

The City of Newcastle Annual Report

Summary 2009/10

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November 2010

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Cover photo: Newcastle Ocean Baths at night.

who we are

## About Newcastle

Pristine beaches, spacious parks, a stunning working harbour and a fascinating history are just some of the characteristics that mark Newcastle as a unique Australian city.

Newcastle has come a long way since its early mining and industrial days and is transitioning to a vibrant, cosmopolitan city that is home to an internationally-recognised university, peak regional institutions and growing commercial and retail sectors.

With a population of over 140,000, Newcastle will continue to grow as it welcomes new residents attracted by the quality and affordable lifestyle offered by our coastal city.

The city's unique geography and 200-year history have helped create distinctive suburban precincts, each with their own unique characteristics. Suburbs vary from historic Newcastle East with its views of the Nobbys headland to leafy New Lambton bordering the magnificent Blackbutt Reserve. Then there is Minmi, one of the last remaining mining villages in Newcastle, and Stockton, with its extensive sandy beach and natural state.

Parks, reserves and playgrounds are located throughout the city, providing sporting facilities and recreational spaces for people of all ages. This contributes to Newcastle being a great place for families, sport lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

The growing cultural scene continues to attract national attention. Newcastle Region Art Gallery is home to a substantial art collection and the historic Civic Theatre showcases the best of local, national and international acts. A number of private galleries, dance studios and community theatre companies complement the city's key cultural facilities.

Novocastrians are renowned for their resilience, overcoming challenges such as the 1989 earthquake and the 2007 storm with great strength of character and strong community spirit. Our city thrives on the enormous and invaluable contribution of its community.

Newcastle truly is a great place, with a great lifestyle and a great future.

**Our Vision**

Great Place, Great Lifestyle, **Great Future**

**Our Mission**

*Providing services to the ratepayers, residents and visitors to Newcastle that:*

- Enhance quality of life
- Ensure a sustainable future
- Make best use of our assets
- Are community and customer focused

**Our Core Values**

- Strong leadership
- Customer and community focus
- Community connected
- Continuous improvement and teamwork
- Develop our people
- Adapt to change
- Decisions based on fact
- Behave responsibly and ethically
- Sustainability

**Our Goals**

**Economic & Asset Development**

A strong focus on economic development and tourism and managing our assets effectively

**Community & Cultural Development**

Ensure Newcastle has a high quality of life through effective place management

**Environmental Enhancement**

Ensure Newcastle has an environmentally sustainable future

**Governance & Organisational Development**

A well performing, customer focused, open and transparent organisation that engages the community and encourages participation in Council matters

## From the Lord Mayor



The General Manager, Executive Leadership Team, Councillors and Council officers worked diligently to contain and reduce costs through greater efficiency so that we could peg back a \$12 million deficit and begin the year with a balanced budget. This paved the way for Council to undertake its largest capital works program yet, spending more than \$22 million on renewing and maintaining infrastructure including roads, footpaths, drains, parks and community facilities.

There was a strong focus on community engagement and consultation to inform the development and delivery of numerous plans and projects over the year. Quality feedback was sought and provided for the Coastal and Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplans, Merewether Beach Public Domain Plan, Bar Beach and Wallsend skate parks, Cycling Action Plan, Blackbutt Reserve Masterplan and the Tourism Plan to name a few.

Newcastle Voice, continued to play a huge role in our community consultation and now has more than 2,500 members. Engaging with the community and encouraging participation with Council matters has resulted in a more community-focused, open and transparent organisation.

City presentation continues to be priority for Council and a highlight of the year was the launch of the graffiti hotline, which has proved to be a great success. The hotline logged more than 1,450 reports in its first 12 months and Council removed over 20,000 square metres of graffiti.

The City of Newcastle was again able to generously support many local organisations with more than 50 community groups receiving funding and in-kind assistance for a diverse range of projects.

The Community Grants and Sponsorship Program enabled a variety of ventures to go ahead, from community services to sport and environmental initiatives.

Progress was also made on a number of key issues affecting the people of Newcastle, especially flooding. Council adopted a Floodplain Risk Management Plan for Wallsend and is now well on the way to developing a city-wide flood plan. In addition, Council completed the installation of flash flood detection equipment throughout the local government area.

This annual report will outline many other initiatives and achievements of Council during 2009/10. While there are many challenges ahead, there are also countless opportunities to be realised and we will continue working hard to deliver genuine results for the people of Newcastle.

**Cr John S Tate**  
**Lord Mayor of Newcastle**

## General Manager's message



Balancing our commitment to fiscal responsibility and financial sustainability with the provision of high-quality services and facilities for our ratepayers underpinned council business in 2009/10.

Getting this balance right is an ongoing challenge. Council proactively implemented an efficiency drive through its improved budgeting processes and Sustainability Review to find cost savings across the organisation. All 69 service areas provided by Council were reviewed, with two reports outlining over 300 recommendations for improvement. It will take a full four years to achieve all these opportunities but the 2009/10 year saw savings of \$1,124, 237 following the implementation of budget reductions and review initiatives. These changes to cultural and financial practices have resulted in a further \$4.2 million in savings from base budgets.

Overall this effort has contributed to our strong financial performance over the past 12 months with record levels of investment and an improvement on forecast operational budgets.

At the same time the organisation has maintained its focus on delivering 69 service areas to our community. Getting the basics right is an important priority and we have allocated critical resources to road and footpath rehabilitation as well as drainage works and park maintenance.

Another priority has been on planning and city revitalisation with extensive engagement of community and stakeholder groups on issues such as mines subsidence and flood management. Substantial stakeholder engagement on the issue of environmental sustainability has also occurred through the Smart Grid

Smart City project, waste reviews and the provision of industrial land for the future.

A number of significant projects were progressed, which will contribute to the social, cultural and economic future of our city. Hunter Street Mall was reopened to traffic, paving the way for future revitalisation initiatives in the CBD.

Works continued on the development of the new \$23.5 million Museum at Honeysuckle, a significant addition to the civic and cultural precinct. Other projects such as the No 2 Sportsground redevelopment and Newcastle Ocean Baths restoration were highlights in the year.

Our work to develop the 10-year Community Strategic Plan through the 2030 program has identified important community priorities for the future, including the need for vibrant public spaces and improved public transport. Council will strive to meet these community needs and aspirations while delivering a broad range of quality services to our ratepayers.

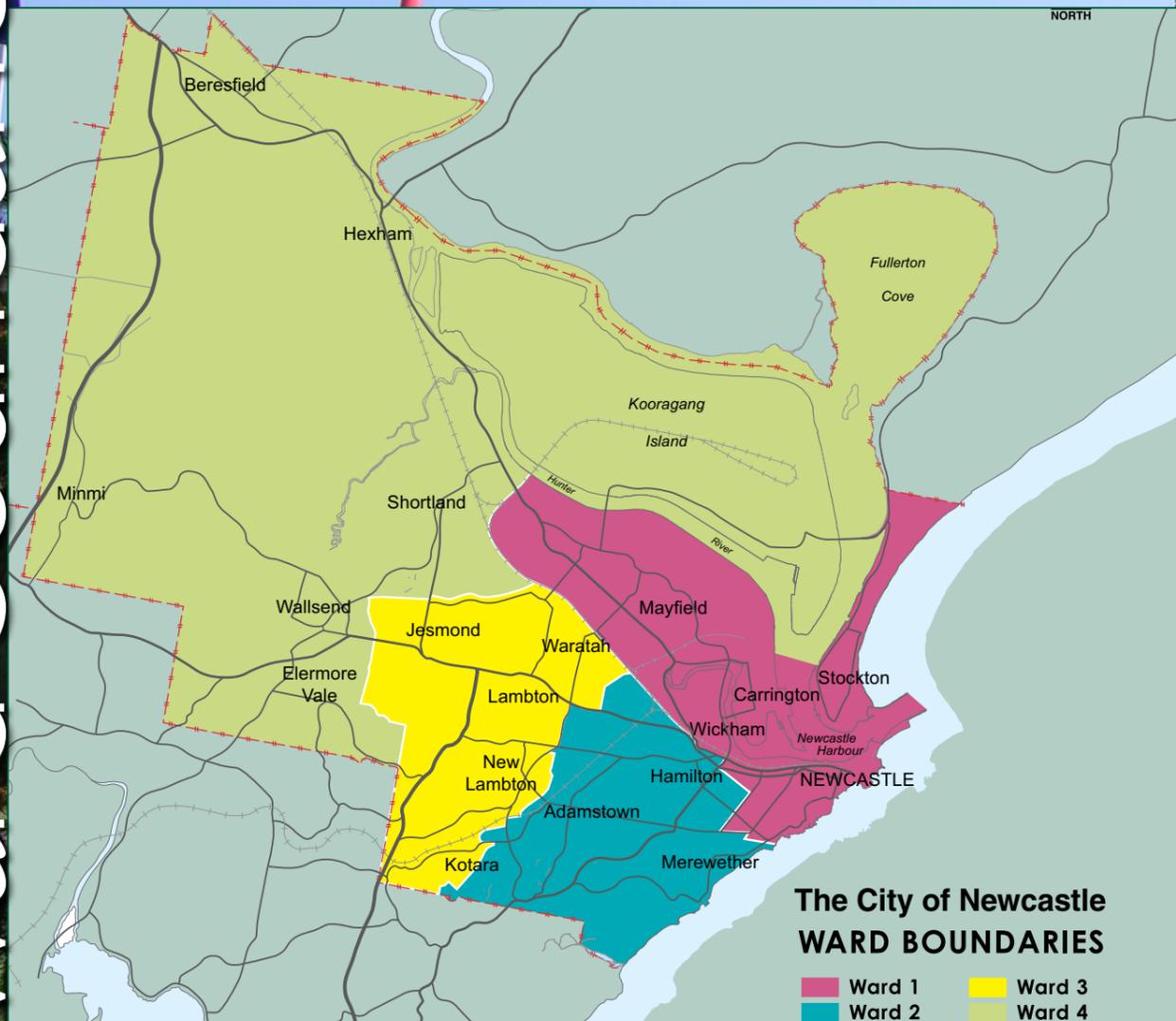
**Lindy Hyam**  
**General Manager**

## Our Councillors

*Councillors are elected to represent the views of residents and ratepayers. They play an important role in overseeing the functions and services of Council, setting the strategic direction and operational budget as well as developing policy for the long-term benefit of the city.*

Newcastle's local government area is divided into four wards, with three councillors elected to represent each ward. The Lord Mayor is elected by a ballot across the city.

Each year Council adopts its Payment of Expenses and Provision for Facilities for the Lord Mayor and Councillors to ensure accountability and transparency in this process. The policy is a public document available on Council's website.



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### Ward 4



Cr Bob Cook - Independent  
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Cr Shayne Connell - Independent  
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Cr Mike Jackson - ALP  
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## Our achievements

### Place making sustainable public environments

With the aim of improving our suburbs and local areas, Council adopted a place making approach to foster community ownership and engagement in activities. Place making is the creation of safe, vibrant public destinations and neighbourhoods: places where people feel a strong sense of ownership in their communities and a commitment to making things better. Both community and Council benefit from the collaborative approach that is at the heart of place making.

A variety of workshops were held with ward residents to create pilot projects supported by small grants of \$500 per ward. Place making projects have been instigated across the city with the community providing in-kind support and volunteer effort matched by Council grants of up to \$1,000. A further \$281,000 has been provided for projects such as an action plan for Blackbutt Commercial Centre, 'Walk of Pride' plaques and pavement at Customs House and a Macquarie Pier commemorative event. Other projects included a community picnic in Braye Park, improvements to the reserve around Merewether Baths, a community gathering place in Minmi Park and "Art in the Park" activities at Lambton Park.

Since the start of the program in October 2009, 15 place making projects were completed by the end of the 2009/10 year and a further 19 were in progress.

Overall, contributions to projects made by community groups through either in-kind or volunteer work, material support or donations is estimated at \$53,400 for a Council investment of \$21,600.

### Award-winning teams

The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre continued to impress, winning even more accolades for the varied programs it provides to our city's young people. The centre's commitment to delivering drug and alcohol-free services was recognised when it took out the Excellence in Services for Young People category at the National Drug and Alcohol Awards. Blackbutt Reserve scored a hat-trick at the Hunter and Central Coast Awards for Excellence in Tourism after taking out the Ecotourism category for the third year in a row.

Also, Council's in-house community consultation team, Newcastle Voice, won the Excellence in Communication category at the annual RH Dougherty Awards.

### City-Wide Floodplain Risk Management Study

Research shows about 70 per cent of land in our local government area (LGA) is natural, pre-existing floodplains and that one in three properties may be affected by flooding in the future. In September 2009 Council began work on a City-Wide Floodplain Risk Management Plan to examine options to reduce and manage the extensive flood risks in the Newcastle LGA.

During April and May 2010 a series of community workshops were held to give residents affected by flooding an opportunity to have input. The plan is expected to be drafted by mid 2011. The plan will then be publicly exhibited, amended where appropriate and adopted by Council. The plan will recommend a package of measures including requirements for future development, emergency response planning, public and private works and other initiatives to manage flood risks.

In the 2009/10 year Council also completed the installation of flash flood detection equipment throughout the LGA to enable the Bureau of Meteorology and SES to better respond to flash flood emergencies. In addition, Council completed the voluntary purchase of four high-flood-risk-to-life houses in Elermore Vale. These houses have been removed and the land returned to open space.

### Graffiti Hotline

After just one year in operation, The City of Newcastle's graffiti hotline proved to be a great success logging more than 1,450 graffiti reports since its launch in July 2009.

The hotline averaged around 28 calls a week and Council's rapid response teams removed more than 20,000 square metres of graffiti in the year.

All targets were met including removing 100 per cent of offensive material on Council property in less than 48 hours of reporting and removing all other graffiti in less than 5 working days.

The great result could not have been achieved without the support of the community.

## Strategy and planning

The 2009/10 year saw unprecedented progress in planning with the following strategies developed:

- Blackbutt Reserve Masterplan
- Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan Strategic Framework
- Carbon and Water Action Management Plan
- Tourism Plan
- Coastal Revitalisation Masterplan
- Civic Precinct Design Framework
- Merewether Beach Public Domain Plan
- Empire Park Masterplan
- Alcohol Management Plan
- Strategic Waste Review
- Wallsend Park and Empire Park, Bar Beach skate facility designs
- Newcastle Cycling and Strategy Action Plan
- City-Wide Floodplain Risk Management Study
- Newcastle City Centre Transport Study

## No. 2 Sportsground redevelopment

A development Application (DA) for the upgrade of No. 2 Sportsground was lodged with the Hunter and Central Coast Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP).

It is believed that the proposed \$7.25 million major revamp of the facility will be of great benefit to the whole community as well as a drawcard for many different sporting codes.

The DA includes plans to demolish the existing structures and redevelop the site as a sporting and entertainment venue capable of accommodating up to 5000 people.

It is intended the venue will be used for major sporting events and other forms of entertainment such as open air theatre, outdoor cinema, youth concerts, Christmas carols and outdoor community celebrations.

## Coastal Revitalisation

The City of Newcastle partnered with the NSW Government through the Land and Property Management Authority and Hunter Surf Life Saving to develop a masterplan for Newcastle's 11 kilometre coastline. The draft masterplan went on public exhibition for community comment in April and May 2010. Newcastle's beaches and coastline are some of the city's greatest assets. It is an area that is increasingly being recognised at local, national and international levels for its beauty, environmental values, recreational opportunities and diverse range of activities.

The masterplan will help allow Council and the NSW Government to coordinate and manage coastal assets and improvements over the next 20 years.

Once the plan is adopted Council will be able to prioritise and action individual projects with the \$5 million set aside in the 2010/11 Management Plan for this purpose.

## Museum redevelopment project

The development of the new Museum at Honeysuckle continued, with tenders called for the construction stage of the project.

Construction work includes refurbishing the three existing railway buildings and building a new steel-frame building to link them. It also includes the construction of the internal areas including mezzanine office space, a theatrette, exhibition space and a café as well as storage, education and workshop areas.

Outdoor works include a ten space car park, landscaping, stormwater and civil works. The project is on track for an opening of the new Museum in May 2011.

## Infrastructure improved by economic stimulus

Car parks, playgrounds, footpaths and bus stops across the city received makeovers thanks to \$1.75 million funding via the Australian Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

On 1 March 2009 a new playground funded by the program was officially opened at Dixon Park by Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson. Council also contributed a new shade shelter and BBQ area to the park. The project was valued at more than \$390,000 and the popularity of the area shows this was a good investment.

Additional federal grants received in the 2009/10 year include \$5.625 million for the Museum, \$807,000 for the Wallsend and Bar Beach skate facilities, \$200,000 for a shared pathway through Braye Park and \$2 million for No. 2 Sportsground.

## Tree Planting

Council is working towards increasing the tree population across the entire Local Government Area and helping to achieve this objective is the Street Tree Planting program 'Living Streets'. Under the program, more than 1600 trees were planted throughout the city in the last year alone.

The program is set to continue over the new financial year, with the suburbs of Waratah and Stockton identified as priority areas. Council will also be increasing Newcastle's tree canopy cover by planting individual and groups of trees in our parks.

Another program helping to increase Newcastle's tree population is the Council-supported Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project, which will see more than 10,000 trees planted between 2009 and 2011.

## Newcastle Ocean Baths upgrade

Restoration work on the iconic Newcastle Ocean Baths was completed in December 2009. Works included the installation of a new viewing platform between the baths and the canoe pool, construction of a retaining wall and walkway at the southern end of the site as well as car park and significant utility upgrades. The upgrades included moving a power pole, placing power underground and installing new lighting in the car park.

In addition, extra power, telecommunications, water and sewer lines were installed to cater for any future use of the site.

The work also provided a physical link from the Newcastle Beach Promenade to Newcastle Ocean Baths and Nobbys Beach along a designated pathway improving pedestrian safety.

## Community engagement a core priority

Community consultation was a key focus for The City of Newcastle during the last financial year. Council's community reference panel, Newcastle Voice, continued to attract new members and provide valuable input into local and civic issues. Sixteen consultations were held on a great range of topics, including Hunter Street Revitalisation, Newcastle City-Wide Flood Risk Management, the Newcastle Tourism Plan, coastal revitalisation and the Laman Street Cultural Precinct.

A variety of consultation tools were utilised including surveys, field studies and public workshops. The development of a long-term community vision for Newcastle also saw more than 1400 people take part in consultations and online discussions.

## Shared pathways

Nearly 10 kilometres of major shared pathway projects were completed or significantly progressed over the 2009/10 year. They include stage three (4.7km) of the Fernleigh Track from Whitebridge to Redhead, nearly one kilometre of shared pathway through Braye Park, stage one of the NSW coastline cycleway at Stockton and preparation works for the Wallsend to Glendale shared pathway.

## Biggest capital works program ever

The 2009/10 year saw the Council's biggest capital works program ever with more than \$22 million being spent on renewing and maintaining infrastructure. Significant projects included the construction of stage one of a retaining wall in King Edward Park and stage one of a shared pathway at Lambton Park. Lambton Park also received new picnic tables and other seating, new landscaping and the addition of a large climbing net structure to the playground. Jesmond Park playground was replaced with up-to-date equipment; a new shade shelter and paths were also constructed.

Also in the works program was the reconstruction of around 1 kilometre of road and the resurfacing, resealing and rejuvenation of approximately 11 per cent of the road network (77 kilometres). Also, two bridges on Leneghan's Drive, Minmi, were rebuilt.

In addition, 14.35 hectares of bushland underwent regeneration activity and numerous creeks across the local government area were rehabilitated.

## CCTV trial to improve community safety

Council took another step towards improving community safety when it installed four CCTV cameras in the Civic Precinct during October 2009. The initiative was supported by the Newcastle City Centre Precinct Committee, which installed another three cameras around the CBD.

The cameras were installed for a twelve month trial to assist police in post-crime detection and in fact aided in an arrest within the first few months of operation. Council is monitoring the results of the trial to see how the technology can assist Newcastle Police in detecting crime

# Our organisation

## Our Services

The City of Newcastle provides a wide range of community services and manages and maintains important city assets and facilities. It is also responsible for making and enforcing local laws.

Council provides 69 service areas including:

- Urban, strategic and environmental planning
- Supervision of building and development control
- Construction and maintenance of local roads, streets, and bridges
- Preservation of heritage sites such as Fort Scratchley and the Newcastle Ocean Baths
- Waste collection, management and recycling
- Provision of appropriate on and off street parking including enforcement
- Maintenance of parks, golf courses, sporting fields, pools and beach facilities
- Provision and servicing of libraries, community centres, child care and aged care services
- Management of Civic Precinct theatres and City Hall, the Newcastle Region Art Gallery and Museum
- Natural resource management, including the coastal strip, rivers and creeks, Blackbutt Reserve and the Greening Centre
- Tourism and economic development

The City of Newcastle comprises two parts:

### The Elected Council

The Lord Mayor and 12 Councillors are elected every four years to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers and provide leadership and guidance to the community.

### The Administration

The General Manager, who leads the administration, is responsible for the efficient and effective operation of Council's organisation and for ensuring the decisions of the Council are implemented. The General Manager is supported by four Directors and 19 Service Unit Managers, with a total of 1,300 staff across 1014 positions.

## Executive Leadership Team



Lindy Hyam, MBA, B Ed, Dip Teaching, FAICD  
General Manager  
1 July 2009 - 30 June 2010



Steve Edmonds, MBA (Ec), B Ed (Sc), M Prop, Dip PAM, AICD Dip, Cert IV OHS  
Director City Assets  
1 July 2009 - 30 June 2010



Frank Cordingley, BE (Hons), MIEAust, MCILT  
Director Liveable City  
24 August 2009 - 30 June 2010



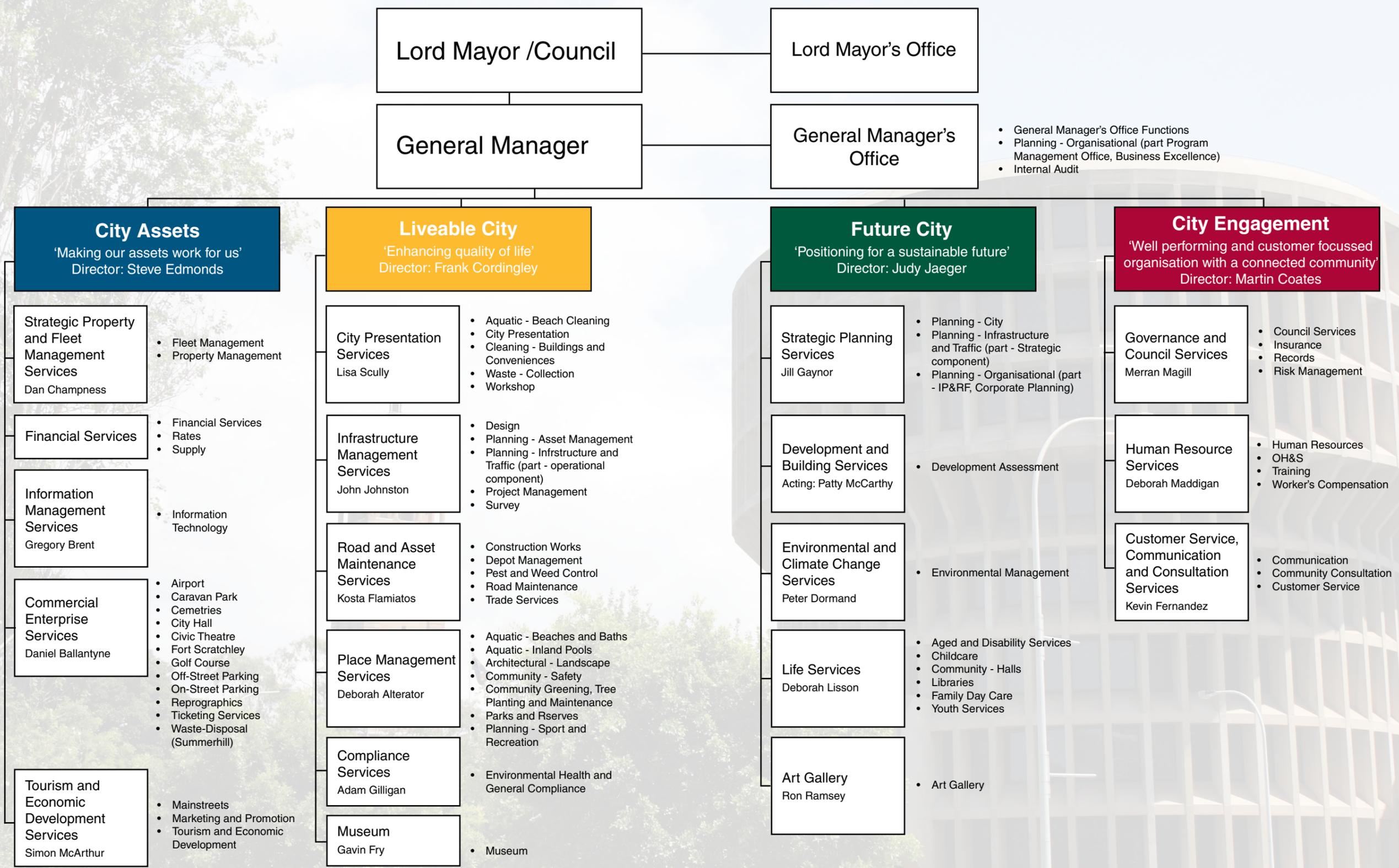
Judy Jaeger, MBA, BA (Library and Information Science)  
Director Future City  
1 July 2009 - 30 June 2010



Martin Coates, MBA, Advanced Cert Management  
Director City Engagement  
6 October 2009 - 30 June 2010

executive leadership

executive leadership



### **Trainees and Apprentices**

The City of Newcastle is committed to the ongoing development of its personnel. With an ageing workforce, engaging apprentices and trainees is critical to the ongoing delivery of services and meeting the future needs of our community.

Eleven new apprentices and trainees were recruited in Plumbing, Warehousing, Civil Construction Design, Automotive Mechanical Technology, Horticulture, Graphic Design, Health and Environment and Carpentry and Joinery.

Another 24 existing worker trainees were engaged in the areas of Operational Works, Management, Regulatory Services, Community Recreation and Investigations.

### **Learning and Development**

Council delivered over 350 training courses, including 157 Information Technology (IT) training courses, 122 Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) training courses and 75 professional development training courses.

Several strategic training initiatives were implemented including Change Management training and the commencement of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Grievance handling training for all Council managers, supervisors and coordinators.

The Integrated Performance Development System (IPDS) was run for the second year providing a Council-wide review of employees' OH&S responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities. The IPDS also provided an opportunity for managers

to review Council's values with each employee and discuss individual training requirements for the upcoming year.

An organisational-wide learning and development framework, an integrated leadership training program and an emerging talent program are all in the pipeline for the new financial year.

### **New Agreement for Council**

A new *City of Newcastle Enterprise Agreement 2010* was endorsed in June 2010. This Agreement continues to provide terms and conditions of employment that are among the best in NSW local government. This modern Agreement is underpinned by the *Local Government (State) Award 2007*. Coupled with other Council initiatives, the Award and Agreement provide a strong industrial platform for the future sustainability of Council.

### **OH&S**

Success with the Self Insurer audit has enabled The City of Newcastle to progress to a three-year Audit Cycle as recommended by WorkCover for both the OH&S Management System and our claims management. This excellent result typifies the significant level of commitment placed on OH&S under the new organisational structure, which will ultimately lead to improvements in hazard identification and reductions in injuries. The City of Newcastle was a finalist in the category of Best Workplace Health and

Safety Management System in the NSW WorkCover Safe Work Awards. Health promotions at Council have included an in-house Weight Watchers program, the 10,000 steps team challenge, H.E.R. Health Mart and the introduction of a staff newsletter 'Our Health and Safety'.

### **EEO Management Plan**

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) focuses on recognising and valuing diversity within the workplace. This means having workplace policies, practices and behaviours that are fair and do not disadvantage people who belong to particular groups.

Council provides a large number of services to a diverse community and aims to promote an environment free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination. We have an EEO Management Plan with strategies that assist members of EEO groups to overcome past and present disadvantage.

We also deliver EEO and Cultural Awareness training to staff and developed a set of organisational values to define how staff at Council should work together.

Our Executive Leadership Team understands the need for all directors and managers to model EEO principles. All staff members are asked to make a personal commitment to improve the way they work with co-workers, customers and the community.

### **Merit-Based Appointments**

The City of Newcastle is required by law (Local Government Act 1993) to provide a merit-based recruitment process.

The City of Newcastle prides itself on the fact that the process is transparent and merit-based. We recruit to find the best person for the position.

When you apply for a position with The City of Newcastle, your application is culled by a panel expert. From there, interviews are held with subject matter experts and a Human Resources representative. Any potential conflict of interest, either real or perceived, is declared prior to the interviews to ensure that the process is fair and transparent.

Applicants are assessed at interview on their ability to meet the Selection Criteria within the Position Description, by way of behavioural-based interview questions.

## Partnerships

### Newcastle Airport Limited (NAL)

Newcastle Airport Limited (NAL) was created in June 1993 to stimulate economic development for aviation/airport industries and to provide civilian airport infrastructure for the region.

Formed on 25 May 1993 by The City of Newcastle and Port Stephens Council, the company is limited by guarantee and reinvests all operating surpluses back into the airport. The airport has undergone significant improvements in recent years and is today serviced by all the major domestic airlines to destinations along the east coast.

The airport is a significant contributor to the domestic and international growth of business and tourism in the Hunter. Since the introduction of jet services into Newcastle Airport, the number of passengers has grown from 214,000 in 2003 to more than \$1.124 million in the 2009/10 (reporting changed from calendar year to financial year with period 2007/08).

### NSW Local Government Mutual Liability Scheme

NSW Local Government Mutual Liability Scheme started in 1993 as a joint venture with 96 members forming a 'self insurance mutual' covering public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Membership has expanded to include councils, the Local Government Association, the Local Government Shires Association, a rural Water Board and a Noxious Weed Eradication Board.

Over 16 years, Statewide has delivered many benefits including stable premiums,

reduced premium outcomes for Council as well as cost containment and spread of risk.

### Hunter Councils

Hunter Councils brings together 11 local councils to promote cooperation and collaboration to benefit our communities.

This has achieved:

- strong communication between councils
- sharing professional expertise
- inter-council collaboration.

With the ever increasing pressure on local government to do more with less, Hunter Councils is constantly striving to reduce the cost of 'doing business' for local government through offering economies of scale and efficiencies.

The General Manager's Advisory Committee, made up of all the Hunter Council General Managers, meets monthly to progress issues of regional importance.

### L!vesites

L!vesites is a partnership created by a memorandum of understanding between The City of Newcastle and Hunter Development Corporation (HDC). The mostly free event program aims to attract people to and activate Newcastle's great outdoor spaces. L!vesites is equally funded by The City of Newcastle and HDC plus the program attracts funding from commercial sponsors and ArtsNSW.

## INSPIRATIONS

The INSPIRATIONS subscription season presented live performances in joint venture with Andrew McKinnon Presents *David Helfgott*, Bangarra Dance Theatre's 20th-year celebration *Fire*, Sydney Dance Company's *Sid's Waltzing Masquerade* and the TaikOz percussion show *Shifting Sand*.

With funding from ArtsNSW and the Federal Government's Playing Australia Fund, Newcastle also saw presentations of Patch Theatre Company's *Fastest Boy in the World*, Monkey Baa's *Thursday's Child and Fox*, Bell Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* and Queensland Theatre Company's *Toy Symphony*. New regional venue touring initiative *Roadworks* also funded the contemporary dance theatre presentation *The Age I'm In*.

### ClimateCam

The City of Newcastle believes it is important to work with local schools and businesses to educate the community about climate change and environmental issues.

ClimateCam for Schools is a program developed by Council to foster energy and resource efficiency within local schools. The program provides schools with access to a range of sustainability tools and resources as well environmental education opportunities to students, teachers and their communities. There are now 42 schools participating in the project.

Council has also developed a ClimateCam for Business program, tailored to assist small, medium and large businesses increase their energy and resource efficiency. It is delivered by The City of Newcastle in collaboration with the NSW Department of Environment Climate

Change and Water (DECCW) and includes the highly-successful Newcastle Small Business Sustainability Initiative (NSBSI), in which over 300 businesses are already participating.

### Together Today

Together Today is an exciting, world-first, world-class environmental initiative and its aim is to create Australia's most energy and water-efficient region right here in the Hunter. Council is a partner in the initiative with more than 25 other organisations working to reduce the impact on the environment by facilitating and enabling action-based change programs for the Hunter region. This is achieved through media campaigns, education, community assistance and stimulating the market for energy and water-efficient products.

### Smart Grid Smart City

Newcastle is set to be the site of Australia's first commercial-scale smart grid. The \$100 million Smart Grid Smart City project will help households and businesses in Newcastle and ultimately the rest of the country to save energy, connect renewable energy to the grid and deal with climate change.

Smart Grids combine advanced telecommunications and information technology applications with 'smart' appliances to improve the energy efficiency of the electricity system and help people save on their energy bills. Smart grids will provide us with the ability to manage energy consumption by giving consumers information about how much energy they are using as well as the costs.

Newcastle won the right to be the site of the demonstration project in partnership with EnergyAustralia, IBM Australia, AGL, GE Energy, Transgrid and the NSW Government.

## A city of culture

### The Loft turned 10!

The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre turned 10 in April 2010 and celebrated with a big birthday bash. A 10th birthday celebration and street party launched National Youth Week in Newcastle on Saturday 10 April which showcased current arts projects and activities with live bands, performances, demonstrations, exhibitions and venue tours.

The City of Newcastle opened The Palais Youth Venue in March 2000 as an exciting new project providing a safe and friendly space to deliver youth arts services, events and activities in partnership with young people aged 12 to 25 years. Since then more than 200,000 young people have participated in activities and events, more than 1,500 live bands have been heard at events, 40 school holiday activity programs have been run, more than 40 Inzines have been published and, most importantly, young people have had lots of fun.

The 10th birthday celebrations provided an opportunity to thank supporters and recognise the successes of the past decade.

### Newcastle Region Library inspires generations

Newcastle Region Library is one of the state's largest lending libraries. It also delivers services to Port Stephens, Gloucester and Dungog Councils. Member councils can purchase a range of administrative, computer and cataloguing services from Newcastle. Registered library users in the region have access

to the entire collection via a catalogue of holdings in each library.

The library continues to provide services, exhibitions, computers, classes, fun and learning to generations of local residents. In the 2009/10 financial year 1,385,686 people visited branch libraries and 2,343,747 items were circulated in the Newcastle Region Library network.

### Art Gallery redevelopment

The Newcastle Region Art Gallery continues to raise funds to redevelop the building and extend the exhibition, education program and storage areas so that it is better able to display a larger percentage of the permanent collection and present a more expansive range of audience programs.

Fund-raising has continued over 2009/10 with significant support from the Council and private and corporate benefactors. A major milestone was reached in September 2010 when the final designs for the redevelopment were submitted for Development Application approval.

In the last year, the Art Gallery hosted 17 exhibitions, 10 of which were developed from its extensive collection. Four of these focussed on local artists and three were touring exhibitions sourced externally. The Gallery A Sydney and Stone Country-Salt Water exhibitions were two of the galleries most successful events.

### An Inspirational season at the Civic

The Civic Theatre inspired, delighted and challenged audiences with its 2010 INSPIRATIONS subscription season as well as many other performances that took place at the iconic venue.

The Civic has attracted and supported local productions as well as presenting the highest quality national and international artists and performances for many decades. In 2009/10, 72 main stage performances and 125 Playhouse performances attracted 68,000 audience

members. There were shows for a range of tastes and interests, from comedy, musicals, dance and iconic drama with a twist. The Imperial Russian Ballet was a sell-out as was the comedic act The Umbilical Brothers.

As Newcastle continues to redefine itself as a modern city, arts and culture have become a significant part of our social fabric and economy.

## Council Committees

To better engage the community and reflect local community views and needs, The City of Newcastle delegates a range of its functions to volunteer committees.

### Mainstreets Committees

Mainstreets Committees manage Council funds for the betterment of their local business areas. Council supports Mainstreets Committees for local business areas in Newcastle City Centre, Darby Street, Hamilton, Mayfield, Wallsend and New Lambton.

### Parks Committees

Parks Committees manage local parks and reserves on behalf of the community. Council supports Parks Committees for Adamstown Park, Beresfield/Tarro Park, Centennial Park, Elernmore Vale Reserve, Federal Park, Heaton-Birmingham Gardens Park, Kotara Park, Myamblah Crescent Oval, New Lambton Oval, Stevenson Park, Stockton Park, Tuxford Park, Waratah Park and Wickham Park.

### Community Facility Committees

Community Facility Committees manage local community facilities on behalf of the community. Council supports Community Facility Committees for Alice Ferguson Community Centre, Beresfield Child Care Centre, Carrington Community Centre, Elernmore Vale Community Centre, Hamilton South Community Centre, Henderson Park Hall, Jesmond Neighbourhood Centre, Maryland Multipurpose Centre, New Lambton Community Centre, Newcastle Elderly Citizens Centre, Tarro Community Hall and Warabrook Community Centre.

### BBC Housing Management and Development Committee

BBC Housing Management and

Development Committee is a committee of Council that aids in the revitalisation of Newcastle through the management and allocation of grant funds for housing projects.

In addition to Council's volunteer committees, **Newcastle Airport** provides civil aviation and associated services at Williamtown Airport as a delegate of Council, and **Theiss Services** provides waste collection services as a delegate of Council.

### Strategic Advisory Committees

Strategic Advisory Committees (SACs) are the peak advisory committees of Council and were established to:

- consider strategic issues referred to them by Council and provide feedback as part of a wider decision-making process
- provide a broader base of information to Council on matters of concern, which may impact on the Newcastle local government area
- streamline the reporting process for sub-committees of Council, ensuring that Councillors are provided with meaningful, yet manageable information from all subcommittees.

There are eight SACs comprising community members, Councillors and industry representatives or experts. The committees are:

- Community and Culture
- Economic Development and Revitalisation
- Environmental
- Guraki Aboriginal
- Recreation
- Safety and Crime Prevention
- Transport
- Urban Planning and Design

## Volunteers

In the 2009/10 year Council supported hundreds of volunteers to help out with a wide variety of activities across the community. Without these volunteers many services would not be able to operate.

Blackbutt ran an extensive volunteer program with 38 very active volunteers contributing over 15,000 hrs within the nature reserve. Participants got involved with:

- food preparation, feeding, cleaning and maintenance
- environmental education - Junior/ Cadet Ranger Program and volunteer guides
- park maintenance
- bush regeneration and weeding programs
- public presentations and keeper talks
- conservation programs and projects
- special events and displays

Students volunteered their time to assist with TAFE qualification requirements, help determine future career goals or just expand their knowledge of Australian flora and fauna.

The Community Greening Centre has hundreds of registered volunteers who took part in a range of activities to improve their local environment over the last year.

Volunteers participated in:

- plant propagation
- seed collection
- Saturday plant sales
- Adopt-A-Park
- Bushcare
- Coastcare
- community gardens

The Newcastle Region Art Gallery recruited and trained 15 new volunteer guides who presented exhibition tours to general and specialised audiences, including schools. The recruiting, training and ongoing development of volunteers was integral to the Gallery's ability to deliver diverse, high-quality services. In 2009/10 the volunteer guides presented 597 tours to a diverse range of audiences including adults, children, school groups, disability groups and tour groups. The volunteer guides also assisted staff with projects in education and collection management.

Volunteers with The Fort Scratchley Historical Society managed the day-to-day operations of the site, held guided tunnel tours and ran the small shop selling refreshments and souvenirs. The Fort Scratchley Historical Society currently has around 70 active members.

## Community assistance

### Community Assistance Program

In 2009/10 Council invested **\$396,875** in projects managed by community organisations. These projects brought visitors to Newcastle, celebrated creativity, protected our environment, promoted health and well-being, expressed cultural values, created jobs and revitalised the CBD.

The Community Grants and Sponsorship Program assisted a diverse range of sporting, cultural and civic organisations to achieve mutual goals. Activities supported by the program include:

### Renew Newcastle

Renew Newcastle is a non-profit company that finds short and medium-term uses for buildings in Newcastle's CBD that are vacant, disused or awaiting redevelopment. With Council's support the organisation increased its premises from seven to 27 in one year, with 50 projects in all including art galleries, studio space, retail shops and office space for creative professionals. Contribution: \$20,000

### Hunter Surf Life Saving Community Education Program

The City of Newcastle co-sponsored the Hunter Surf Life Saving Community Education Program. The award-winning program has a participation of some 8,000 students each summer and teaches rip identification, catching waves, body board use and basic rescue techniques. It contributes greatly to the surf awareness of the community. Contribution: \$12,000

### Climate Action Newcastle's Smart Energy Expo

The Smart Energy Expo Newcastle event was held over two days at City Hall from 7 to 8 November 2009. It showcased smart, efficient, low-carbon and renewable-energy services and products. The event featured 45 exhibitors and attracted an estimated 3,000 visitors. Media sponsorship was secured from NBN Television, the Newcastle Herald and 2NUR FM. Contribution: \$8,000

### Newcastle Maritime Centre's National Maritime Festival

The Newcastle Maritime Centre hosted the National Maritime Festival at the Foreshore on Sunday 11 October 2009. The event celebrated Newcastle's rich seafaring history and featured a program of activities both on shore and afloat. An estimated 40,000 people attended the festival including a considerable number of visitors from the Central Coast, Mid North Coast and Sydney. Contribution: \$20,000

Council also provided community organisations with subsidised services valued at \$112,988 in 2009/10. This included venue hire, mobile stage hire, road closure for street events and printing. Events that received subsidies included:

- World Vision Australia's *Global Leadership Convention*
- Department of Education's *Regional Music Festival*
- Leukaemia Foundation's *Light the Night*
- Newcastle's *ANZAC Day Dawn Service*
- Darby and King Street Fairs

## Our awards

Every year Council calls for nominations from individuals and organisations in a variety of fields such as arts, sport, the environment, community service and more.

There are three award ceremonies held each year including the Australia Day Awards, the Community Awards and the Sports Awards.

### Australia Day Awards

Held in conjunction with our national day, these awards acknowledge community spirit. The City of Newcastle Australia Day Awards recognise the outstanding achievement and contribution of individuals and groups within the community of Newcastle.

### Citizen of the Year

#### *Marcus Westbury*

Marcus is a writer, broadcaster, festival director, media maker and the key figure responsible for establishing the Renew Newcastle project in late 2008. Renew Newcastle was established in a bid to find short and medium term uses for buildings in Newcastle's CBD that were vacant, disused or waiting redevelopment. Marcus not only conceived the idea but also rallied support and has been the driving force in turning the Renew Newcastle vision into a reality for the betterment of our city. To date, Renew Newcastle has placed 50 projects in 27 empty properties, working with artists, community groups and businesses toward shaping a better future for The City of Newcastle.

### Young Citizen of the Year

#### *Louise Mackay*

A Communication and Public Relations student at The University of Newcastle, Louise is a 23-year-old leukaemia survivor and dedicated Cancer Council volunteer. Louise showed inspiring motivation organising fundraisers and sponsorship through a variety of fashion parade events to raise money for the Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital Haematology ward. Also a member of the Newcastle Relay for Life Committee, she continues to raise awareness of cancer issues for the Regional Advocacy Network in the Hunter Region. One of her greatest achievements is as the founding director of Newcastle Fashion week, which showcases the talents of local designers and retailers while raising funds for the Cancer Council.

### Community Group of the Year

#### *The Newcastle Local Organising Committee of the 'Engineering and Science Challenge'*

The 'Engineering and Science Challenge' was developed by the University of Newcastle to address the falling interest in science and engineering careers. The Newcastle Local Organising Committee has been responsible for the successful planning and execution of the regional challenges as well as the zone finals for the past eight years. Each year the committee achieves the funding and coordination of the event, which has an exceptional impact on students. The challenge has directly contributed to rising secondary enrolment in science and mathematics in NSW.

### Community Awards

#### The City of Newcastle Medal

This Medal is awarded to individuals, organisations or groups for distinguished service of a high degree to Newcastle and its citizens.

The recipient for 2009 was:

**Jeffrey McCloy** for highly distinguished service to the city and community of Newcastle and outstanding contributions to the philanthropic support of charitable and community organisations.

#### The City of Newcastle Service Award

The City of Newcastle Service Award is awarded to individuals, organisations or groups for service to a specific field of activity. This category is limited to 15 awards each year.

Recipients for 2009 were:

**Ian McKenzie** for outstanding contribution to environmental sustainability.

**Maria Roberts** for outstanding contribution to engendering pride of place in the Blue Gum Hills community.

**Cherie Roy** for outstanding contribution to the carers of Alzheimer's patients.

**Roderick Smith** for outstanding contribution to the support of city revitalisation.

**ARAFMI Hunter** for outstanding contribution to the carers of the mentally ill.

#### Hippocrates Australian Greek Aged

**Persons Inc** for outstanding contribution to multicultural and aged services.

**Renew Newcastle** for outstanding contribution to the revitalisation of the city centre.

#### Certificates of Commendation

For the first time, certificates of commendation were presented to community organisations that had achieved outstanding outcomes through programs funded by Council's Community Grants and Sponsorship program.

Recipients included:

Tantrum Theatre

The Lock-Up Cultural Centre  
Education Program

Climate Action Newcastle  
Smart Energy Expo

Figtree Community Garden

BCS Food-4-Life

### Sports Awards

Five-time World Champion and three-time Paralympian **Kurt Fearnley** was named **Sportsperson of the Year 2009** at the annual Newcastle Sports Awards Dinner in Newcastle on Friday 5 March 2010.

He also won the **Outstanding Sporting Achievement (Athlete with a Disability)** category for his sporting success in marathons. The award was well-deserved and his achievements have been a real inspiration to many Novocastrians.

Other winners included:

**Newcastle District Cricket Association**  
Sporting Organisation of the Year

#### Northern NSW Football

Sporting Event of the Year for Celebrating 125 Years of Football.

#### Garry Miller of Merewether Surf Life Saving Club

Gary was awarded Volunteer of the Year for his 50 years of continuous service both on patrol and for the movement.

#### Roslyn Morante

Roslyn received the Sports Official of the Year award for her contribution to Field Hockey.

#### Denis Broad

Denis received an Outstanding Service to Sport Award.

#### Helene O'Neill

Helene received an Outstanding Service to Sport Award.

The 2009 Newcastle Sports Awards are proudly sponsored by The City of Newcastle.

Individual Award Sponsors included:

Australian Hotels Association Newcastle sub branch, Crowne Plaza Newcastle, Cutcher and Neale, Hexham Bowling Club, James Estate Wines, Madden & Associates, NCC Sports Advisory Panel, Newcastle Jockey Club, Newcastle Netball Association, Radio 2HD, Regent Street Physiotherapy and Western Suburbs (Ncle) Leagues Club.

Supporting sponsors include:

Newcastle Herald, NBN Television, Tooheys and Travelworld on King.

# Our performance

## Management Plan 2009/10

The City of Newcastle ended the 2009/10 financial year with a strong budget surplus and with many projects either ahead of target or on track for delivery by their scheduled completion date.

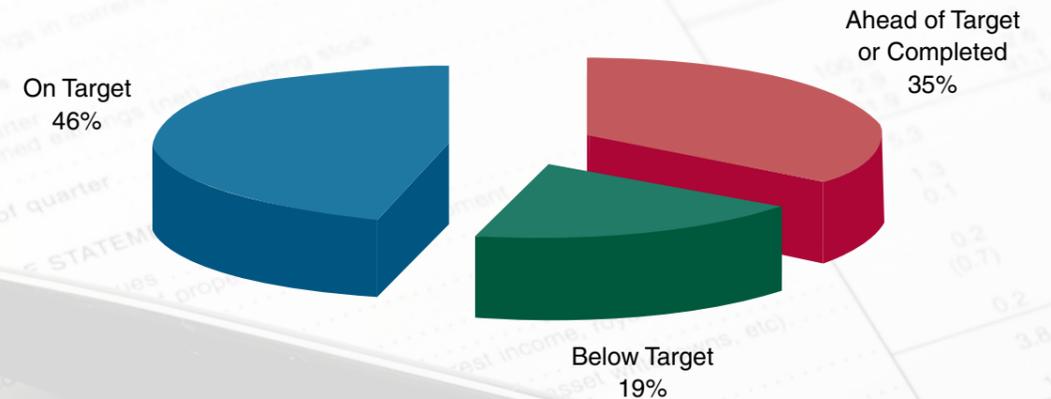
Throughout the financial year Council was able to achieve an improvement on its forecast operational budget of \$5,478,328. This result was achieved through the combined effort of all Council services, that strove to find efficiencies and improvements in their service delivery including the implementation of Sustainability Review recommendations.

Council's June Quarterly Review indicated 81 per cent of the organisation's key performance indicator (KPI) objectives were completed, either ahead or on target against the strategic objectives outlined in Council's 2009/10 Management Plan.

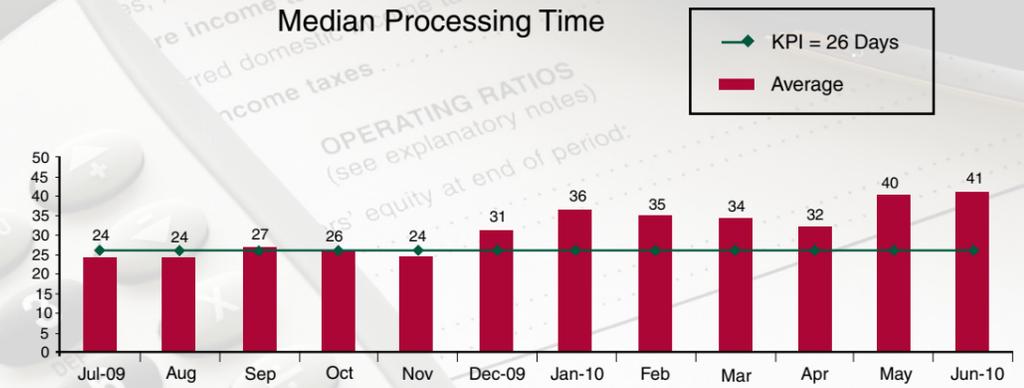
A number of our KPI's achieved higher than target results, including an increased waste diversion from landfill. There were 53 live performances held across the city with the Art Gallery attracting approximately 18,000 participants to their activities. Council's graffiti removal continued to be a significant focus for the city, with approximately 1,400 calls received to our graffiti hotline and more than 20,000 square metres of graffiti removed by Council's rapid response teams. Juvenile offenders have also helped remove graffiti under a program developed in partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Resourcing issues contributed to the lower than expected results for the 19 per cent of KPIs which were below target. Visitor numbers at our libraries were down. Our swimming pools achieved a below target result primarily due to increased security (28 per cent), electricity costs (13 per cent) and operating expenses (21 per cent) despite good attendance and revenue results. Parking results were affected for the June quarter, with competition undercutting council fees and reduced patronage at the Mall parking station. The value of conference enquiries remained low due to the market continuing its slow recovery from the global financial crisis.

Status of KPIs Year End



Median Processing Time



A total of 1,815 development applications were received during 2009/10, with 1,612 approved at a value of \$297.26 million. The average median processing time for the year of 31 days exceeds the nominated KPI of 26 days. Delays in processing time were due to training of new staff.

## Our finances

The end of year financial performance showed Council is in a sound financial position.

Key financial performance indicators show Council has good liquidity, has a low debt service ratio and manages its outstanding rates and annual charges within policy guidelines. Our results for the financial year demonstrate strong compliance with the Local Government Financial Health Check assessment criteria. Total cash increased \$34.5 million and continued expenditure on infrastructure is decreasing the Public Infrastructure Maintenance gap. Council's external audit report is unqualified.

The operating result for the year showed a \$13.651 million surplus compared to \$2.682 million surplus for the previous year. The rise can be largely attributed to a decrease in on-costs, materials and contracts and other expenses.

Overall income and contributions was \$210 million, down 1.4 per cent from \$213 million in 2009. Operating income increased by \$3.3 million, largely due to increases in rates, annual charges, parking a gain on sale of assets (primarily Cottage Creek); offset by decreases in tipping, RTA recoverable works income and capital grants and contributions.

Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes decreased 48 per cent compared to the prior year, mainly due to Council acquiring Fort Scratchley at a value of \$9.87 million (contributed by the Commonwealth of Australia) as well as the receipt of Art Gallery contributions of \$1.8 million in the prior year.

Expenditure was \$196 million, down 6.7 per cent from \$210 million in 2009. The

decrease can be mainly attributed to a reduction in on-costs, materials and contracts and other expenses. Further variations can be attributed to the NSW Government waste levy, superannuation and the non-cash market adjustment for investments. In the prior year, the other expenses category included the partial write-down of the Lehman related investments. (Note that the market adjustment for investments is required under Australian Accounting Standards and does not represent a cash loss).

Depreciation of \$34 million continues to be a burden on all local government authorities.

Total cash and investments were valued at \$180 million, an increase of \$25 million from 2009.

The total value of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment, including investment property and assets for sale, is \$1.64 billion. The road and drainage network was revalued during the year to fair value as required by the Division of Local Government. The total increase in value was \$154 million, which also increases the net worth in the balance sheet.

The balance sheet has increased net asset value by \$170 million. Total borrowings were \$46.5 million, up from \$39 million in 2009, which council continues to repay within agreed deadlines. Council's debt service ratio for year ending June 2010 was 2.88 per cent, well within the Local Government Financial Health Check Guideline of less than 10 per cent for developed councils.

All budgetary variations have been reviewed by Council through the Quarterly

Management Plan and budget review process and favourable and unfavourable variations adjusted accordingly.

Special Schedule 7 Condition of Public Works details a public works maintenance lag of \$16 million expenditure is in line with the Newcastle Report by Review Today.

	Current year \$'000	Previous year \$'000
<b>Income statement</b>		
Total income from continuing operations	209,636	212,590
Total expenses from continuing operations	195,985	209,908
Operating result from continuing operations contributions provided for capital purposes	13,651	2,682
Net operating result for the year	13,651	2,682
Net operating result before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	(311)	(24,231)
<b>Balance sheet</b>		
Total current assets	114,364	94,990
Total current liabilities	55,591	56,123
Total non current assets	1,727,343	1,571,001
Total non current liabilities	51,527	44,416
Total equity	1,734,589	1,565,452
<b>Other financial information</b>		
Unrestricted current ratio (%)	300%	244%
Debt service ratio (%)	2.88%	2.19%
Rate coverage ratio (%)	47.53%	45.11%
Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage (%)	5.70%	5.45%
Buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio (%)	12.45%	7.40%

# Our opportunities

what's ahead

## Sustainability Review

The most comprehensive review of the organisation in over 30 years was introduced by the General Manager with Council support in January 2009.

The Sustainability Review examined all 69 service areas provided by The City of Newcastle with a focus on effectiveness, efficiency and the appropriateness of the current service mix.

Two sustainability reports were released within the 2009/10 financial year, highlighting a number of issues and improvement opportunities for Council to consider.

The Stage 1 Report recommendations were adopted by Council in conjunction with the 2009/10 Management Plan on 25 June 2009. Of the 124 recommendations, 94 per cent have now been actioned, with others dependent on outcomes of benchmarking.

The Stage 2 and 3 Internal Services Report was released in early 2010 and included 183 adopted recommendations. Of these, 59 per cent have now been achieved.

The implementation of Sustainability Review recommendations resulted in savings of \$1,124,237 and of this, \$882,167 will be ongoing savings.

The Sustainability Review provided a catalyst for many long overdue improvements in the organisation and was part of an overall program of changes to the organisation's cultural and financial management practices.

This change program is fundamental to regaining community confidence in the administration, creating value for money services, building a cohesive and forward-looking culture and improving consultation and communication with the community. It is also building long-term sustainability with a strong executive and management team who have a mix of corporate knowledge and new expertise to tackle emerging community needs.

Stage 2 and 3 Report recommendations will be considered by Councillors later in 2010.

## Business Excellence Framework

The Sustainable Excellence project in The City of Newcastle commenced in July 2009 to embed a culture of continuous improvement throughout the organisation.

The aim of Sustainable Excellence is to ensure that we have the ability to meet the current needs of the city and its community without compromising our ability to meet future needs.

In the search for a set of tools and techniques to assist us to achieve Sustainable Excellence, The City of Newcastle has adopted the Business Excellence Framework (BEF) to provide a holistic approach to further organisational improvement. The BEF is an integrated approach built on best practice, leadership and management practices.

The tools that we have begun to use over the past 12 months have provided managers and staff with a better understanding of the business they are in, who their customers and suppliers are, and the inputs they require to deliver a quality outcome for their customers. The organisation is working to identify and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders to ensure that products and services are delivered to the community in an effective and efficient manner.

A number of initiatives have been implemented over the past 12 months that have transformed the individual, team and organisation.

The initiatives include:

- The introduction and application of a redefined organisation mission and core organisation values with 100% awareness penetration across the organisation
- 'Sustainable Excellence - 5 simple steps for teams' training delivered to over 700 employees
- 30 Sustainable Excellence facilitators were established to assist the

organisation research and investigate options, commit to a course of action, identify milestones and recalibrate on successes and setbacks as we progressed

- 162 systems views have been completed, which is 100 per cent of the target. Business Excellence utilises systems views to understand key processes and relationships with our customers, suppliers and other stakeholders
- The introduction of The City of Newcastle Achievement Award, which rewards employees based on how they have demonstrated The City of Newcastle's values

Through embedding a culture of continuous improvement in the organisation, we are confident that we will be providing services to ratepayers, residents and visitors that:

- Enhance quality of life
- Ensure a sustainable future
- Make best use of our assets
- Are community and customer focused

The next phase of Sustainable Excellence will focus on process mapping the organisations core strategic and business processes. The objective of this phase is to identify, document, standardise and improve Council's processes which will allow us to:

- capture knowledge
- identify and understand the relationships and interdependencies on all business processes across services, service units and business groups
- look for continuous improvement opportunities.

striving to excel

## Newcastle 2030

### Newcastle 2030 Community Vision and Plan

Over the last year, The City of Newcastle has been working with the community to develop a long-term shared vision and plan for our local government area. The plan is called Newcastle 2030 and it will help set our city's direction for the next 20 years by recognising and building on our strengths, realising our opportunities and addressing our challenges.

Council is playing a lead role in the initiation and preparation of the plan but will not be solely responsible for its implementation. State and regional agencies, business, community groups and individuals will work in partnership to deliver the Newcastle 2030 plan, which will provide a strong platform for making sustainable choices in planning and providing services.

More than 1,400 members of the community have had direct input into the project through a range of engagement activities including workshops, surveys and public forums. It is through this extensive program of public conversations that we have been able to discover what the community envisions for the future of our city.

### The seven themes emerging from the process include:

#### Connected city

Our transport networks and services are well connected and convenient. Walking, cycling and public transport are viable options for the majority of our trips.

#### Protected and enhanced environment

Our unique environment is understood, maintained and protected.

#### Vibrant and activated public places

We are a city of great public places and neighbourhoods that promote people's health, happiness and well-being.

#### Caring and inclusive community

We are a city of great public places and neighbourhoods that promote people's health, happiness and well-being.

#### Liveable and distinctive built environment

Our city is attractive, built around people and reflects our sense of identity.

#### Smart and innovative city

We are a leader in smart innovations with a healthy, diverse and resilient economy.

#### Open and collaborative leadership

We have a strong local democracy with an actively-engaged community and effective partnerships.

Council is currently working on putting the Newcastle 2030 plan together.

Newcastle 2030 will outline the community's priorities as well as identify practical ways, from simple initiatives to long-term visionary strategies, that will move us towards the Newcastle we want. It is expected the document will be available for community feedback at the end of 2010.

## The year ahead

While The City of Newcastle has delivered many positive outcomes to the community over the last 12 months, there are numerous opportunities for achievement in the coming financial year.

The Sustainability Review will continue to benefit Council's bottom line, with the potential for another \$1million in savings over the next 12 months.

Work on the \$7 million redevelopment of No. 2 Sportsground will commence, with the project expected to be completed in October 2011. Meanwhile, the Newcastle Museum will be completed in May of next year. In addition, the skate parks at Bar Beach and Wallsend will be finished, boosting the recreational facilities available to our city's young people.

Approved plans will be activated including the Coastal Revitalisation Masterplan, Merewether Beach Public Domain Plan, Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan and Blackbutt Reserve Masterplan. The City-Wide Floodplain Risk Management Plan will be completed and will go before Council for adoption.

An even bigger budget to the tune of \$30 million will be allocated to capital works and will greatly assist Council to tackle its infrastructure renewal backlog.

A continuous improvement project in development and building will pave the way for the commencement of online development applications. We will also commence the Smart Grid Smart City project with our partners, develop a new

Tree Masterplan and provide new waste services.

Local communities will continue to benefit from place making initiatives that create safe, vibrant public destinations and neighbourhoods.

Council will build on the Business Excellence Framework by capturing improvement opportunities and conducting another self-assessment.

Most importantly, however, we will continue to consult with our community in order to best inform the elected Council about the wider views and aspirations of Newcastle residents.



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