

A more vibrant city centre for Newcastle



Planning & Infrastructure

Frequently Asked Questions

March 2014

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR NEWCASTLE'S CITY CENTRE?

- The NSW Government has worked with City of Newcastle Council, local businesses and the community to develop the vision to transform and revitalise Newcastle's city centre.
- Revitalising the city centre will attract more investment and visitors, making Newcastle a more vibrant place to live and work.
- The NSW Government will work with locals to protect the unique character of Newcastle, while helping NSW's second biggest city to become an even better place to live and work.

HOW WOULD THIS VISION BE REALISED?

- The [Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy](#) outlines the vision for Newcastle's city centre. It includes a suite of initiatives that stretch over 25 years to drive urban renewal in Newcastle's city centre.
- The strategy will help attract investors and businesses to Newcastle, provide more jobs in the city centre by providing development opportunities that align with transport improvements underway for the city centre.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PARTS OF THE URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGY?

- The strategy identifies Hunter Street as the main street and key destination in the city centre - linking the three main activity hubs in the city centre and positions the West End activity hub as the city's future CBD location.
- Significant improvements to Hunter Street Mall and Wheeler Place are proposed to rejuvenate the city centre.
- The strategy includes economic and physical improvements as well as new planning controls to stimulate growth by increasing the options for homes and jobs in the city centre – it would provide 10,000 jobs and 6,000 homes by 2036.
- These initiatives will encourage retail trade back into the city centre, making it a more vibrant place to live and work.

WHY IS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION HAPPENING AGAIN?

- Following Planning & Infrastructure's review of the [submissions](#), it has determined that a number of proposed amendments could be considered.
- These amendments include changes in response to submissions from the University of Newcastle and other land owners.
- Planning & Infrastructure has amended parts of the proposed planning framework and placed those amendments on public exhibition as a draft amendment to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Urban Renewal).

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- An amendment to the city centre sections of the Newcastle Development Control Plan 2012 is also on public exhibition to ensure the community can review the more detailed planning and design guidelines for the city centre that will support the Local Environment Plan.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES?

- The University of Newcastle is seeking to increase the floor space ratio on its site at Civic from 4:1 to 5:1 to accommodate the future capacity needs of the university.
- The GPT Group and UrbanGrowth NSW have proposed to increase the height of buildings across specific locations of their sites. A number of varying heights across the area are proposed, ranging from 20 metres to 65 metres. Under the previously exhibited strategy the heights ranged from 20 metres to 27 metres across the site.
- Some minor amendments and corrections to the draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and maps are also being exhibited. These changes include:
 - expand the objectives of the R4 High Density Residential zone to encourage a balance of uses, such as tourist and visitor accommodation and education facilities
 - expand the objectives of the B3 Commercial Core zone to promote more commercial uses in mixed-use developments
 - delete certain uses from the Zone B3 Commercial Core that don't support the objectives of the zone or are not relevant to the location of this zone in the city centre, such as boat launching ramps, port facilities, residential flat buildings, seniors housing and water recreation structures
 - require that any building in the R4 High Density Residential zone should be predominantly residential to provide more dwellings in the city centre. Residential development should comprise at least 75% of the new building
 - change the thresholds that require an architectural design competition by reducing the height requirement from 48m to 45m or more than 13 storeys (or both) and changing the value of works threshold on key sites from \$1 million to \$5 million, to provide more appropriate triggers when to hold design competitions
 - provide a clearer description explaining the different rate for FSR within "Area A" for non-commercial buildings
 - correct the allowable building heights for the lots bounded by King, Watt, Church and Newcomen Streets to better reflect the existing and desired future scale of this heritage precinct
 - update all LEP maps to be consistent with current mapping conventions.

WHAT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION HAS OCCURRED?

- [The Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy](#) was placed on public exhibition for four months from 14 December 2012 until 19 April 2013.
- The strategy included new planning controls to 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

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- Planning & Infrastructure received 420 [submissions](#)
- Two community sessions were held in Newcastle on 20 February 2013, where over 400 people were in attendance.
- Regular and ongoing meetings were held with key stakeholders such as council, other government departments and CBD land owners.

HOW MANY SUBMISSIONS WERE RECEIVED?

- Of the 420 submission received:
 - six were from local councils and council groups
 - eight were from State Government agencies and local MPs
 - 25 were from industry groups
 - 351 submissions were from the general community, and
 - 30 submissions were from non-government organisations.

WHAT ISSUES WERE RAISED IN THE SUBMISSIONS?

- The majority of submissions were about the decision to terminate the rail line at Wickham.
- There was broad community support to enhance the city centre.
- The main issues raised included transport in the city centre and the protection of Newcastle's heritage buildings.
- Feedback also included specific comments around zonings, land use in general and funding of the work.
- A number of land owners requested amendments to the proposed planning framework.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT?

- There will be better connections for pedestrians and cyclists, dedicated cycle lanes, 11 new connections across the railway line – connecting the city centre to its waterfront, better management of city traffic, and innovative solutions to car parking in the city centre.
- Given the intense community interest in transport, the NSW Government [announced](#) on 18 June 2013 that it will spend an additional \$340 million on revitalising Newcastle by building light rail between Newcastle and Wickham.
- A further \$10 million has been allocated to explore potential light rail links from the city to surrounding areas and wider region.

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WHAT FUNDING IS GOVERNMENT PROVIDING?

- The proposed long-term leasing of the ports, as [announced](#) in the 2013-14 NSW State Budget, provides commitment to revitalising the city centre with an additional \$340 million to be spent on the new multi-modal transport interchange.
- This is in addition to the \$120 million the NSW Government has already committed to renewing Newcastle.
- A further \$10 million has been allocated from the NSW Budget 2013-2014 to explore potential for light rail to be extended to the surrounding suburbs and broader Hunter region.
- Additional funding to support improvements across the city centre will be provided through developer contributions, planning agreements and grant funding.

HOW WILL HERITAGE BE PROTECTED?

- Since the exhibition of the strategy, Planning & Infrastructure have prepared design guidance for re-purposing heritage buildings in addition to the guidelines that already exist.
- The design guidance will ensure new development conserves and enhances the cultural significance of heritage items important to Novocastrians.

WHEN AND WHERE CAN I HAVE MY SAY?

- All information is available at:
 - <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/revitalisingnewcastle>
 - Planning & Infrastructure (Newcastle Office) Level 2, 26 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle
 - City of Newcastle, Administration Centre, 282 King Street, Newcastle
 - Planning & Infrastructure (Head Office) Information Centre, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney
- Submissions can be lodged via:
 - www.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposals
 - directly to urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au
 - by fax to (02) 9228 6555
 - by post to GPO Box 39 Sydney NSW 2001
- Submissions will be made public in line with the department's objective to promote an open and transparent planning system. If you do not want your name published, please state this clearly at the top of your submission.
- Before making a submission, please read our privacy policy at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/privacy
- Further information: Information Centre 1300 305 695