrastructure in the future due to the projected population and employment numbers over the life of the strategy (pg. 55).

However, it does not specifically mention surf clubs, or their facilities and operations, in the context of the proposed urban renewal strategy nor the likely implications arising through the increased resident and worker population that has been projected in the Strategy. Accordingly, the Club appreciates the opportunity to make a submission during the public exhibition period so that the Department can review and integrate this information into the final document that will be issued once the public exhibition period is ended and the Department have the opportunity to review submissions.

The key issues that the Club would like to include in its submission to the Department are listed below.

### **1. Policy Context**

NSLSC has recently been engaged in discussions with Newcastle City Council (Council) regarding its Surf Pavilion Strategy, which is an initiative jointly sponsored by NSW Land and Property Management Authority, Council and Hunter Surf Life Saving (HSLs) under the broader Newcastle Coastal Revitalisation Strategy. The Club understands that Council is undertaking the Surf Pavilion Strategy in order to identify modifications to each building and the surrounding public domain that are necessary to meet the future needs of Council, HSLs and the community in accordance with the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan and the Coastal Revitalisation Strategy.

The Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy does not make reference to the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan, the Coastal Revitalisation Strategy or the Surf Pavilion Strategy. These three documents contain many important initiatives and funding commitments not only concerning Newcastle beach, and therefore NSLSC, but also concerning the broader draft renewal strategy for the CBD. The initiatives, strategies and commitments include:

- Improving physical access and visual connections from Pacific Park to Newcastle beach;
- Options investigations for the future location and design of the Newcastle Surf Club;
- Associated redevelopment of the surrounding public domain;
- Changes to the local traffic regime along Shortland Esplanade; and
- In the longer term, investigate built form to accommodate uses that support a vibrant restaurant precinct.

The possibility of successfully integrating and implementing these initiatives and commitments within the context of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy is an opportunity that should not be missed. Key benefits of considering these initiatives, strategies and funding commitments as part of the draft renewal strategy include:

- Improved coordination between state and local government and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of public domain and social infrastructure initiatives to avoid duplication or delays in timely provision;
- Early planning for the replacement or refurbishment of the Newcastle Surf Club, which has been inspected with Council and identified as not meeting current or future needs, to ensure that the important service providing to a growing inner city population is not compromised;
- Improved access to and connectivity with the City's waterfront, which is one of the Guiding Principles identified by the draft strategy (pg. 63); and

- Incorporation of the precinct to complement the priority public domain improvements identified for the east end of Hunter Street Mall, including its termination at Pacific Park.

Significant work has been done regarding the Newcastle beach precinct and its relationship with the Newcastle CBD. It is imperative that this information is included in the planning and implementation of the future revitalisation of Newcastle to ensure coordinated policy and infrastructure implementation decisions, accommodate known deficiencies in current and future social infrastructure services, and ensure the objectives of the draft renewal strategy are met in terms of improved connectivity, and support for important social infrastructure and public domain improvements to attract people to the city.

**The NSLSC request that the initiatives identified in the current and previous planning and design strategies for Newcastle beach and the Newcastle Surf Club be considered as part of the final Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy to be issued by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.**

## **2. Employment and Housing Targets in the CBD**

The Strategy recognises the need for additional social infrastructure over the life of the plan. This, however, needs to include the volunteer surf life saving services provided by Newcastle Surf Club. Increased resident and worker populations, along with the forecast increase in tourist activity envisaged by the draft strategy, will impact on the beach patrol and rescue services currently provided by NSLSC by virtue of the increased usage of Newcastle beach. The Clubhouse facilities currently provided are sub-standard, which has been recognised in the documents outlined above and is subject to current needs analysis investigations being undertaken by the Council and NSLSC.

**The NSLSC supports the Strategy's key initiatives of attracting more residents and employees into the city in order to support and build a more vibrant and viable CBD. However, this needs to be balanced by accommodating the growth and expansion of the Newcastle Surf Club in order to enable the volunteer life saving services to be provided at an acceptable standard in to the future.**

## **3. A Supportive Contributions System**

The draft urban renewal strategy identifies the need for a supportive contribution system and recommends changes to existing Section 94A contributions schedule through some deletions and cost increases, and a number of new initiatives for improvements to park, community and transport infrastructure.

However, the amount allocated to Newcastle Beach is considered minimal (\$250,000) in the context of the expected increase in demand for the use of the precinct and the volunteers services provided by NSLSC. Further, the Newcastle surf pavilion is provided with no funding in the revised Section 94A contributions table, whereas Nobby's surf pavilion is provided with a total of \$1,000,000 in the revised contributions table. The current deficiencies of the Newcastle Surf Club that have been documented in previous and current studies and investigations need sufficient funding to enable this standard of service to be maintained.

**It is requested that the Department revisits its amended Section 94A contributions table to allow for sufficient allocation for the funding of these much needed public domain and social infrastructure improvements over the life of the plan. In addition they will need to be identified and brought forward in the fully funded**

**implementation plan provided in the draft urban renewal strategy that takes account of existing committed funding.**

#### **4. Conclusion**

NSLSC applauds the State government's delivery of the Urban Renewal Strategy and its initiatives to reinvigorate the city centre. The achievement of the Strategy's objectives will require a collaborative partnership between many and varied stakeholders, including state and local government, the private sector, community organisations and the people of Newcastle and the Hunter Region more generally. The Club wishes to be part of the ongoing collaboration between all of these stakeholders to ensure that its vital volunteer services can be maintained and improved as the city prospers and grows.

However, the NSLSC has identified a number of issues that require further consideration to ensure its viable operation into

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the future. We hope that the Department will consider these issues in integrate them into the final Strategy to be prepared and the implementation plan that is necessary to make these things happen, including a clear funding strategy for the important social infrastructure services for which this city is renown.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments and we look forward to working with the Department and Newcastle City Council into the future to achieve the outcomes related to the renewal of Newcastle. Please do not hesitate to contact me on

#### should you have any questions in relation to the above matters

Yours sincerely,

Brad Kinniard

President