

# Newcastle Voice Laman St - Civic Precinct



February 2010

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**Prepared for:** Strategic Planning Services, Newcastle City Council

**Prepared by:** Newcastle Voice, Newcastle City Council

## Executive Summary

The consultation was conducted on behalf of Strategic Planning Services to develop a vision for the future of the Laman Street – Civic Precinct which will inform a two-day intensive design workshop to investigate the options with independent experts, such as arborists, engineers and landscape architects as well as local residents, businesses, key stakeholders and community representatives. This report summarises the public opinion gathered during broad community consultation. It was conducted within the Newcastle local government area, inviting Newcastle Voice community reference panel members as well as the broader community.

An open-ended question was distributed at public locations and to Newcastle Voice members from 8 to 21 February. A total number of 414 visionary comments were received. The responses from the community include plans, drawings and written comments. The report centres around three broad themes: culture, access and the Hills fig trees.

### Culture

In terms of culture, responses were split between those addressing the specific buildings in the precinct, such as the art gallery, library, Civic Theatre, Conservatorium of Music and university buildings and those addressing cultural activities which include the quiet enjoyment of Civic Park, arts performances and other activities.

### Access

In relation to access, respondents provide input about linkages across the precinct, and address pedestrian, transport and parking needs.

### Hills Fig Trees

In relation to the Hills fig trees, detailed responses suggest retention, replacement and a small number of community members recommend removal. In most cases, respondents suggest actions to be taken in addition to addressing the trees.

The input reveals a sound recognition of the complexity of the subject and the physical location which includes important buildings and important thoroughfares to other parts of the inner city.

This consultation report will be distributed to the members of the two-day design workshop to be held on 19 and 20 March 2010.

## Introduction

Council is undertaking a Master Plan process for Laman Street – Civic Precinct.

The Laman Street - Civic Precinct area provides important cultural and recreational spaces for Newcastle residents and visitors to the city. It includes the city library, the art gallery and Civic Park and is bounded by Queen, Darby, Hunter and Union Streets.

A significant feature of the precinct is the archway of Hills Fig trees in Laman Street. Unfortunately, a number of studies have identified there are public safety risks with these trees. Many community members have a strong sense of place with respect to the Laman Street – Civic Precinct. Council wants to work with the community to explore every option for the future community use of this area.

Extensive public consultation is occurring in several stages over the next few months:

1. Broad community consultation to gather 'vision' for the area
2. Intensive design workshop/charrette to develop options, with experts and the community
3. Public exhibition of options, before adoption by council.

## Report Purpose

The consultation sought to identify community priorities and vision for the Laman Street – Civic Precinct in both written and drawn form, as well as capture nominations from those individuals interested in the two-day workshop/charette.

## Scope of Consultation

A number of communication tools and engagement methods were used as part of this consultation program. Council aims to consult in a transparent, broad-based way. Refer to the Appendixes for all materials distributed, survey and promotional tools used throughout this consultation, as well as media received around the consultation period.

## Information Distribution

A colour flier was prepared, with 300 copies distributed throughout public locations, including libraries and cafés to increase awareness of the consultation. This flier contained an aerial map to allow for drawings, and space for written responses.

A flier with information about this consultation was distributed at the Defence Housing Organisation's welcome to new RAAF residents, OWeek at the University of Newcastle and at both of council's public events surrounding the 2030 Community Social Planning.

## Media

Throughout the consultation program, local media was used to inform the public and promote ways to participate. Four media releases were prepared, with frequent media updates and alerts, such as the regular 'Next Week at Council', distributed throughout the consultation. All media clippings, from the Council resolution on 15 December 2009, have been collected and are available on request.

## Question Tool

A one-question survey was created to gather information about people's vision for Laman Street – Civic Precinct. The survey was administered in three ways:

1. Newcastle Voice members – online
2. Newcastle Voice members – print
3. Broad community through the use of a flier – print
4. Broad community through council's website – online

## Paid Advertising

Advertising to invite community contribution towards this public consultation was run in *The Newcastle Herald* on 6 and 13 February and in *The Star* on 10 February. All advertising is included in Appendix IV – Promotional Materials and Media.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

Data collection took place from 8-21 February 2010. One open-ended visionary question was sent to all active Newcastle Voice members, in print or online, depending on their selected mode of consultation. A survey invitation and link to the on-line survey was sent on 8 February 2010. An electronic reminder to online members was sent on 19 February. A copy of the one-question survey is provided in Appendix I.

In addition, the link to the question was placed on council's website to allow other members of the community to comment.

A printed leaflet with a map of the area was made available in public places including libraries for people wishing to draw or write their visionary comments.

### Consultation Area

The consultation encompassed the whole Newcastle City Council local government area (LGA). The entire Newcastle Voice panel was invited and promotional activities were aimed at both the residents and ratepayers in the immediate vicinity as well as the entire LGA.

The breakdown of the demographics of Newcastle Voice respondents is provided in Appendix II.

It should be noted that being a Newcastle Voice member is voluntary, and therefore participation in its activities is also voluntary.

### Participants

The breakdown of the demographics by gender, age and employment status is provided for the Newcastle voice respondents in Appendix II. The demographic information is managed in the Sparq software. There were a total of 414 participants and the following key demographics were collected. Please note that demographic information was not captured for anonymous community members (13 out of 414).

- 96.8%% of respondents (401 out of 414) are Newcastle Voice panel members.
  - Respondents live in: Merewether (12%), Cooks Hill (8%), Wallsend (5%), Mayfield (5%), and New Lambton (5%)
  - 67% live in Ward 1 and Ward 2
  - 69 % are employed full or part-time, 21.98% are retired and 3.95% are students.
  - 44% have lived in Newcastle for more than 25 years.
  - 22% are aged 25-39 and 6% are over 70 years of age
  - The gender split was 51% females and 49% males.

## Representation

The views collected in this report can not be said to be statistically valid of the population of Newcastle, however they represent the views of some high user groups and near residents, as well as qualified professionals identifying themselves in the comments as landscape architects, artists, arborists and members of council's own parks committee.

Consistent themes presented in this report are derived from contributions and the reliability and validity of the interpretations can be assessed.

## Data Handling and Analysis

The data handling and analysis was carried out by Council staff from the Customer Service, Communication and Consultation Service unit. An iterative process developed themes from the visionary comments received. Where a respondent addresses a number of issues, comments are duplicated and coded with up to three codes to allow for a truer analysis of the strength of response - by subject.

In this instance, respondents took an average of seven minutes to address the visionary question with detailed, lengthy responses received from a majority of respondents.

Only valid responses were included. All are included whole, as they were received, in Appendix III. Where a comment has been included in the body of the report, comments have been extracted to illustrate a point and edited only for spelling and grammar.

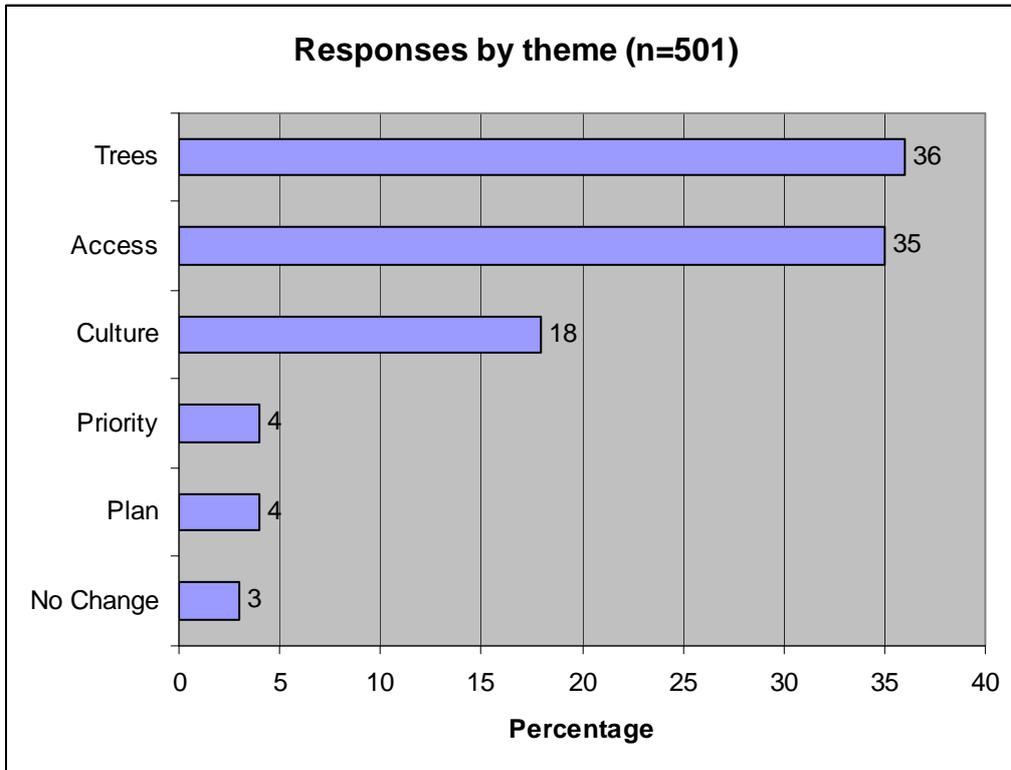
All responses are treated in confidence, to ensure the anonymity of respondents. No identifying information is included with any responses selected for this report – and all names are removed from all data.

## Findings

The written responses were grouped into the following major themes, with the Hills Fig trees representing 36.06% of responses. The subject of access, to the art gallery and library, to other parts of the inner city and for cars and pedestrians, is of great interest for 34.86% of respondents. Culture is described by 18.13% of respondents in many dimensions: the buildings or facilities and the activities.

Nearly 4% of respondents submitted a comprehensive plan, addressing all of the above issues; 3.78% query council's priority or approach to this subject and 3.39% request no change at all.

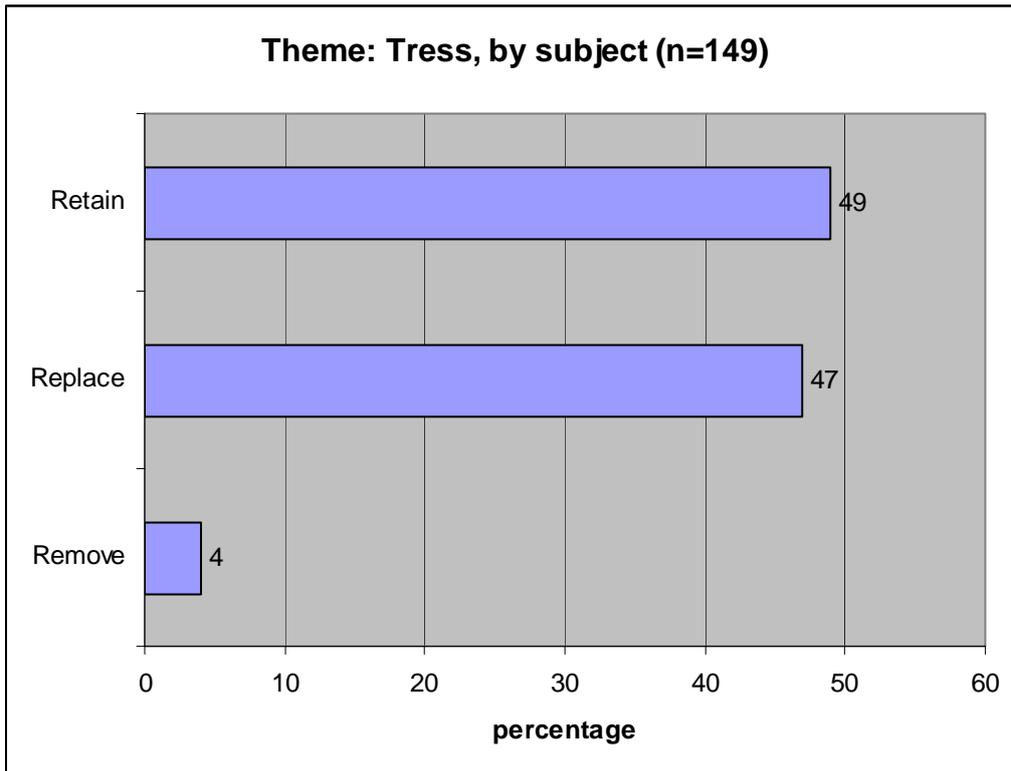
Graph 1: Responses by Theme



## Trees

Many respondents addressed the subjects of the Hills Figs directly (149 out of 414), with the following chart illustrating the proportions of comments:

Graph 2: Trees



### Retain

A large proportion of the comments received (49%) seek the retention of the Hills Fig trees, with the following indicative remarks addressing this issue:

- “Every effort must be made to protect the tree lined beauty of the streetscape. We don’t do enough to save old trees in Newcastle, too quick with the chippers I’m afraid. See what the Japanese experience is with protecting older trees, they erect all sort of support structures to protect them.”
- “I would really like as many of the trees as possible to remain, especially after the loss of similar trees in Tyrrell Street, which still looks bare and devastated.”
- “What is the problem? We have had the neurotic removal of playground equipment by councils (my local park was effected) and now it’s the trees turn. Sorry for becoming emotional but the crowning glory of the area in question is those magnificent trees and to remove them will leave a very drab looking street.”

## Replace

Of the respondents addressing the trees, almost half (47%) raise the possibility of replacing the Hills Fig trees with either different species of trees or with a steel structure with climbing plants. There is clearly strong emotion in favour of the trees, combined with doubt about the finality of the current risk assessments, which leads to these alternate suggestions. The following comments illustrate the range of responses:

- “Be a shame to lose the fig trees but if you have to remove them then I'd like to see a traffic free piazza connecting all those locations with benches/sitting areas and landscaped gardens, including leafy replacements for the figs.”
- “So if they really pose such a safety risk, they have to come out. Whatever vision is decided upon, the research and design team need to work out how to replace that canopy as soon as possible as it does hold a place dear to most Novocastrians and visitors' hearts. Whether that canopy is provided by trees or by structures is up to the research team.”
- “Remove all fig trees & replace with people friendly trees that will not provide a hazard. This will also ensure roads gutters & footpaths are not continually damaged by root growth. Importantly parking can then be returned.”
- “There would be an arched avenue along that stretch of Laman Street. The arch would be covered in greenery so that the steel arch is invisible. That's my endpoint, but the execution is the best part...The steel arches would be erected NOW, and would prevent the existing fig trees from collapsing on the people below. Management of the fig trees would be done in a controlled program.”

## Remove

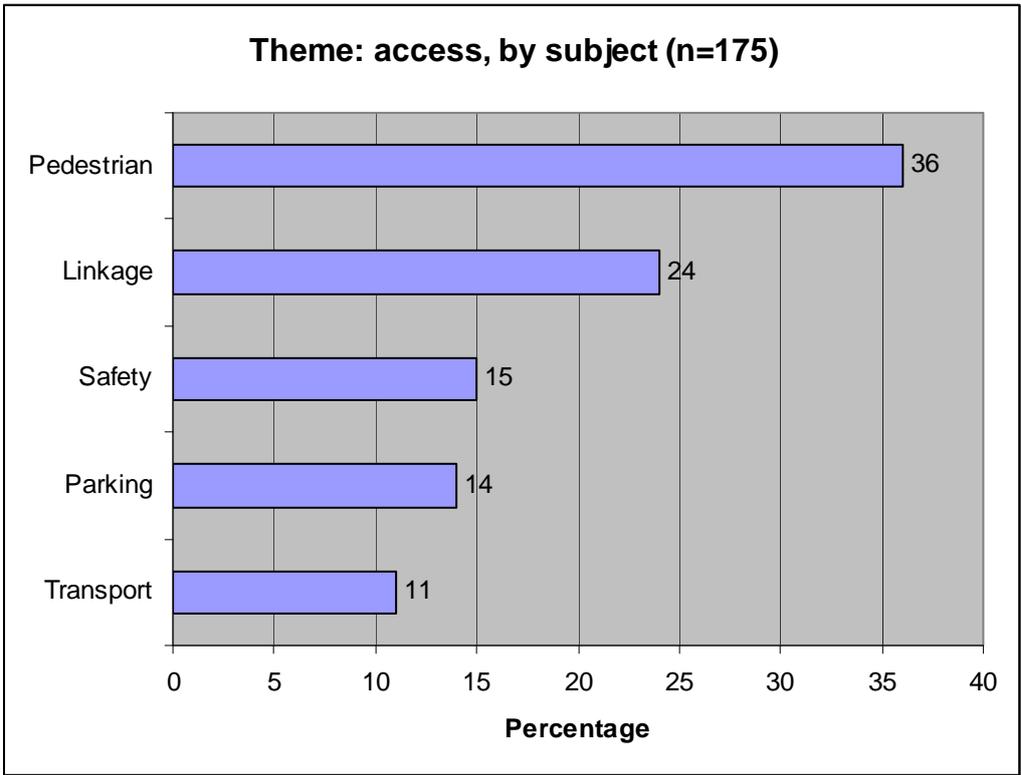
A small number of respondents (4%) advocate the removal of the Hill Fig trees, with the following span of responses:

- “Removal of the fig trees is unfortunately necessary - turn this into a positive. Removal of the trees will open the street up to the park more.”
- “Get rid of the trees. Have some kind of shade covers in some parts. Put in some items like things made from recycled items that have come from the local communities. Use these as stepping stones to draw people to the Art gallery.”
- “Removal of the diseased trees will help. The fountain is a bit crummy.”

## Access

Access to buildings on Laman Street, as well as linkages to other parts of the inner city, was highlighted by over a third of respondents (34.86%). The following chart shows the subjects identified in relation to access, with pedestrian access to Laman Street depicted as the highest priority.

Graph 3: Access



## Pedestrian

The majority of respondents who commented on access in the precinct area, favour pedestrian use on Laman Street. As Laman street is identified as a priority area for pedestrian use, respondents also mentioned that toilets, lighting, seating and attractive planter boxes or sculptures should be added to the area. The following comments illustrate the multitude of detailed suggestions received:

- “Visitors to the Library and Art Gallery already have to contend with stairs if they come from Civic Park, hills on Auckland, Darby and Dawson St and limited parking which has decreased since parking has been removed from Laman St. An ageing population and the possible increase of disabled people, as well as parents with prams and young children, trying to access the Library and Gallery will increase over time.”
- “A safe pedestrian environment with suitable trees for the modern arts/entertainment precinct that will be easily maintained. A place to allow quick access for library and art gallery users and the park.”
- “An area free of traffic that can be enjoyed by people and families for recreational activities and access to cultural activities, markets etc. Increased security and policing to make Civic Park and surrounding areas safe at night. Retain trees if feasible.”
- “Fairly simple project I believe. Block the road off from Darby to Auckland St. No access for vehicles, pedestrian access only. Turn the area into a sort of study campus. Leave the trees alone. The reality is anything above the ground can be a safety risk. Manage the hazard, remove/reduce the risk. No bloody car park in Civic park.”
- “I would like to see the trees retained if possible and the section of Laman Street from Dawson Street to Darby Street made into a pedestrian only walkway. This would mean a reduction in parking for cars which could possibly be accommodated by building a multi-storied car park in the area behind the Art Gallery and Library which is currently used for parking but is inefficiently used.”

## Linkages

The interconnectivity across the inner city, from Civic Theatre to Darby Street, was identified by many respondents, as this north-south journey across Laman Street is frequently made by residents and visitors alike. The crossing on King Street and the walk through the RTA carpark are identified as current limitations on this linkage. Some of the suggestions received follow:

- “A pedestrian-friendly interconnected precinct with a focus on trees (large scale), art (gallery and public space installations), cultural activities and community gatherings (eg live bands).”
- “Street scape: the link between the cultural assets needs to be part of the cultural experience. Design of this public space to draw people into each of the cultural venues and likewise for the venues to link into / engage with the public domain. More than items of public art, but the whole street designed to reflect the place. Site specific street furnishings and scaping.”

- “Laman Street should provide a landscaped entrance to the Art Gallery, current Library building and the two churches. It should provide access to these buildings and particularly the Art Gallery. Once the extensions to the Art Gallery are built the entrance to the Gallery can be in Darby Street or at least on the corner of Darby and Laman Streets. This would allow the Laman Street side of the building to open onto a landscaped sculpture garden.”
- “I would like to see better connections between the cultural facilities and Civic Park. The trees are a wonderful asset but the precinct has other assets too, ie the art gallery, the library, the Baptist Tabernacle - these are distinctive of the architectural style of their respective periods and part of the "story book" character of the Newcastle streetscape. This extends around the park with the Conservatorium building, St Andrew's Church, the art deco University House and City Hall - it is possible to do a self-guided heritage walk around the block already.”
- “Overhead walkways erected instead of road crossings. Ramps instead of stairs, eg from one side of the park to Town Hall that would have access to Civic Theatre area. All the arts, Council, Taxation and government buildings. By having overheads traffic would flow easier.”

## Safety

Over 15% of respondents mentioned the safety of the trees, as well as road safety, lighting and pedestrian safety. Some are genuinely concerned with the safety of the trees, others doubt council's risk assessments. The following indicative comments illustrate the breadth of responses:

- “Safety risk is also to be a consideration in regard to personal safety. The area should afford a sense of security for all people. This could be obtained through the use of open sight lines, (appropriate planting) prompt response to all issues/concerns raised, and regular activities and other amenities so as to promote regular use. People in the area will assist to reduce the personal risk.”
- “Signage could be erected to warn people of the dangers of possible falling branches and ensure the trees are checked and maintained on a regular basis to minimise the chance of someone getting hurt from falling branches.”
- “My vision is for a SAFE area, I have stopped seeing shows at the Civic due to a few frights from yobbos while walking to the car and waiting for a taxi.”

## Parking

Parking is identified as difficult for businesses, wedding parties and visitors to the art gallery and library. Disabled parking is identified as insufficient, and there are suggestions about the limits of current parking rules. The following comments illustrate:

- “Parking in the area is a problem. Better results for the amount of cars serviced with parking, would be that the entire area of paid parking should have white 'parking bay' lines....that would ensure each vehicle had a space. Parking meters need to be more visible (some sort of higher sign that can be viewed easily, especially above larger cars) and information on the meters needs to be more user friendly...especially the 'how to use' information.”

- “A dedicated parking space at the back of the Gallery (short term) for library users and a more organised (several levels) parking space there for visitors to the Gallery. (meters)”
- “Being able to actually park your car there, that’s my vision!”
- “PLEASE don’t seriously consider building an underground car park - with the pitiful visitation to the CBD, it’s hardly warranted, is it?”
- One thing I will say is that there are constant parking issues in that area. The Town Hall books functions for periods of two hours or more at lunch time for business people to attend. There is an expectation that everyone stays in the room and yet parking is available for two hours only.”
- “In fact the west end of Newcastle would be a more suitable place for the relocation of as much business as possible which would free up a lot of the parking issues in town.”

## Transport

The rail is mentioned by respondents, as is the need for vehicular access to Laman Street. As with many other comments, observations address several intertwined issues, as the following indicative comments illustrate:

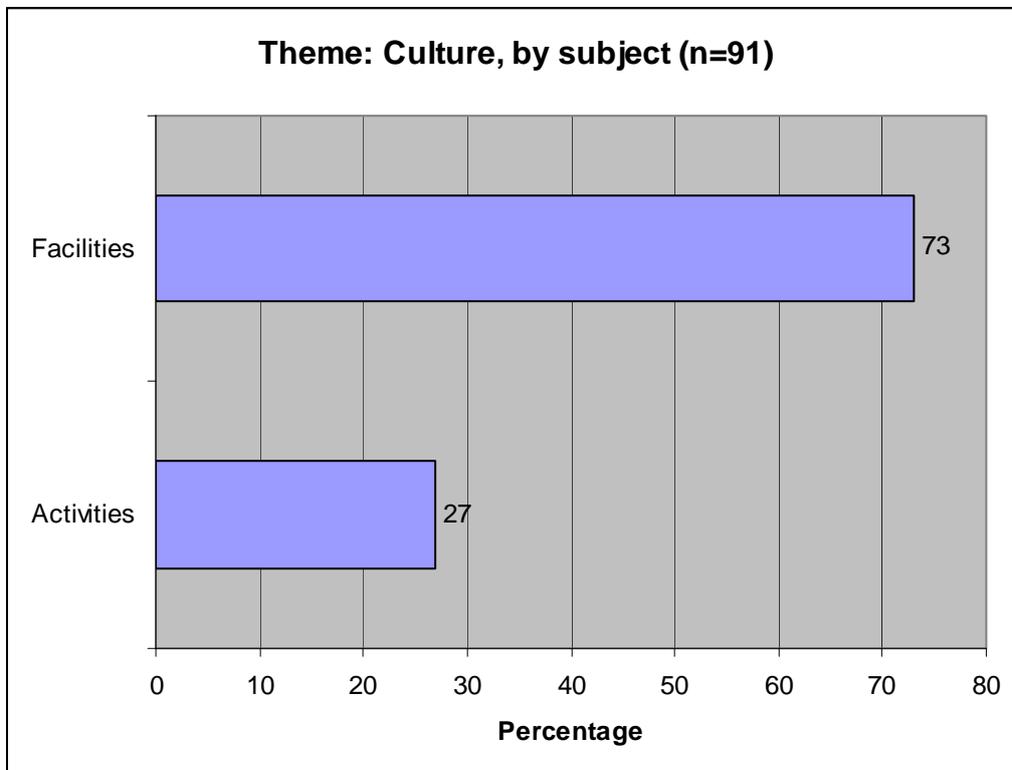
- “BRING BACK THE TRAMS and preserve the rail line into the city with possible extension through The Hill to Merewether Beach either via Nobbys or along the old coal rail line through Civic Park to The Junction and Merewether with light rail.”
- “Cut the trees if necessary for public safety and open the street back up to 2-way traffic.”
- “Whatever the outcome, there must be easy pedestrian and car access to the library. If this is not possible then move the library to the old post office!”
- “I must say that since the traffic arrangements in Laman St have changed to prevent people turning in and out of it in certain directions on the Darby St side, I rarely drive down Laman St, as the main directions I used to use it from are no longer available, so I use the main roads instead. This probably provides benefits to people living in Cooks Hill as it takes traffic out of that area, but it does mean you don’t have people driving past the front door of the gallery and library as much and remembering that they are there.”

## Culture

The art gallery and its proposed developments are identified as priority issues, with many suggestions received during this consultation preempting the current long-running plans to redevelop the Newcastle Region Art Gallery.

All comments about culture (18.13%) were categorised as facilities, dealing with buildings and locations; and activities, which encompasses passive enjoyment of Civic Park and includes public performances. The following chart illustrates the split.

Graph 4: Culture



### Facilities

The library and Newcastle Region Art Gallery are the two major cultural facilities mentioned, as well as the Civic Theatre, the Conservatorium of Music and university buildings. Suggestions range from those immediately actionable by council to that outside council's scope of operations, as the following span of remarks illustrates:

- "When the Art Gallery extensions go ahead we will have a state-of-the-art gallery which will not only be for ratepayers but will bring visitors to Newcastle and will enable our art collection to be properly shown to the public. With the gallery and the library looking through the trees and across the park we have a very attractive and useful civic amenity."
- "The new Gallery coffee shop design might be altered so that it faces the park, ideally with a large outdoor deck, rather than the RTA building on Darby St."

- “Complementing perfectly the Civic cultural precinct, incorporating the Con, Civic Playhouse and Theatre, as well as the western stretch of Hunter Street currently being isolated from the precinct. Later hours of activity - an extension of active street frontages from Darby St. Remove car repair workshops and replace with low-rise apartments/shops/offices with active street fronts. Remove RTA and Southern Cross Ten building, or renovate so that the building pays attention to the street, instead of looking over it.”
- “I work at the Conservatorium, so it also represents access for all our community of students, who use the library regularly to get their homework done before or after lessons, or like to sit in the cool of the park. Mothers with very young children need close parking to facilitate their attending activities at the gallery, library, pre-school, con.”
- “That it be a focal point for art/sculpture and craftworks of Newcastle. That it could include more street sculptures and the "him and her" figure sculptures from inside the library are moved outside as they were originally intended. That the fig trees are always preserved.”

## Activities

Respondents also identify cultural activities which could take place in these urban spaces, from markets such as the current annual Art Bazaar to music and other cultural festivals. The range of responses is illustrated by the comments included below:

- “Highly relaxed, reflective space most of the time with events from time to time. Place to go, to be in the shade, to experience art. To read. This to me is a location of refuge and fun. The art, the fountain, the grass the trees/shade these are elements worth maintaining and building on. Commercialisation can be left for King and Darby Streets.”
- “If weddings were taking place on Laman Street, it would be possible for the renovated Art Gallery to have a function room, which would be a revenue-raiser for the Gallery. There would be a natural progression for the use of the space all around Laman Street near Civic Park.”
- “A precinct that attracts visitors because of the interesting range of uses there and because the space is quirky and dotted with public art, temporary installations, spontaneous activities etc that reflect the university, music, art and culture that is experienced in this area. Opportunities abound for unexpected things to happen.”
- “A green, interesting space that signifies its historical and cultural background through public art. Careful attention to access for people with a disability including easy parking or drop-off.”
- “Extend the venue in the Civic Precinct, where possible, such as the Art Gallery, LiveSites, as well as develop the Civic Precinct as an arts base in Newcastle to include other organisations such as the Conservatorium, The Loft, Renew Newcastle, Performing Arts Newcastle, Octopod, Tantrum, Circus Avalon & Watt Space to name a few.”

## Complete Plan

Out of the 414 respondents, twenty (4%) include a complete plan for the precinct – some drawn, some written. Below are several examples to illustrate the comprehensive nature of respondents' considerations. The complete list of plans is included in Appendix III.

### Complete Plan 1 quote from respondent

1. Enhanced Art Gallery facility with improved community art workshops and small cinemas for festival screenings and regular arthouse etc.
2. Access to library and gallery with slow two way traffic and easy short drop off for elderly/disabled etc
3. Encourage public transport/ pedestrian use through Civic Theatre, Wheeler Place by broadening pedestrian crossing so people alight from train and cross straight over
4. Better footpath/bicycle link between station/uni/Wheeler Place/council/library/gallery to Darby St restaurants.
5. Endeavour to save the Laman Street trees, perhaps pruning if necessary. The history of tree planting in Newcastle seems very poor as despite council efforts young trees seem to be constantly vandalised by what must be a very small, effective, disengaged few. I am concerned that even with the best intentions we won't see any effective replacement for those beautiful trees. It might be cheaper and safer to do everything to save them.
6. Finally keep the rail, NOBODY is going to fund a beautiful science fiction integrated rail/road system. Only if the money is in the bank would anybody be stupid enough to destroy not just what they already have but what other cities spend a fortune trying to get.

### Complete Plan 2 – Direct quote from respondent

1. Keep the stunning fig trees
2. Close off the street in front of the Gallery and library
3. Have regular markets there
4. Have screenings of outdoor movie
5. Coffee shop or coffee cart
6. Organise, encourage students to perform drama and performance art in this area

### Complete Plan 3 – Direct quote from respondent

A vibrant, cultural area with more open-air public fine and performing arts, making them accessible to the people as is done in Europe. Newcastle has a thriving arts sub-culture but it's behind the scenes behind closed doors and only displayed in formal settings. It should be embraced and brought outside as part of our everyday social fabric of our city. It should be every weekend, not just on special days of the year or at the theatre.

Weekends and evenings could come alive with busking and performances of all types:

- arts and crafts markets,
- artists demonstrating their skills outdoors and in the park like in France,
- musicians playing,
- poetry, drama and other performers
- workshop areas for all forms of fine arts
- small coffee/eatery kiosks and seating areas
- areas and playgrounds to encourage children's creativity in the arts
- and don't forget seats, public drinking fountains and public toilets which are missing from Honeysuckle and the foreshore!

This area should be linked and opened down to the harbour foreshore for pedestrians (not over the train line). The rail line should go from Wickham or the Civic and be replaced with light rail level tracks or buses to Newcastle East to open it up.

The trees could be replaced with other vegetation such as trellised vines to maintain the cool, shady, green canopy effect over Laman St without the large roots. Laman St could be closed to traffic (or min. no of slow cars allowed through as in Hunter St) to provide more of a leisure area. It will need good lighting.

I think Newcastle City as a whole should become the cultural hub of the Hunter. It's moved away from retail shopping and could remake itself as an interesting arts centre. Cooks Hill is already a haven for artists and musicians and there are several art galleries and the Conservatorium. We just need to develop it further and bring it out to the people.

## Priority

Nineteen respondents (3.78%) query council's priority on this issue and the approach taken, or the allocation of resources to this street at this time. Respondents identify other areas as needing council's attention. Furthermore, some respondents mentioned the need to use a different approach to the street consultation. The following comments illustrate:

- "Why should we be spending tens of thousands of dollars for a plan about trees which aren't natives, when there are many of our community members doing it tough, children, homeless and elderly people alone in their homes?"
- "Council's response to the issue of risk has been akin to panic: If we had the same response to the risk presented by motor vehicles we would instantly close all our roads. As well as dealing with the Laman St situation, council needs to adapt its risk response to achieve a more appropriate balance between risk mitigation and other public interest considerations. The current response simply fuels anti-tree tendencies in some of the community, and is counterproductive to the aims and objectives of council's urban forest strategy."
- "There is enough to be done in Newcastle without spending time and money on problems that don't exist. I remain unconvinced about the public dangers attributed to the Fig trees."
- "I think that the money could be spent on other places within the Newcastle LGA and surrounding suburbs upto Beresfield."
- "I have a vision of the Newcastle City Council making the hard decisions rather than being held hostage to small vocal groups that plague Newcastle. Do what you think is right? Progress is about managing change - not handing over to someone else. Don't come running to me!"
- "Leave the trees as is, leave Laman St as is and instead spend the money fixing Hunter Street."

## No Change

A small proportion (4%) simply says 'change nothing', with the following illustrative remarks:

- "I like it the way it is."
- "I feel it should be maintained similar to how it is today, for the local residents and the public."
- "My vision? Just look. What I see now is beautiful."

"We as citizens of the city I am sure would all agree that we will take our chances walking and driving down Laman Street, it should be left alone, it is perfect the way it is, blocking the street as it is now is disruptive to traffic flow and restricts the access to the Art Gallery and library etc. - LEAVE IT ALONE."



# Appendix I – Questionnaire

## Laman Street – Civic Precinct

Council is developing a vision for the future of the Laman Street – Civic Precinct. We encourage you to get involved.

The Laman Street - Civic Precinct area provides important cultural and recreational spaces for Newcastle residents and visitors to the city. It includes the city library, the art gallery and Civic Park and is bounded by Queen, Darby, Hunter and Union Streets.

A significant feature of the precinct is the archway of Hills Fig trees in Laman Street. Unfortunately, a number of studies have identified there are public safety risks with these trees. Council wants to work with the community to explore every option for the future community use of this area.

Many community members have a strong sense of place with respect to the Laman Street – Civic Precinct. Council is interested in your views for the future of the precinct. Here are some things you should consider when describing your vision:

- Access to the Newcastle Region Library
- Future plans for extending the Art Gallery
- Public safety relating to the Hills Fig trees
- Parking and traffic issues
- Enjoyment and uses of Civic Park and Laman Street
- Connections between Darby Street, Laman Street and the Civic Precinct (Wheeler Place, City Hall and the Civic Theatre)

You can be assured that your responses will remain completely confidential. Your vision will be made available to the members of the community two-day design workshop to be held on 19 and 20 March 2010.

Please return the completed questionnaire back to Newcastle City Council in the postage-paid envelope provided (there is no need to put a stamp on the envelope) by **19 February**.

If you have any questions or want further information about this survey, please contact **Newcastle Voice** on (02) 4974 2823.





## Appendix II – Demographics

## General Characteristics of Respondents

*(Newcastle Voice only)*

### Length of Time Lived in Newcastle

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than a year	16	3.97 %
O2	1 - 3 years	39	9.68 %
O3	4 - 10 years	83	20.60 %
O4	11 - 25 years	87	21.59 %
O5	More than 25 years	178	44.17 %

### Gender

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Male	201	49.02 %
O2	Female	209	50.98 %

### Age

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	16-24	7	1.68 %
O2	25-39	93	22.30 %
O3	40-54	136	32.61 %
O4	55-69	149	35.73 %
O5	70+	25	6.00 %

### Employment Status

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Employed full time	214	52.84 %
O2	Employed part time	68	16.79 %
O3	Looking for work	10	2.47 %
O4	Studying	16	3.95 %
O5	Domestic activities/caring	15	3.70 %
O6	Retired	89	21.98 %
O7	Other [specify]	30	7.41 %
O8	Prefer not to answer	5	1.23 %

## Suburbs

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Adamstown	12	2.93 %
O2	Adamstown Heights	6	1.46 %
O3	Bar Beach	7	1.71 %
O4	Beresfield	4	0.98 %
O5	Birmingham Gardens	3	0.73 %
O6	Blackhill/ Lenaghan	0	0.00 %
O7	Broadmeadow	4	0.98 %
O8	Callaghan	1	0.24 %
O9	Carrington	5	1.22 %
O10	Cooks Hill	31	7.56 %
O11	Elernmore Vale	3	0.73 %
O12	Fletcher	3	0.73 %
O13	Georgetown	8	1.95 %
O14	Hamilton	15	3.66 %
O15	Hamilton East	4	0.98 %
O16	Hamilton North	1	0.24 %
O17	Hamilton South	9	2.20 %
O18	Hexham	0	0.00 %
O19	Islington	15	3.66 %
O20	Jesmond	5	1.22 %
O21	Kooragang	0	0.00 %
O22	Kotara	12	2.93 %
O23	Lambton	13	3.17 %
O24	Maryland	9	2.20 %
O25	Maryville	8	1.95 %
O26	Mayfield	22	5.37 %
O27	Mayfield East	3	0.73 %



	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O28	Mayfield West	3	0.73 %
O29	Merewether	49	11.95 %
O30	Merewether Heights	8	1.95 %
O31	Minmi	5	1.22 %
O32	New Lambton	19	4.63 %
O33	New Lambton Heights	5	1.22 %
O34	Newcastle (CBD)	18	4.39 %
O35	Newcastle East	5	1.22 %
O36	Newcastle West	4	0.98 %
O37	North Lambton	4	0.98 %
O38	Rankin Park	1	0.24 %
O39	Sandgate	0	0.00 %
O40	Shortland	4	0.98 %
O41	Stockton	9	2.20 %
O42	Tarro	0	0.00 %
O43	The Hill	17	4.15 %
O44	The Junction	13	3.17 %
O45	Tighes Hill	5	1.22 %
O46	Wallsend	19	4.63 %
O47	Warabrook	1	0.24 %
O48	Waratah	7	1.71 %
O49	Waratah West	4	0.98 %
O50	Wickham	2	0.49 %
O51	I don't live in the Newcastle area.	5	1.22 %

## Wards

	as % LGA	Laman Street – Civic Precinct respondents %
<p>Ward 1 (including the suburbs of: Carrington, Cooks Hill, Islington, Kooragang, Maryville, Mayfield, Mayfield East, Mayfield West, Newcastle (CBD), Newcastle East, Newcastle West, Stockton, The Hill, Tighes Hill, Warabrook, Wickham)</p>	25%	36.05%
<p>Ward 2 (including the suburbs of: Adamstown, Adamstown Heights, Bar Beach, Broadmeadow, Hamilton, Hamilton East, Hamilton North, Hamilton South, Merewether, Merewether Heights, The Junction)</p>	25%	31.23%
<p>Ward 3 (including the suburbs of: Georgetown, Jesmond, Kotara, Lambton, New Lambton, New Lambton Heights, North Lambton, Waratah, Waratah West)</p>	25%	18.79%
<p>Ward 4 (including the suburbs of: Beresfield, Birmingham Gardens, Blackhill / Lenaghan, Callaghan, Elermore Vale, Fletcher, Hexham, Maryland, Minmi, Rankin Park, Sandgate, Shortland, Tarro, Wallsend)</p>	25%	12.68%



## Appendix III – Responses

## Plans

<b>subject</b>	<b>subject2</b>	<p><b>your_vision</b></p> <p>a place to stand back and admire the surrounding architecture</p> <p>photographic opportunities (the individual/specimen subject, groups/medium spaces, longer views)</p> <p>damping of surrounding noise from traffic or large groups</p> <p>a deference to, and celebration of, local history (eg bronze plaques, old photographs)</p> <p>some surfaces of interesting texture and geology</p> <p>sensation of nook and cranny solitude in a larger space</p> <p>comfortable seating; some interesting seating; seating that accommodates the individual as well as groups; seating within earshot of the practice rooms of the Conservatorium</p> <p>clean and accessable public toilets</p> <p>personal safety (from traffic, and from antisocial individuals)</p>
plan	2	<p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-design for the individual first, not the crowd</li> <li>-create a large Public Space from many smaller, detailed, inspiring, interlinked areas</li> <li>-concentrate on a perception of peace and solitude in a city; the antithesis of a bustling marketplace feel (which belongs to other precincts of the City). This precinct should be celebrating sandstone, gardens, art, books, music, fountains, and the history of public rail and city administration.</li> <li>-design a seasonally comfortable precinct which sweeps across the entire area as the seasons change</li> <li>-ensure regular pedestrian thoroughfares are sheltered from rain and Summer sun</li> </ul> <p>DON'T FORGET to actively promote the area (at the railway stations (Newcastle and Civic), the ferry terminal, the Visitors' Centre, the Mall, the Foreshare and Board Walks, on the footpaths in front of city accommodation buildings and at city carpark pedestrian exits) with clear and encouraging signage, and support this with helpfull directions along the way, so that Visitors entering the City are encouraged to explore and rest awhile in this precinct.</p>

- 1) Enhanced Art Gallery facility with improved community art workshops and small cinema's for festival screenings and regular arthouse etc.
- 2) Access to library and gallery with slow two way traffic and easy short drop off for elderly/disabled etc
- 3) Encourage public transport/ pedestrian use through civic theatre, wheeler place by broadening pedestrian crossing so people alight from train and cross straight over
- 4) Better footpath/bicycle link between station/uni/wheelerplace/council/library/gallery to darby st restuarants
- 5) Endeavour to save the Laman street trees perhaps pruning if necessary. The history of tree planting in Newcastle seems very poor as despite council efforts young trees seem to be constantly vandalised by what must be a very small effective disengaged few. I am concerned that even with the best intentions we won't see any effective replacement for those beautiful trees. It might be cheaper and safer to do everything to save them.
- 6) Finally keep the rail, NOBODY is going to fund a beautiful science fiction integrated rail/road system. Only if the money is in the bank would anybody be stupid enough to destroy not just what they already have but what other cities spend a fortune trying to get.
  1. A well used public space. The current space is not well used and is often quiet at night and on weekends. There is very little business activity in the immediate area. Compare this to Cessnock Performing Arts Centre and the adjoining pub, which at weekends has families and visitors in and around the precinct. Wheeler Place on the other hand has coffee shops which are not open at night and restricted opening on weekends unless there is someting significant happening.
  2. Well lit and safe to use.
  3. Pathways which are pram and wheel chair friendly.
  4. Slow traffic across King St. The crossing at King St has traffic which moves too quickly for a friendly civic precinct.
  5. Consider the use of mobile coffe stands or similar retail oppurtunities to bring people into the area.
  6. The library needs an update. The look and feel of the library is of an old civic institution and not a vibrant community centre that uses modern technology.
  7. Parking in the Laman Street area needs to improve. The removal of parking in this area makes it harder for families to use the park, library and art gallery.
  8. Although the trees need significant maintenance/risk reduction, there needs to be a system in place to provide new fig trees to the Laman Street. Perhaps the whole street could be removed and a new avenue planted and then carefully maintained from the outset.

plan

plan



- plan
1. Close off Auckland, Laman and King Streets where they bound the park, in order to include them as part of the parkland/amenities area.
  2. Insert a parking station somewhere.
  3. Create better and more open parkland and covered walkways in-between venues including City Hall and University House.
  4. Use only native vegetation.
  5. Include water tanks for maintaining the open spaces.
  6. Use rooftops of new structures to collect solar power and water for the use of the public amenities.
- plan
1. Keep the stunning fig trees
  2. Close off the street in front of the Gallery and library
  3. Have regular markets there
  4. Have screenings of outdoor movies
  5. Coffee shop or coffee cart
  6. Organise, encourage students to perform drama and performance art in this area
- plan
1. Retention of the existing trees to the MAXIMUM POSSIBLE EXTENT.
  2. Replacement of any unviable trees with mature examples that will preserve the existing look and feel.
  3. Minimal disruption to the existing character.
  4. Enhancement/ expansion of the existing library and gallery facilities.
  5. Provision of proper off-street parking facilities.
- plan
1. I think Laman Street should be kept with the beautiful archway of trees. It is a magnificent backdrop to Civic Park.
  2. Laman Street should be traffic free and preferably the roadway and footpaths at present should be removed to assist the health of the trees.
  3. A clearly defined and tree friendly (ie mulched) walkway to access the art gallery and the library could be provided and clearly signposted so that people are aware that they use the walkway at their own risk.
  4. An alternative could be to access both those buildings from the side or the rear.



A vibrant, cultural area with more open-air public fine and performing arts, making them accessible to the people as is done in Europe. Newcastle has a thriving arts sub-culture but it's behind the scenes behind closed doors and only displayed in formal settings. It should be embraced and brought outside as part of our everyday social fabric of our city. It should be every weekend, not just on special days of the year or at the theatre.

Weekends and evenings could come alive with busking and performances of all types:

- arts and crafts markets,
- artists demonstrating their skills outdoors and in the park like in France,
- musicians playing,
- poetry, drama and other performers
- workshop areas for all forms of fine arts
- small coffee/eatery kiosks and seating areas
- areas and playgrounds to encourage children's creativity in the arts
- and don't forget seats, public drinking fountains and public toilets which are missing from Honeysuckle and the foreshore!

plan

This area should be linked and opened down to the harbour foreshore for pedestrians (not over the train line). The rail line should go from Wickham or the Civic and be replaced with light rail level tracks or buses to Newcastle East to open it up.

The trees could be replaced with other vegetation such as trellised vines to maintain the cool, shady, green canopy effect over Laman St without the large roots. Laman St could be closed to traffic (or min. no.s of slow cars allowed through as in Hunter St) to provide more of a leisure area. It will need good lighting.

I think Newcastle City as a whole should become the cultural hub of the Hunter. It's moved away from retail shopping and could remake itself as an interesting arts centre. Cooks Hill is already a haven for artists and musicians and there are several art galleries and the Conservatorium. We just need to develop it further and bring it out to the people.

Arts and education Hub

More presence of University

plan

Trees still lining street

Arts markets in the street and park

I would like the space to be one of the arts and a place to relax in a city that will only grow busier in the coming years.

I see that the trees should remain in Street.

I would like to see the street opened again for traffic, it being closed limits access for people outside area.

plan

I think the heavy rail should be maintained as it is a good way to bring people to this area.

Anyone who goes to the area on a Saturday knows that the area is a hub for cyclists. More secure parking should be provided for bikes to lessen traffic problems.

The trees that fell down during the Newcastle floods should be replaced.

There is no need for car parking in the city as the proposed 230 spots are a mere drop in the bucket, and properly uneconomic in the long run. In the short term, a reopening of longer term parking meters in Laman Street or the utilization of the RTA?/ Council car park beside the Gallery for the general public to allow access to the Gallery and Library.

In the future:

1) A tree lined, pedestrian friendly, close connection between Civic Park and the Art Gallery and Library (close Laman Street off completely to cars and have a grassed connection, allowing for public art displays, between the Art Gallery and Civic Park..

plan

2) To allow for cars, an increase in the car spaces in the Queen St car park (multi-storey helps those businesses in Darby S too) with ready access (disability friendly) from the car park to both Gallery and Library.

3) A cafe/retail outlet for both Gallery and Library, preferably attached to the Gallery.

4) A decrease in the number of unnecessary public warning signs in Civic Park eg "this area closed in high winds".

5) In-keeping direction signs showing visitors the way to the various cultural sites.

It is time to open our eyes and minds and create a facility that will serve the community of the next 100 years:

# Close King St and Lamen Street to all traffic allowing the linking of the library, art gallery etc to the Civic Theatre.

plan

# Build a very large parking station under King St and the parkland with underground moving foot ways to each of the major venues and to the new Museum on the foreshore.

# Terrace the area into usable areas to give a progression from the Hunter ST Level to the Lamen St level. The terraced layers could effectively provide a number of outdoor stages and amphitheatres. The usable areas should be constructed as large open spaces to allow large open air events, carnivals and

activities.

# The boundary to the area should be landscaped with dense vegetation to act as a fence and sound absorbing barrier.

# Major 24/7 toilet blocks should be provided with capacity to suit large crowds.

# All the fig Trees and much of the existing vegetation from the total area should be removed. Those that fit within the long term plan can stay however the existing vegetation, pathways and lighting should not be constraints on the new layout.

# The fountain and pond should be incorporated within the new layout however this is not mandatory.

# The paved area between Hunter St and King Street should be retained and developed as an outdoor hard surface alcohol prohibited venue with food kiosks, restaurants and coffee shops around the ring. There should be no food kiosks etc between King St and Lamen St. One of the 24/7 Toilets should be in this location.

# A safe Bus bay separated from Hunter St should be along the Hunter St Frontage with the area in front of Civic Station also being a bus bay.

# A safe Bus bay separated from Darby St should be along the Darby St Frontage near the Art Gallery.

# The entrance to the underground parking station should be from Darby St utilising the section of King St in front of the tax office to Burwood St and the exit into King St west of Auckland St

# The area containing the Clarendon Hotel, Telstra Building and Tax Office should be included in the total precinct and be part of the total design.

# The total are should be a permanent (not suspendable) alcohol prohibited area with the exception of the major function rooms in Civic Hall and the Clarendon Hotel.

# The total vista should give easy line of sight to all components with the pathways drawing people from the various outdoor areas and buildings. The pathways should act as the conduit and each venue act as a people magnet.

I have kept this brief and simple however can provide additional information and explanation.



Laman Street: Pedestrian only area along section of Laman Street and King Street to linking Art Gallery & Library to Civic Park and Wheeler Place. Vehicles directed through Hunter Street.

Fig tress: Commence succession planting of established trees with figs gradually removed (over a specified period of say 10 years) as new trees take to streetscape.

Library Site: Refurbish the Library and develop car park site at rear for civic functions.

plan

Art Gallery Site: Refurbish Gallery and develop RTA car park to continue Darby Street retail/commercial precinct and improve pedestrian link to Civic Precinct.

Queen Street: upgrade intersection as alternative vehicular route to king street and Auckland Street intersection.

Civic Park: Upgrade/redevelop dated terraced stone wall planting and walkways to improve visual connection and pedestrian safety through Civic Precinct. Remove/repair/upgrade broken sewer pump/vent at south-east end of Civic Park to improve environment and prevent further pollution from sewerage overflow during heavy rain events. Review of planting species and formalise planting pattern to reflect the Civic /Cultural Precinct. Upgrade existing amenities.

My impressions of any public space are formed by my response to the balance, and play, of light and shade, in response to my appreciation of the ambient temperature at the time that I am in the public space. (I have experienced, as a tourist, many public spaces in many countries, as well as many in towns and cities throughout Australia.)

If a cool and shady Summer place is dark and cold in Winter, it is not attractive to the Winter visitor. Conversely, what may be cheerful in Winter, but is exposed and bakingly hot in Summer, will be repugnant to the visitor on a hot day.

(I believe "public spaces" should be designed to primarily meet the needs of the Visitor.)

plan

The Visitor encompasses more than the tourist. All Visitors who arrive in the Public Space (either deliberately or by happenstance) should be impressed, feel refreshed, be inspired to linger and enjoy the peace and balance of the space, and feel safe in the space. A Public Space is not a utilitarian corridor; although many people may need to use some of the Public Space as a thoroughfare.

The Visitor includes:-

- tourists, holiday makers and locals in their leisure hours
- employees seeking respite during their lunch breaks, and requiring suitable facilities to eat their lunches in comfort(seating which is seasonally comfortable, plus small nooks and crannies offering an opportunity for the sensation of solitude and an escape from the working day)

- pedestrians en route who are travelling through the Public Space.

Occasionally, the Public Space will be used to hold an organised event (like Mattara). However, this is not its primary purpose, and it should not be



predominantly designed around such an event. Many more people will visit the space, on many more occasions, in the role of the Visitor described above.

All Visitors require:-

-shade from the sun in Summer

-sunlight in Winter

-shelter from the rain

-movement of air in the heat

-protection from the wind in the cold

-visual and other sensory stimulation which inspires psychological relief such as:-

moving water (eg Civic Park fountain)

long views (eg through to the harbour)

interesting sculpture, and other permanent embellishment such as mosaics

outstanding specimen trees

coloured, and scented, flowers

bird attracting plants to encourage birdsong

plants that change and mark the seasons

flags fluttering on a balmy breeze with the gentle chink of links on a pole

- Rationalise traffic flow, making the system west along Hunter Street and east along King Street in this civic area. On civic occasions close King between Darby and Auckland (direct via Queen).
- Create a series of linked public spaces from the Civic Theatre to the Art Gallery and Library, clearly delineated by landscaping and paving. Create a square in front of the City Hall, incorporating part of King Street with paving. Create a pedestrian square in front of the Library and Art Gallery incorporating Laman Street.
- Develop parking structures in Queen Street to attract people to the area. Incorporate lifts.
- Prepare a long term replacement plan for the Laman Street trees. Safety is a priority.
- Remove the most dangerous trees, heavily lop where possible and immediately start a replanting program with a 50 year timeframe

plan

- Integration of the Cultural Precinct / Laman Street / Civic Park / Civic Centre
  - Accentuations of Civic – Cultural Axis (visual)
  - Retention of Laman Street Tree Canopy
  - Pedestrian systems at Laman Street – “Laman Plaza” concept – no cars (except for special access). Use of space as part of Cultural Centre / Civic Park activities (plaza type uses – outdoor coffee shop, festival, outdoor exhibition space)
- plan
- Consider a Laman Plaza Arts Pergola, as both a practical support / protective frame structure for trees / branch fall, AND a sculptural artwork for Laman Plaza, reflecting and enhancing the character of the Art Gallery / Library cultural precinct.
  - Pave Laman Street (with ‘artifices” pavers)
  - Consider long term replacement strategy (15-20+ years) with objective of maintaining tree canopy. Staged, as-needed, removal / replacement of trees. Prefer figs, but other canopy-yielding species would be acceptable, if more suitable and compatible.
  - Ensure that the vision / strategy is determined by ‘whole of community’ approach, and not by narrow ‘professional” perspective eg arborists / traffic engineers.
  - Access to Library needs public transport, short term parking and bike racks.
  - Extending Art Gallery also puts more demand on ability to attend (see access to Library)
  - Hills Figtrees hide Gallery and Library which is a good thing, have some life left, should be phased out as other trees take their place. Presently no parking signs should read park at owners’ risk.
- plan
- Parking & traffic. University’s 70,000 m2 is just enough to park their cars. Where do their buildings go? At present peak hour traffic in and out our dead inner city already saturates the roads. Should we revitalise the inner city? There are not enough roads and 10,000 parking spaces would be needed. We need trains.
  - Uses of Civic Park – Keep public toilets open
- My vision for the Cultural Precinct is creating a SQUARE. Laman Street should be closed to vehicle traffic between Darby and Dawson Streets. Steps leading up to Laman from Darby and Laman Street paved level. Large stepping / seating can lead down to Civic Park from the front of the Art Gallery – taking in the width of the Art Gallery. The square could be created by paving to match Laman and lead to a raised speed hump in front of NCH & CAC thus allowing pedestrian traffic free flow between the Art Gallery, Library, and Theatre.
- Existing trees could be paved around a metal fretwork / grill could surround the larger trees.
- plan
- More seats / benches are needed for the perimeter grassy sides of the Park along with more trees, perhaps scented or flowering natives. If suitable to save, The Fig Trees in Laman Street could be under protected by an architecturally designed archway or form work possibly made of steel. Extensions to the Art Gallery could be made at the rear and a suitable carpark incorporated. Queen Street could be widened and opened to thru traffic. An indoor / outdoor café at the AG on Laman Street.
- My vision is of a cultural precinct with grandeur. A place for people to congregate as well as enjoy displays, festivals for the many uses a formal square creates.



An architecturally designed arch under the Laman Street Figs – with cross beams, could be an added safety from any possible falling braches. This formwork could be made of steel? Hence from the Steel City.

plan

- There should be short term free parking near library for easy and better access to give better use of these facilities in this area.
- No public safety issues because there should be no FIG trees.
- There could be tables and seats (attached) around park for picnicking and lunchtime enjoyment.
- There should also be more ground space taken up for buildings. To extend Region Art Gallery it has to go up higher or go elsewhere.
- Remove excessive large trees in park on a progressive basis and replace with smaller trees.
- Full 100% 24 hour NO alcohol zone between Auckland and Darby and Hunter and Laman Streets.
- Guaranteed safety is a big issue in this area day and night. Definitely NO go zones from midnight to 4am.

plan

Could we do something like Montreal Park, it would be a major tourist attraction: topiary animals, landscaped gardens including a floral clock.

# Trees

subject	subject2	your_vision
		<p>2 options</p> <p>1. Retaining the trees - take up tarmac, give the roots a chance to grow, and have horticulturist monitor the trees. It will take another 50 - 100 years to replace them. If there is any way of retaining them it should be considered. Not just getting into a panic (like what might happen to the Bogey Hole!) about potential litigation - can we please have a council with guts, vision and a sense of excitement for the city.</p>
trees	remove	
		<p>2. Without trees - close or narrow the road and have an outdoor park associated with the Gallery.</p> <p>There can be provision for parking but without the trees that area will be a wasteland unless something splendid is done to it. A sculpture park could be considered.                      Accessable for pedestrians &amp; motorists.</p>
trees	remove	<p>fig trees either removed or pruned.                      Better connection between street and park - therefore natural flow between city hall and art gallery/library.</p>
		<p>Removal of the fig trees is unfortunately necessary - turn this into a positive. Removal of the trees will open the street up to the park more. This will create better connectivity so Laman St and the park become more unified, and being more open and visible would improve passive security in the park.</p>
trees	remove	
		<p>Create a shared traffic zone to slow traffic down - maybe oneway traffic only - should retain car parking though.</p> <p>Provide some commercial space for a cafe. Could also have a kiosk-style takeaway shop or similar within the shared traffic zone.</p>

trees remove

For a start I am anti fig tree. Apart from creating problems with road and footpath surfaces the fruit and leaves create a mess where ever they have been planted. Bat droppings add to my problem. they trees themselves create a problem with parking. The art gallery and library have been built and subsequently developed with little consideration to FUTURE parking and without some demolition or underground parking facilities being developed it will always remain a problem. Laman Street is not currently a well used street, people avoid it because of the narrowness in some places and the fact that one can only turn left when driving in an easterly direction towards Darby Street. The park itself is used by some interest groups for weddings etc and for military related services. The toilets were for some time regularly used and were a meeting place for some homosexuals. Currently parking is a problems and when more of the university courses transfer to the city area it will deter non residents from even looking for a parking spot in this area. Any develop in Laman Street will only affect local residents and either enhance their living standards and increase their property values or expose some of the buildings for what they are, an eyesore. From what I have already written the reader would have formed the opinion that I am not into the preservation of "all things old ." A little bit on sunlight in this Street would be greatly appreciated by some. I am a Novocastrian by birth and attended Cooks Hill High School in the 1950's. Get rid of the trees. Have some kind of shade covers in some parts. Put in some items like things made from recycled items that have come from the local communities. Use these as stepping stones to draw people to the Art gallery. Alot of people don't know it is there and a lot of people have never stepped inside to see what is there.

trees remove

As a child, When ever I went to town with my mum. We always went to Civic park. to see the fountain and to just sit in the park for a while. These days people don't go there as much. Alot of people don't know how nice that part of town is, Because they stick to hunter street and don't see the beauty that is there.

Remove the trees because they are a safety concern. Open the area up possibly as a low traffic or no-traffic area opening up to Civic park.

trees remove

It would be nice if somehow (bridge or under road) Wheeler Place could also open to the park and then into the Library and Art Gallery area as a continuous pedestrian access.

Sure the trees in Laman Street are nice but if it is unsafe to people and can cause damage then they should go - I'm the last one in the world to rip a tree out but common sense should prevail. The extra light streaming into the art gallery and the library would be a great bonus.

The precinct at the moment is adequate, but I don't think there are enough facilities to satisfy the users of the park. Noty enough seats, shade shelters mor some sort of food delivery.

trees remove

The end towards the library has too many stairs and that end is like a wall that does not do justice to the public buildings. i.e.you cannotg see them in their best light Removal of the diseased trees will help. The fountain is a bit crummy.

I also feel that the area needs some sort of enclosure, either by way of hedges or interesting fencing, but I undedrstand the need for security and evacuation if suddenly required. A more specific pathway system leading to

a more defined road crossing to the north would help traffic flow.

trees	replace	<p>A few factors affect my vision for Laman St and the Civic precinct, access being top of the list. Visitors to the Library and Art Gallery already have to contend with stairs if they come from Civic Park, hills on Auckland, Darby and Dawson St and limited parking which has decreased since parking has been removed from Laman St. An ageing population and the possible increase of disabled people, as well as parents with prams and young children, trying to access the Library and Gallery will increase over time. Yes the trees must go if they are a hazard to people and ideally be replaced with trees more suited to an urban environment. All sorts of things could happen in Laman St, seating, market stalls, music, street theatre, cafes.. the possibilities are endless. In a perfect world a new Library and gallery either on King or Hunter St would be great so that it is closer to public transport and ideally with underground parking or parking station nearby making the area a real cultural centre. Which is the next point that must be addressed. Transport must be increased, both bus and rail, making this area more accessible by day and night because the one complaint people make about visiting the two buildings is the lack of parking and constantly having to worry about being booked. The library is open at night and still visitors compete for parking with Civic Theatre goers and in November with school formals in the park. I think an increased University presence in the precinct would add vibrancy to the area which makes a regular reliable transport system into the city vital . Civic Park needs a revamp, more seating, playgrounds and decent toilets. The Civic precinct is great now and is a well visited and liked area by locals and visitors alike, lets make it buzz with life but really plan for access, transport, parking and above all make it user friendly.</p>
trees	replace	<p>A shady street, full of history. Area for street fairs and recreation in hot summers.</p>
trees	replace	<p>A shady, leafy and peaceful entrance to our library and art gallery. I can hear birds, flying foxes and the falling water of the civic park fountain. There are lots of places to sit and enjoy the surrounds.</p> <p>A thriving arts and culture hub physically linking the area to Darby Street (an arts, fashion and food strip) ... offering a cluster of art and cultural experiences. Public art should be paramount to draw people to the arts hub.</p>
trees	replace	<p>Further research must be conducted with the view to a solution where the trees can be SAVED. To date it appears all studies have been conducted with a premise that they must go. If they do eventually have to go this must be done in a staged approach so that the trees are systematically replaced</p>

so as not to lose the ambience of the street scape overnight.

A tree lined street. Weather it's with the existing trees or new trees should be left up to the experts in the field to make the decision based on safety, accessibility and cost now and into the future. Councillors like me dont have any expertise on the subject and should make the best decision for the city and not just to get re-elected.

trees          replace

All fig trees removed and replaced with suitable inner city species that do not mess up the street with their droppings, bird and bat droppings; do not buckle the footpath with their roots.

trees          replace          Replace the stormwater drainage and gutters to allow the frequent heavy downpours to drain effectively without flooding households in the street.

Resurface the road and footpaths after the tree removal.



Impose 10kph speed limit from Darby to Dawson Streets and make the cultural precinct more pedestrian friendly similar to the Hunter St Mall. Minimise parking availability.

Although noone wants to see the destruction of such an iconic Newcastle streetscape I believe that it is necessary to remove the trees and start with something new NOW otherwise this fruitless debate will drag on and on and on and on and on like so many issues in Newcastle and EVENTUALLY after spending far too much money and having an unworkable band aid fix they will be in such a state that they will have to be removed anyway or they will be removed one by one and the entire avenue will lose its appeal anyway.

trees replace

If the hard descision is made now and they are replaced there will be a new look and growth happening in a very short time.

trees replace

An area with public access. It doesn;t have to have the fig trees because they'll grow back and them get removed again in 70 years and replanted.

trees replace

An open public space that enables access to the library, art gallery, fairs, presentations, picnics in a quiet safe beautiful natural environment

trees replace

An updated and considerably larger art gallery complete with shop and cafe with outdoor dining area. An updated library with reading room with pleasant aspect. Replanted trees if the figs have to go (would rather they were kept). Adequate parking and more accessible gutters.

trees replace

Be a shame to lose the fig trees but if you have to remove them then I'd like to see a traffic free piazza connecting all those locations with benches/sitting areas and landscaped gardens, including leafy replacements for the figs. Tiny cafe/snack bar essential in this location - too far to go down to Darby Street when you want to sit and enjoy the surrounds. Also be great to have a variety of original live music playing weekends and some week nights to attract a more favourable 'culture' to the city. (Local and visiting bands - but alternative music as there's already plenty of the mass media styles available in town and through local media - please please please: different music!)

trees replace

Bearing in mind the damage the existing trees have done to the roadway I realise they may have to be removed at some time. However this area has always felt like an oasis in town with the shade cover so I feel there should still be other trees planted in their place. Parking continues to be a problem in that area and often makes me think twice about a visit to the Library or Art Gallery.

Civic park and the surrounds must be kept open are for the general public. The look formed by the trees within this area - particularly on Laman street are crucial to maintaining the heritage look of the area however this must be kept within the safety feasibility. Obviously if the figs are nearing the age of potential risk they must be replaced, however I would like to see a gradual replacement, a few at a time so as to avoid the stark look that would be, should total removal and replanting simultaneously would create.

Safety risk is also to be a consideration in regard to personal safety. The area should afford a sense of security for all people. This could be obtained through the use of open sight lines, (appropriate planting) prompt response to all issues/concerns raised, and regular activities and other amenities so as to promote regular use. People in the area will assist to reduce the personal risk.

trees            replace

While traffic flow is a necessity in the city, I would like to see greater pedestrian friendly areas in the precinct. I recognise that Darby, King and Hunter streets are critical to vehicle flow, I believe that Auckland and Laman should be closed off at their corner (at the Conservatorium of Music), and Dawson and Gibson be terminated at their interections. In addition, there could be a reduction in pedestrian risk, through making King Street one way (travelling to the east) and Hunter St (travelling one way to the West). [This will also permit a greater volume of parking if the extra room was used to introduce angle parking - not on King at the Civic Park but further afield]

From an aesthetic aspect, improvements and softening the lines between soft and hard surfaces by the removal or reworking of the gutters and improved drainage could lead to a more people friendly feel. Civic Park and Wheeler Place must remain open space suitable for recreational purposes and public events/gatherings. Do not sell off or develop any of the Civic Park land.

trees            replace

The trees in and around Civic Park are the greatest feature of the park, providing a break from the concrete jungle that city dwellers and workers have to face for the majority of the time. If it is NECESSARY to remove the Hills Fig trees, I suggest this be staged over time, to allow what trees that will be used to replace them to grow and create a continuous new canopy and tree curtain on the southern side of Civic Park. I would suggest planting trees that are native to this area, instead of importing plants from other areas of Australia or overseas. We need to encourage native birdlife to return to the area. Please do not plant any more Norfolk Island Pines in the area. The council has already overdosed on these trees all around the coastline.

If the Hills Fig trees are removed, could the council then remove the unsightly danger signs alongside the fountain. These ruin the ambience of

the area and no doubt many photographers are now looking elsewhere for aesthetic backdrops.

I don't understand why Laman Street has been blocked in only one direction. Are the Hills Fig tree branches only likely to fall down on the Northern side of the road? This makes no sense. If the trees are that dangerous, the road should be completely blocked. If they are not so dangerous, reopen it completely.

The section of Hunter Street between the old Civic Arcade and Auckland Street is a disgrace. The council has been sitting on this real estate for some time, letting it become dilapidated and is an eyesore. Something needs to be done with it. Is this planned to be part of the future CBD Newcastle University annexe? The Civic Hotel appears to be trashed since the fire gutted it.

The carpark between the Clarendon Hotel and the Telstra building is more prime land that appears to be wasted. This appears to be an ideal spot for a building housing all levels of government (local, state, federal). Clearly the trees have to go. Keeping them will only prolong the issue of not having a mature avenue of trees in the street. Once the trees are removed it will be true that the space will look very different for a reasonable period of time, so.....

trees	replace	Why don't you look into creating steel arch structures at various points along the street whilst the more appropriate trees you have chosen have a chance to mature. Vines could be grown over these quite quickly to create an avenue feel as well as some shading and the steel fits in with Newcastle's industrial heritage.
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trees	replace	Also, now that the street is one way. why don't you pave it to make it a passive one way driving space (ie don't re-open it to 2 way traffic) Complementing perfectly the Civic cultural precinct, incorporating the Con, Civic Playhouse and theatre, as well as the western stretch of Hunter St currently being isolated from the precinct. Later hours of activity - an extension of active street frontages from Darby St. Remove car repair workshops and replace with low-rise apartments/shops/offices with active street fronts. Remove RTA and Southern Cross Ten building, or renovate so that the building pays attention to the street, instead of looking over it.
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Staged removal of trees, with replanting of trees of better suitability, that will also create a shade canopy.



		Existing trees must be removed and replaced with more suitable (ie. less damaging to streetscape)
trees	replace	types. Addition of a cafe in or very near the Gallery would be of great benefit to visitors and provide more funds for the Gallery. Extend the venue in the Civic precinct, where possible, such as the Art gallery, LiveSites, as well as develop the Civic Precinct as an arts base in Newcastle to include other organisations such as the Conservatorium, The Loft, Renew Newcastle, Performing Arts Newcastle, Octopod, Tantrum, Circus Avalon & Watt Space to name a few. If the trees in Laman street are a danger to the community, once removed, replaces the trees with natives to ensure the Boulevard feel is maintained.
trees	replace	First of all the road known as Laman st cookshill should be opened to all traffic both way's, as this is a convenience to all that live in the city, a good short cut around the lights in king st.  Secondly the said trees have grown over the years from when they were young in 1955. Some are taller. Cut them out the lot and replace them with local native cedar trees, evergreen with spreading branches & fragrant fine grain wood. This will cause a storm, but time moves on. Remove the old fig trees as well in the park, and replace with Cedar trees, this will look and be better for the park in 20 yrs or so. Plus the price of cedar wood is expensive and it is dollars in the bank for the city come replacement time, in 100 yrs or so, not wood chip. The fountain and war memorial are good why change. Widen king st from union to darby take 10 Ft off the park, when removing the fig trees. Remember when they said Burwood park would never have a road though, Ha Ha, Take trees out of Scott st for smoother traffic flow. Cut rail at Woodville junction, open up city to Forshore.
trees	replace	Green, pleasant shady area to take children, without being accosted by loutish elements, intoxicated or otherwise.
trees	replace	Have a street full of trees, either new ones or keep the old ones. Allow parking.
trees	replace	We always love old fig trees at Lamna street. I am not sure what's wrong with them as it was mentioned in this email that they are dangerous to people. I am not in favour of removing the trees because these trees add a lot of structure on Civic Park and Lamna Street area.
		It will be great if they get replaced with some tall good looking trees. They are not going to look as good as the fig trees are but at least within a few years they will grow more bigger.

I accept there is a problem with the fig trees. My vision includes a similar eventual shaded area, still with traffic, providing a calm environment for the surrounding facilities. Civic park needs to remain a passive area for entertainment and relaxation; a stepping stone to other spaces. I enjoy the current facade of the Art Gallery; whilst looking good it isn't 'in your face' in any way and doesn't shriek lack of design. I acknowledge it needs to be enlarged 'heaps' and thus perhaps a cheaper alternative is to rebuild: hopefully not too outlandishly as I wouldn't want to be deterred from my frequent visits by garishness. I don't know the size of the old post office but if the art gallery must move it would at least make a beautiful facade for it. for me the gallery is currently in an ideal position but the post office is still do-able.

The library is also ideally positioned for me. Improvements to it could be rear entry but that opens new cans of worms for entry surveillance by staff and increased costs. Only the library staff are expert enough in that field to decide better layout and extension of services and I feel they should be the ones to be consulted over changes - after all they work there.

trees            replace

There do need to be more car parking spaces as our local bus services are insufficient to support weekend and evening transport at an efficient level to needs. I don't think undermining Civic park will do this well. How about more levels onto the current council park behind the library? (of course I don't live in Council Street - that might change my thinking).

I would not like to see paid parking introduced - it would detract custom not enhance it.

Darby Street seems to be doing quite nicely as it is and too much development would make it artificial and thus it would lose its appeal. Footpath dining is pleasant and not an impediment to sensible people. Underground wiring would be a good improvement as would the provision of attractive street trees such as magnolias as well as Australian natives.

I attend quite a few events in Wheeler place and the only problems there are wet weather and a lack of food (the pub does 'do' quite nicely). The covers in place in town would be a marvellous addition here but again the space is different and I don't know how they could be implemented. I believe the Laman street panorama should remain a green expanse. To this end I suggest a staged (? every 2nd tree?) replacement of existing figs with a suitable replacement, arboreal experts to determine suitability of course.

trees            replace

I think Laman street should be a one way corridor, with reverse angle parking on one side of road, with disability/ coach parking on the other, thereby effectively increasing total parking but also enhancing access to art gallery etc. Access to Laman street should be from Darby st.. The existing toilet block must be renovated, patrolled and cleaned regularly, with opening hours extended to suit use of nearby facility's.

		<p>I don't think I really have a vision. I do know that the Art Gallery needs more room and I definitely feel that a cafe at the Gallery would be a good idea and a good financial bonus for Council.</p>
trees	replace	<p>The fig trees are amazing but if they have to go then it should be a staged removal i.e. not taken out all at once. They should be replaced with dramatic but appropriate trees.</p> <p>The parking area behind the Gallery is really useful for parking at night when eating in Darby St!!</p> <p>Parking really needs to be available in Laman Street for ready and easy access to the Library and Gallery.</p> <p>I feel if the current trees have passed their use by date they should be removed and replaced with a more suitable species. Possibly the street should be one way.</p>
trees	replace	<p>The art gallery to me looks fine and is a herald back to architecture of the time. Any new structures should not impact on the current facade.</p>
trees	replace	<p>I like it as it is the walk along Laman street from Tyrrell Street to the Library is one of the most pleasant. If the trees must be removed then we need a better solution than what was implemented on Tyrrell Street which decimated the ambience of the lower half of the street.</p> <p>I think access (including access for disabled, wheelchair access, prams, frail elderly) is needed to library and art gallery. This is slightly off the point but seating facilities within the art gallery (and the new art gallery) should also be suitable for disabled and frail aged (ie higher seating than presently exists, preferably with arms for support). Higher seating doesn't look as streamlined and beautiful but very elderly and frail people cannot stand for long periods of time required for looking through exhibitions.</p>
trees	replace	<p>Back to Laman Street itself. Parking has always been an issue it would be good to see some resolution - maybe no parking at all in Laman around the library and art gallery and provide good parking at the rear.</p>
trees	replace	<p>The trees are a problem. If second and even third expert opinions are sought on their safety and they still say they have to come down, so be it I guess. But I think generally the community is keen to see them stay as long as possible. Personally I think trees grow and eventually die, if they are unsafe remove them and replace them with something that could eventually be similarly shady and majestic. I wonder whether that section of Laman Street could be closed to traffic and turned into an open paved area like that alongside the Civic Theatre, so that art gallery/library related outdoor functions could be held there, right near the gallery and library.</p> <p>I view this area as the most significant civic space in Newcastle. The current night lighting of the historical building and the fountain makes for a stunning site by night. The fig trees are critical to the ambience by day. I strongly support an immediate careful review of the landscaping needs of this area. I do understand the figs may in time need to be replanted with a smaller more suitable species. Let's start now to prepare a plan and begin the planting process now while the figs are still in place if that is possible. eg the trees cut down after the big storm have not been replaced with a new smaller species - why not. By now they could have some significant growth.</p>

trees	replace	<p>i was just up at the city library this morning and i find the area around the library much better since restricted vehical access to laman street has been installed----- the trees in laman street look great and shady which makes this area so beautiful and full of character and to remove the figs in one go will turn this area into a very hot unwelcoming area for all --if the figs are too old and dangerous the problem trees should be replaced over an extended period and not remove the trees in one go--tyrell street has never been the same since all the trees were removed in one go to make the street safe and it wasn,t that unsafe to start with---trees are part of this laman street area</p>
trees	replace	<p>I would like see the avenue of fig trees preserved, with more space for their roots. I don't mind that the street is semi-closed or permanently closed from cars and think public events such as the Art Bazaar are an excellent use of the space. I accept that some of the trees may be unhealthy and that some work may be involved to preserve, remove or replace. I also accept if the expert opinion is that this is simply not possible, but if they are removed i would like to see an appropriate significant avenue planting replace them. Perhaps the gardens at the back of Civic Park can be opened up more to show the facilities behind?</p>
trees	replace	<p>I would like to continue the ambience of canopy trees arching over the roadway in Laman Street. If the fig trees are dangerous and cannot be pruned back, then they should be replaced. Their replacement should of suitable type that still provides the ambience that exists now.</p> <p>The footpaths need to be made even and easy to walk on.</p> <p>There is a need for additional pedestrian crossings. I have seen many people cross the street in front of the art gallery. It needs to be made safer.</p> <p>Seating should be provided in Laman Street so people can enjoy the shade and peacefulness of the street.</p>
trees	replace	<p>I would like to replace the trees with something more suitable to a city streetscape. The present trees give a very gloomy feel to the precinct.</p> <p>The idea of having the Art Gallery, Library and Civic Centre in close proximity is great.</p>
trees	replace	<p>I would like to see, if possible, a graduated replacement of the trees in Laman Street. They are an iconic part of our city, and I'm sure one of the most photographed streets in our city. I understand that the trees pose a current safety risk, but if some were to be removed, i think it would be best if it was a staggered removal, gradually replacing the trees with ones which are aesthetically similar.</p> <p>Otherwise, I think the civic precinct is a fantastic place to be, and there's not much else I would change.</p>
trees	replace	<p>I would prefer to see some form of trees in this precinct. If some fig trees are dangerous then they could possibly be removed as the need arose with the rest left and trees planted in place of the ones removed so as to not leave the area devoid of a canopy completely as this area at the moment adds to the beauty of Civic park.</p>

		<p>I would reluctantly like to see the trees removed and mature trees of a similar kind replace them so that they can grow together and provide a canopy for the street. This would allow for parking back in the street.</p>
trees	replace	<p>I also think the street offers the potential to be incorporated into civic park with perhaps cars only allowed for drop off, but if this option was chosen there would need to be more parking provided - perhaps along darby street where angle parking could compensate for the loss of the Laman St parking. This would allow for an cafe and/or shop in front of the Art Gallery, going down to Darby St when the extention to the gallery is completed.</p>
		<p>I do not want to see a street where there are many aging trees which will systematically have to be removed and the new ones coming up at all different heights as we will find it too difficult to get a canopy and this is what most people love.</p>
trees	replace	<p>I'd like to see it stay a leafy corridor. If the current trees are unsafe, it would be negligent to leave them, but they should be replaced.</p> <p>If the figs have to go because of safety issues then some attractive shade needs to replace it. The preferred option would be trees, however as this may take a long time for maturity, attractive artificial shade you be OK.</p>
trees	replace	<p>If the entire area from Civic station through to the Library was car free, the area could be the cultural hub with easy access. Given that there is enough who- ha over the railway line going, I presume that car free area cutting the city access would not go down any better. Therefore a compromise could be re-vamping the park and Laman st as car free and pleaseant to be in.</p>
trees	replace	<p>If the trees are unsafe they should be removed and most definately replaced with some trees that are suitable for the street, and will in time provide the same wonderful look. The area could then be use for more public events, linking Civic Park, the Library, Art Gallery and the Music Conservatorium.</p>
		<p>It is really the jewel in the city area, and I feel not made the best of its beauty.</p> <p>I would like to see that only the trees that are considered dangerous to be removed however saving the healthy trees that currently exist.</p> <p>This would give slow change as new trees planted to replace the old trees grow into the overall picture.</p> <p>I would like to see more extensive parking made available close to the library as it is currently often a long walk from any available parking to visit the library.</p>
trees	replace	<p>The city needs to be made more people friendly to attract more people into the city, especially that there are so many attractions like the city hall, library, etc all close together.</p> <p>We need cleared walways between car parking and the sites that the city invites the residents and visitors to visit. Some of the areas are poorly lit making the area unsafe at night.</p> <p>Currently we only consider cost and aesthetics without considering making the city people friendly.</p> <p>Plan on making the inner city more attractive to people 24 hours each day.</p>



trees	replace	<p>If the trees have to come down I would want them replaced with similar ones. I do believe that the one way traffic change is good. Maybe some more gardens can be put in around this area. I have no idea how big the new art gallery will be but this may effect the whole feel of the street anyway. It is a beautiful cool area and does draw people into inner city. It may be possible to close the street off occasionally and have some different music groups give performances. I would certainly make an effort to bring a chair and listen to some music from the conseratorium.</p>
trees	replace	<p>It is important to maintain a green backdrop to Civic Park and a cool leafy street for pedestrians around the Art Gallery and Library. It is not necessary to maintain the present fig trees but they should be replaced with trees which will serve the same purpose - they must be fairly large both in width and height.</p>
		<p>The street should have low traffic flow. It must be as ethically sustainable as possible.</p>
		<p>No access to any cars (they are dangerous, kill, and their pollution kills aswell).</p>
trees	replace	<p>Pedestrian and bicycles access only (and delivery trucks with fully separated bike/vehicle lanes). Speed limit 10km/hr.</p>
		<p>If a tree is dangerous from an independant tree expert then get rid of it. Replace with more trees.</p>
trees	replace	<p>It needs trees- Deciduous because it needs to look as good as it does now. Needs light in winter.</p> <p>It would be a shame for the fig trees to go as they are part of what makes that area part of Newcastle, but</p> <p>having parkd there many times and been glad of the shade the roots are a danger to walk around(especially at night) and the fruit all over the car is not very good. However, I think that some sort of shade in that area would be wonderful be it trees replacing the figs or someb type of sails</p> <p>such as those at car yards. I think the figs should be removed on a staggered basis and replaced</p> <p>with an alternative tree or cover as they are removed. I like the idea of an eatery at the art</p>
trees	replace	<p>gallery but as much as i would like to see the gallery enlarged I think tha t for the number of</p> <p>people going to it makes this a bit of a waste of money that could be spent on venues or other</p> <p>things more in need that would be better used more people. I love that the Civic theatre is bringing</p> <p>so many good shows to our city and have encouraged many to attend but think promotion of shows needs to be started earlier and cover a wider clientel.</p>



The activities in wheeler place have been excellent and should continue if possible..

I hope this is the type of input you are after

trees	replace	Keep it the same as it is. if trees are a problem, rip them out and plant replacements, staged if necessary to reduce the immediate impact.
trees	replace	Laman St closed to traffic and developed as an extension of Civic Park. The aging Fig trees removed. A line of suitably selected shade trees planted down what is now the northern pathway on Laman St, so as to overhang the road reserve and the park. This new line of trees so be planted simultaneously so as to mature together.
		Laman street is an excellent starting point to explore Civic Park, City Library, The Newcastle Art Gallery plus many other interesting sites nearby.
trees	replace	I feel that public access and a safe thoroughfare is far more important than blocking the area to prolong the life of trees, that are beautiful, but have possibly reached there expiry date. Other trees can be planted in their place and will look just as attractive in the near future. All living things do have an expiry date, this is a reality of life. Creating a safe access to these areas for all people is the priority here.
trees	replace	Laman street should remain the cultural precinct of the CBD. It is important to keep it a pedestrian friendly area. At the moment the trees provide shade and help to integrate it into Civic Park, and through the park to the City Hall and University House. While safety issues cannot be ignored, it would a disaster if the street was denuded without replacing the trees without providing a suitable replacement, whether this be mature trees or a visually striking man made feature.
trees	replace	Laman street should still remain as a two way thoroughfare,with MV parking. All the Fig Trees should be gradually removed over a suitable period of time (say 5yrs)and replaced with more suitable species, spaced out still to create the canopy effect, when you compare the site from old photos, we have to some extent lost the view of the street buildings themselves, particularly the Cultural Centre and very Historic Baptist Tabenacle, from a street scape perspective, Locals and Visitors to our city this is very sad, but can be rectified and planned with the above suggestions.
trees	replace	Laman Street to remain the same - remove the fig trees and plant new trees.
trees	replace	love to see the old trees stay, or replaced with safer ones
trees	replace	maintain shade, maybe replant shrubs that will not be dangerous.

My view is that we should retain the look and feel of the area as much as possible; perhaps go into "damage control" mode and replace each tree on an as needs basis one at a time and only after all repairs and trimming options have been exhausted. I absolutely hated the total de-nuding approach adopted in Tyrrell Street, although I understood the need.

I think we should avoid any sudden changes where ever possible and commence planting replacement trees now, before it becomes necessary to start removing the existing ones so as to have some relatively established growth and avert having the awful barrenness that was Tyrrell Street.

trees            replace            My view is that we probably don't need such ready vehicular access as we had in the past, maybe having restricted parking and one-way traffic so as to cater for the elderly, infirm and disabled. In any event the eastern end of Laman Street should not be a thoroughfare to motor vehicles.

I am not aware of the scope of proposed extensions to the Region Art Gallery, but take the view that expanding on a good thing can only be, by definition also a good thing. The one proviso I would put on that would be that any extension should be sympathetic to the existing building and its surrounds.

I am not in favour of any enhanced 'connectivity' of the various Civic precinct components on opposite sides of King Street that involves walk ways or impedes the flow of traffic in King Street itself. My vision includes big trees: retain as long as possible those that are there, take all measures to prolong their life.

trees            replace            When inevitably, each one must eventually be removed, replace it with another tree that will also be tall and shady.

trees            replace            My vision is that the street become a paved Terrace overlooking Civic Park and the Town Hall. There would be an arched avenue along that stretch of Laman Street. The arch would be covered in greenery so that the steel arch is invisible. That's my endpoint, but the execution is the best part... The steel arches would be erected NOW, and would prevent the existing figtrees from collapsing on the people below. Management of the figtrees would be done in a controlled program. For example, 4 trees would be removed each year and replaced with very mature trees of a different kind. At that rate, it would take 20 years to eventually replace all the trees - but the entire transition would be smooth, and at no stage would the street look totally denuded.

trees            replace            My vision would be for the figs to be removed and replaced with shade trees suitable for the area and possibly a pedestrian only area instead of a traffic road in front of the Library. This would enhance the fountain area and views of Civic Park.

Obviously this is being driven by the fig tree drama. So if they really pose such a safety risk, they have to come out. So whatever vision is decided upon, the research and design team need to work out how to replace that canopy as soon as possible as it does hold a place dear to most Novocastrians and visitors hearts. Whether that canopy is provided by trees or by structures is up to the research team.

Newcastle needs to position itself in the tourism industry. I believe cultural tourism is a valid way to go. This includes architecture, design, public art, art events etc. People do travel the world to see particular structures e.g. the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Sydney Opera House etc. Our bicentenary structure (The Erektion) on Queens Wharf is a huge embarrassment.

trees replace

By looking at Laman Street and other sites around Newcastle for some innovative architecture or statement art pieces, we would have something to market to the tourism industry other than beaches. Lets face it Australia is an island ringed by beaches, so why choose Newcastle?

I believe we should be looking for art events like Sculpture by the Sea for Newcastle. That needs a lot of money so we need to be looking to big business (hello the coal industry) for sponsorship and naming rights.

We have one of the busiest ports in Australia, yet it doesn't reflect in income for Newcastle City. We need to work out how to get a slice of that pie to fund whatever vision you come up with. Because a vision is useless without the means to enact it.

trees replace

Removing alternate trees would enable replacement trees to grow without denuding the area. Parking is also a major issue for visitors.

trees replace

remove all fig trees & replace with people friendly trees that will not provide a hazard. this will also ensure roads gutters & footpaths are not continually damaged by root growth. Importantly parking can then be returned.

Remove all fig trees

make street into pedestrian mall

Plant Native Australian trees

Put in seats & sails

trees replace

Fig trees are dangerous and destructive to surrounding buildings and infrastructure including roads, utilities (phone Gas etc) and buildings and probably the civic fountain, they are messy with their "fruit" with birds spreading the seeds

With a pedestrian mall outdoor exhibitions could be undertaken

Looking out over Civic Park would be an ideal way to eat lunch enjoy a drink or icecream

This would attract tourists to the inner city if something was done about the lack of "access" to the city decent public transport system not a system designed by someone in Sydney

BRING BACK THE TRAMS and preserve the rail line into the city with possible extension through the hill to Mereweather beach either via Nobbys

or along the old coal rail line through Civic Park to the junction and Mereweather with tram or light rail

Put the car parking under the cathedral park by digging in to the hill rather than down below the water table

More use of the area under the hill could be utilised

Tell Jodie McKay to butt out and stop crawling to her political mates in Sydney and listen to what the public want not the few yuppies on the hill

Cut the rail and you KILL the city

Its now a no go for toutists due to the parking policies of the council BRING BACK Free Parking get rid of the meters

Remove the trees that are existing - beautiful but costing a fortune in road and path maintenance. Plant other trees and/or lots of small/tall bushes.

trees replace

Keep the street open to traffic.

Make sure the street is well lit with solar lighting.

trees replace

Exhibit all types of art/craft/poetry and story telling at the Art Gallery & Library - ones that suit all walks of life and all ages.

replace current trees with more suitable trees-try to maintain character under all cicumstances-

trees replace

Retain the fig trees for as long as possible. However selectively start gradually replacing them over as long a period as possible - even 10 years plus. Every effort should be made to minimise the impact that this canopy provides. The canopy provides not only a significant micro environment through shade both also impressive visual backdrop for Civic park and for Laman Street itself. Alternate planting locations, for replacement and additional trees, that could be considered include inside Civic Park below the retaining wall and at the top of the retaining wall to the north of the footpath. These locations may help to minimise the impact that trees root system has on roads, footpaths and underground services in Laman St, but still retain some the current the visual impact.

trees replace

Something that involves keeping the beautiful fig trees, and planting other trees that can replace them in time.

Street Trees: The number of trees ould be reduced. But I would like to see still a shadey canopy of trees to maintain the embience of the street. should the fig trees need to be removed it should be done in a staged manner, remove half , replant and remove the others in a couple of years time so there is a transition, less shock and some time for residents to get use to the new look, feel and fragrance or lack of.

trees replace

Facilities/amenities: I would like to see a tea/coffee shop outside the Library/Gallery vicinity. this should not be seen as competing with established business in Darby Street and wheeler place. At this stage there is no refreshment facilites without a long walk and people have to leave the Art Gallery and Library area. I believe civic park, the Library , cultural Centre and Art Gallery as one entity should havea refreshment facility.

trees	replace	<p>The council should impliment a programme to replace all the mature trees in the LGA. This should be done on a gradual basis of say one in five in an area and then two or three years later another one in five till all are replaced. The current trees which are deemed to be a problem should be trimmed of dangerous branches and replaced as outlined before. The Parking and access through Laman street should be restored. An access door should be cut in the rear of the cultural centre into the library to facilitate entry from the rear car park. Entry to the rear car park should be improved. The parking area adjacent to the Art Gallery should be for general public parking with access out into Council street and one way traffic flow.</p> <p>Other council assets adjacent to the Town Hall should be utilised for expanded library facilities.</p> <p>The first and prime objective must be the long term safety of pedestrians in an area fronting major public cultural facilities. This safety must be secured by removal of the most dangerous trees and immediate planting of replacement trees. As many trees as possible should be heavily lopped to try to retain some of the canopy. The aim should be to gradually over a period of years, replace all old trees with new to secure the long term appearance of the area.</p>
trees	replace	<p>A paved and landscaped pedestrian public open square should be created in the street and pavement area directly in front of the entrances to the Library and the Art Gallery. This square should be linked into the Park, to create a series of linked public spaces from Laman Street, down to the Town Hall and the Civic area. King Street can be incorporated into a open space in front of the Town Hall. Traffic can continue to flow through, but on a visually demarcated surface. Traffic would be stopped on relevant occasions.</p> <p>The facades of the Art Gallery and Library should be remodelled to create a harmonious public streetscape.</p> <p>A parking structure will need to be incorporated into the Art Gallery extensions.</p>
trees	replace	<p>The trees are Laman street. Please try to retain or if they have to be removed then suitable alternatives need to be planted. Thi ms archway is magnificent and the feel should be maintained.</p>

This is a really difficult expectation that you have of residents who know nothing of some of the infrastructure solutions that you asking us to provide vision on.

One thing I will say is that there is constant parking issues in that area. The Town Hall books functions for periods of two hours or more at lunch time for business people to attend. There is an expectation that everyone stays in the room and yet parking is available for two hours only. Watch the parking officers on those days as they swoop like vultures to book the business people attending those events. Shame on you NCC.

trees          replace

In terms of the trees, if they have to go due to safety issues then fair enough. However, the shade there is lovely and provides a gorgeous landscape for wedding photos, walking and more. I suggest that the trees are replaced with a structure that provides a shady, mottled sunlight environment instead. Bye the way, has anyone thought about the birds and other fauna that live in those trees and what their future is likely to be?

I think the access to surrounding areas including Wheeler Place works well as it is. The Pedestrian Crossing is convenient and does not hold traffic up too much. Perhaps roundabouts instead of traffic lights at either end of Civic Park may be more appropriate.

trees          replace

to including the figs with replanting of similar species as the older one die off, better connectivity with civic park.

trees          replace

To leave Laman St as it is or if the figs must go, then replace them with the faster growing figs.

To retain (and if possible, enhance) the iconic heritage streetscape character of Laman St, and to provide better integration between the street and Civic Park (to the north) and the cultural precinct (to the south).

I DON'T want to see Laman St completely denuded of trees at any point, though I do accept that we need to conduct an open-minded assessment of the options (short-term and long term) for the future of the Laman St figs, which will - at some appropriate point - involve replacing the current trees with new stock. However, I have a strong preference for this to be a staged process, over a substantial period.

trees          replace

Council's response to the issue of risk has been akin to panic: if we had the same response to the risk presented by motor vehicles we would instantly close all our roads. The risk of anyone being killed or seriously injured by a tree in Laman St is very minimal, especially compared with other everyday risks we tolerate without even thinking in our normal lives.

As well as dealing with the Laman St situation, council needs to adapt its risk response to achieve a more appropriate balance between risk mitigation and other public interest considerations. The current response simply fuels anti-tree tendencies in some of the community, and is counterproductive to the aims and objectives of council's urban forest strategy.

Trees like Humans have a finite life span. With the previous centuries lack of tree knowledge, the Laman Street Figs branches have been pruned incorrectly, various public utilities have hacked through roots, bitument paving has surrounding the trunk areas preventing water penetration. Cars have been allowed to park up against the trees further compacting soil and squashing the roots.

With an opportunity to revitalise the area I'm sure correct NATSPEC guidelines will be used for new trees that replace the Figs when they have to go.

trees            replace            I suggest that Laman Street been closed to vehicle traffic (except emergency vehicles) between Darby Street and Dawson Street. The existing road area could be levelled and repaved to create a pedestrian friendly plaza area in front of the Art Gallery and Library. The steps that currently exist to the east and west ends the park from Laman Street into Civic Park could be remodelled into disabled walking/wheelchair ramps. At the moment disabled people can only get into Civic Park from its Auckland, King and Darby Street boundaries. There is no disabled access into the park direct from the Art Gallery or Library. I suggest that the entrance to the steps above the fountain on Laman Street be widened, in conjunction with steps that go done either side of fountain also being widened. This would to encourage people to site and socialise on the steps.

Landscape Architects would be able to provide advice to improve the current seating layout in the park, and on appropriate trees species to planted in the park and on Laman street to assist in the linking of the area. Trees- they should all be removed and more suitable ones put in, all at once. A flat safe walking area is probably more important than retaining these trees with such huge roots.

trees            replace            Parking in Laman St - at least some parking should be retained

Art Bazaar, Dec - visitors and stallholders (I am one) to this event overwhelmingly thought it should be held in the park, in the future, and not the street.  
Wow! That's a bit of a tall order, first up.

trees            replace            The main thing I miss in the current situation (apart from the beauty of the arch of trees that one could drive through)is being able to park and pop in to see what's new in the gallery, or pick up a book. But it's unlikely that is going to be possible again unless the tress are removed. And this raises the question of whether any activity will be possible with the trees in place, as there is no way anyone can guarantee complete safety with them there. So it would seem that unless the trees are removed the only thing that could be done is to rope them off as a nice sight to be viewed from outside a fence. And this would mean blocking off the street to pedestrian traffic providing a new entrance for the public to the Art Gallery and maybe the Library too. Obviously not a practicable proposition.

So we need to remove the trees, very regrettably. And then provide something else that would provide an attraction to people to visit the area and linger. More (safe) trees in the long run. Plants at least, the bigger the better, and some shade canopies in the short run. Perhaps a sculpture garden (does NRAG have enough)? Not another pavement cafe, please. Some research is needed into what has been successful/popular anywhere

in the world when similar removals of trees have had to be done. Since the planned extensions to the Gallery are round the other side, there need be no real impact on Laman St, except the need to preserve the present entrance.

trees	replace	<p>Laman Street is perfect as it is. Most Newcastle people are skeptical about the advice that the Laman Street trees are unsafe since this advice comes from the team that destroyed the beauty of Tyrrell Street, using the excuse that the trees were unsafe; the loss of the canopy there is a source of unhappiness to most residents. Employ arboricultural techniques and access advice that preserves the trees and prolongs their life. The external arborist assessed the life expectancy of the trees as 5 to 15 years. This is impossible to predict and many Newcastle residents believe the trees' outlook is likely to be much greater. The next 5 to 15 years should be spent looking after the trees. The time could also be spent growing replacement trees. Saying that the current generation of Newcastle people should put up with Laman Street as a desert so that future generations can benefit is not acceptable. If the trees have to be replaced they should be replaced with fully grown trees. These should be able to be sourced fairly close to Newcastle. Randwick race course and Homebush Bay transplanted huge figs. This street is of equal importance to those sites -Sydney has streets similar to Laman St on their Significant tree register. That Newcastle would ever contemplate felling our trees beggars belief. These trees are home to grey-headed flying foxes which are listed as vulnerable and could be extinct within decades if their recent rate of decline is not slowed. Removing these figs decreases their habitat and removes a food source. A bus should go up the street for elderly people who use the library if you intend to persist with the ridiculous notion that it is dangerous to park in the street. Disabled parking should be provided at the eastern end of the Art Gallery. Increase seating and picnic tables in Civic Park so it becomes more usable. The idea that a parking station should be built under Civic Park (John Tate) or that council's parking stations should be sold (council's general manager) are ridiculous.</p>
		<p>Trees must be removed and replaced with non-invasive shrubs/trees.</p>
trees	replace	<p>Ongoing repairs/replacements are becoming more expensive because of these trees.</p> <p>It is very difficult to find parking in the area so that people can go to the Cultural Centre with out blocking parking spaces - Maybe powers to be at the Council do not want people in town.</p>
trees	replace	<p>For the trees to be replaced slowly and alternatively to still have a thick, growing tree line one way street.</p>
trees	replace	<p>Remove the figs &amp; replace with native gum trees.</p>
trees	replace	<p>Remove the trees if they are a risk and put in better types. We are the laughing stock when we close the street due to the wind.</p>
trees	replace	<p>The existing Hills Fig trees have, unfortunately, pretty-well reached the end of their life. Gradually replace each existing tree with a comparable young one. (By 'gradua'l, I mean to rreplace so that there is not a conception of 'reckless denudation'.</p>

It is an interesting choice of word 'precinct' (An enclosed space having defined limits, normally marked by walls) yet this space to me is open, not enclosed however it sounds like Council has predetermined that walls will enclose this space!

trees	retain	Laman Street is a beautiful stree BECAUSE of the trees that line it,nothing else attracts attention, gives the feeling of a ornamental and attractive street. Research by whom and for what purpose is being quoted that states these trees are dangerous, research can be twisted and used by people to say anything that they want.
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My visison is for the trees to remain. Close off the street to cars and make it a precint if this is what you want ie to reduce legal action for damage to vehicles. Add a cafe, chairs and a develop an openair area which uses the shade from the trees to our advantage. Develop a feeling of a cultural centre as well as environmental area within Newcastle, open the front of the Art gallery with wide modern sliding doors that encourage people in, refect this in the Library and open up the view to Civic Park, develop style and culture in Newcastle but keep the trees to enhance the area.

\* Fig trees to stay. They add character, history, grandeur and shade. Trim back any branches deemed "dangerous". Keep the trees.

\* Give the gallery and library a facelift. They appear dated. New technology.

trees	retain	* More bicycle racks for bike parking.
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\* More outdoor sculptures/art.

\* A few more tables and chairs in the park so students and wortkers can access wireless internet from library.  
2 options

trees	retain	1. Retaining the trees - take up tarmac, give the roots a chance to grow, and have horticultogist monitor the trees. It will take another 50 - 100 years to replace them. If there is any way of retaining them it should be considered. Not just getting into a panic (like what might happen to the Bogey Hole!) about potential litigation - can we please have a council with guts, vision and a sense of excitement for the city.
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2. Without trees - close or narrow the road and have an outdoor park associated with the Gallery.

There can be provision for parking but without the trees that area will be a wasteland unless something splendid is done to it. A sculpture park could be considered.

A new multi-storey council building on the corner of Hunter and Auckland streets, to house

- PAN (performance, practice and office spaces),
- Octapod (art, meeting, presentation, workshop, networking spaces)
- community event shopfront (office HQ,shopfron, sponsorship signature) ;
- NCC admin

trees            retain      Study of the "tree environment" (tree perspective - sectors set aside for purpose of adequate root growth rather than randomly pushing up tarmac; location and avoidance of certain pipes, etc).

Formulation of the (at least) three functions/purposes the trees hold for the street, eg:

- shading street;
- cooling art gallery and library;

trees            retain      - beautifying location  
 A public space with trees retained  
 Access to the Newcastle Region Library - No problem with the current arrangement and restricted parking.

Future plans for extending the Art Gallery - A great gallery, hopefully the extensions promise more and better exhibitions

trees            retain      Public safety relating to the Hills Fig trees - Fig trees give wonderful shade, soft filtered light and are a great asset visually. However I can understand the safety issue. Is it possible to retain them safely ?

Parking and traffic issues - Free parking on weekends and holidays.

Enjoyment and uses of Civic Park and Laman Street - Probably clean up the public toilets and open them during daylight hours.

trees            retain      As a qualified arbourist i would remove the dangerous limbs but leave the trees as they are magnificent and really should stay. having moved into Darby st recently and living in Newcastle most of my life i have always loved the trees along lamen st and would be strongly opposed to the removal of these trees.

		<p>As I love trees, my vision would be to continue to have the mature trees existing there now.</p>
trees	retain	<p>If there are issues about safety to the public I could only tolerate a surgical lopping so the danger may be eliminated. In that event even in strong winds there should be no great force to cause trees to be uprooted and fall over.</p> <p>The aim would be to retain the lovely appearance that we so much enjoy looking at and the lopping as above may make their appearance even better.</p> <p>I don't foresee any danger to vehicles that may park there if the above maintenance is achieved.</p> <p>Awaiting the detailed information about the relative health of the trees. If the trees are ultimately in poor health, and/or their root systems have been compromised, as difficult as the decision is, I believe they should therefore be removed. If a plan is able to be put in place in the next 12 months, suitable replacement trees could be obtained, and grown to semi-mature status in another location, with plans to place them in Laman street immediately upon removal of the figs.</p>
trees	retain	<p>However if the trees are reasonable healthy, or it can be predicted that with a better treatment of their root run, they would recover (in much the same manner as the Lambton Park figs, which have thrived with mulched root areas), consideration should be given to closing Laman Street to traffic, and creating a continuum from Civic Park to the Library and Art Gallery. Some loss of parking would result, although not much. Contemplate reopening Queen Street between Darby Street and Dawson Street would be needed to provide a balance of traffic flow.</p>
		<p>Council, for far to long has been more intent on issues that are not what they were elected to do.</p> <p>Get back to basics, forget the overrated, overpaid 'consultants' and so called 'experts', represent and listen to, and act upon the ratepayers suggestion, who pay the wages and ongoings of all council staff.</p> <p>Laman Street is one of many areas that has been neglected by council for far to long to the extent where we, the ratepayers, now have a major problem which once again we will pay for thanks to councils inability to deal with basic issues, preferring to be involved in beaurocratic inefficiencies.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Council must act on the peoples wishes, not dictate to them.</p> <p>The tail has been shaking the dog for far to long.</p> <p>Wake up NCC, get back to basics, stop building sandcastles in the sky, introduce value for our rates dollar.</p> <p>LISTEN to and ACT upon the wishes of the people, who you are supposed to be representing.</p> <p>Maintain Laman Street as close to it is today, with ongoing maintainance, which has been sadly lacking in the past.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Don't remove the fig trees</p>

trees	retain	<p>Dont remove the trees, make it a part of Civic park, as a mall or foot access only.</p> <p>Have vehicle parking close by. Environmentally friendly lighting (solar and better designed to 'save our dark skies' and commit to avoiding light pollution);</p>
trees	retain	<p>Retain and maintain the Moreton Bay Figs;</p> <p>Remove the car parking from that section of Laman Street and create what could be a marvellously quite pedestrian zone adjoining our gallery, cultural centre and the marvellous inner-city Civic Park).</p>
trees	retain	<p>erect signs for residents and visitors to be warned of the danger posed by the trees. close the street to vehicular traffic if it means the trees can be retained. the only thing left in the city with any charm are the trees in laman st. retain the trees. axe the arborists and lawyers.</p> <p>Every effort must be made to protect the tree lined beauty of the street scape. We don't do enough to save old trees in Newcastle, too quick with the chippers I'm afraid. See what the Japanese experience is with protecting older trees, they erect all sort of support structures to protect them. The Fountain needs attention, it is looking awful, is it rusting? Please restore the Fountain. I don't mind if cars are not allowed, but it is always a beautiful spot to park in the shade on extremely hot days, and since Newcastle is doing buggar all about its coal industry, we will certainly need more shade. I think the fear of litigation is have terrible ramifications on our public places. There are thousands killed on roads, yet we don't close them, we spend money on fixing black spots. The likelihood of a problem is minimised if we take measures such as planting new trees now, if we need to phase out the dying ones. Laman street is characterised by its trees, so my vision is look after them.</p>
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trees	retain	<p>Shade.</p> <p>This street is memorable for many people as after celebrating their wedding vows they arrive for walking along this street with the fig trees.</p> <p>There needs to be the lovely romance of fig trees in my vision for the future.</p>

trees	retain	<p>Having lived in Canberra and Sydney and spent time travelling to other major and regional cities throughout Australia my perspective is influenced by these experiences. For example I often lament about what has happened to the foreshore in terms of the blocking of the views from the Honeysuckle Precinct. I envisage a version of Brisbane's Southbank could be built along the harbour foreshore with swimming areas, a market/cultural precinct with the possibility of an outdoor ampitheatre or such. As for Civic Park I would be horrified to think the figs would have to go and since living in Newcastle for over 10 years cannot get over the "anti-tree" brigade throughout the town. Brisbane for example does not seem to have this hangup and rejoices in its leafy green trees which don't get hacked to bits by Energy Australia. What is the problem? We have had the neurotic removal of playground equipment by councils (my local park was effected) and now it's the trees turn. Sorry for becoming emotional but the crowning glory of the area in question is those magnificent trees and to remove them will leave a very drab looking street - no doubt to reflect the rest of the city especially Hunter Street. As for the library, and the art gallery I believe a coffee shop, especially using the shade from the figs could be an asset. As a visitor to the Conservatorium and the Civic Theatre I think Live Sites have been terrific and have no complaints or suggestions to change anything in this area. Thankyou for taking the time to read my point of view. How it is now is fine, keep the Moreton Bay Figs and apart from that there is nothing that needs to be done to.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Get on with fixing up the rest of this <b>shit tip city</b>. There are hundreds of places that need more attention than Laman Street.</p> <p>I am fairly new to Newcastle. But do visit the art gallery on occasions and love the presence of the trees in that street. It would be a real shame to see them go.</p>
trees	retain	<p>As for parking. I have never had a problem parking there. Although, extra parking spaces or a parking lot would be good.</p> <p>I believe Lamen street should retain the trees, they improve the asthetic appeal of the street complementing the civic park area across the road. They improve the atmosphere in the city, giving a green feel to an otherwise concrete jungle. I feel it would be a tragic loss if the trees were to be removed. You only have to look at neighbouring streets that now appear barren where the beautiful trees once stood.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I believe that every effort should be made to retain these majestic fig trees. Many people are fed up with the paranoia about possible litigation, which has resulted in the loss of numerous pleasurable events, pastimes and venues. The only way to ensure that a falling branch will not hit someone is to eliminate every tree in Newcastle. Accidents will always happen and are not predictable. Any branches that are obviously decayed can be removed. Tyrrell Street has lost its character. If the Laman Street trees go, It doesn't matter what you do there; the charm and character has gone.</p> <p>Better lighting for Civic Park, for safety.</p> <p>The library is great.</p>

trees	retain	<p>I believe that the Laman Street-Civic Precinct is the focal point of the Administrative and Cultural sector of the City. The area has always been recognised by the magnificent fig trees which provide a back-drop to Civic Park and an avenue to the Cultural Centre. They should be retained at all costs with vehicular parking in Laman Street denied at all times. Vehicular access could be denied in Laman Street between Darby Street and Dawson Street. If this is considered to be inappropriate then lights could perhaps be installed in Laman Street which will prevent access when the wind velocity exceeds 25 Knots for example. The same lights could also warn pedestrians of impending danger.</p>
trees	retain	<p>To cut down the trees because of the possibility of future damage to person or property is a typical but poor response. I would doubt that any significant damage would occur if the abovementioned measures were adopted. I would suggest that regular monitoring of the condition of the trees and lopping of suspect limbs would result in the trees being safe for the vast majority of the time. For times when there is an increased risk of falling limbs then implement the warning measures. Unfortunately Bureaucrats would rather eliminate risk than manage it.</p> <p>I can't imagine Laman Street without the fig trees. My husband and I had photos taken in front of the trees on our wedding day and they are absolutely gorgeous. It would be nice to be able to show those trees to our kids when they grow up.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Established trees are rare and our city is lucky to have them. If at all possible, I think it would be better to keep them and have them maintained to minimise risk.</p> <p>I enjoy the Civic Park / Laman Street / Art Gallery / Library precinct and want to see it improved as a quiet and attractive inner city refuge with mainly pedestrian access if it comes to a choice. I feel that the trees in Laman Street must remain.</p>
trees	retain	<p>If this means that vehicular use of Laman Street is unsafe and must cease, then so be it. This may mean construction of (strong) pedestrian covered walkway across Laman Street at the top of the Civic Park steps and some provision for covered parking that would cater for vehicles carrying physically handicapped people.</p> <p>I feel strongly that the beautiful trees must stay.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I love Laman Street/Civic Precinct, just the way it is with its beautiful fig trees which would be a shame to lose. I think the access to the area should be by foot only with parking and traffic not within the area of Laman Street in front of the Library etc. Signage could be erected to warn people of the dangers of possible falling branches and ensure the trees are checked and maintained on a regular basis to minimise the chance of someone getting hurt from falling branches. Civic Park/Laman Street is such a great area for many public events and visitors that if more resources/money was used to maintain the area I think this would be the feedback from all locals and visitors to the area.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I really like the way it looks now - a tree lined street - so something similar in appearance would be in keeping with how I would like it to look</p>

		<p>I think removing the fig trees is non negotiable, they're an asset to the city, and any issues with the trees should be taken care of. Once this is done re-open the road to through traffic maybe without the parking.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I think the money to be used for any future expansion of the art gallery could be better spent creating a permanent stage and performance space in Civic Park, possibly using Federation Square as inspiration, I don't mean just a concrete stage, but a space that is a work of art itself, which in turn would become a focal point in the park. Fees charged for the use of the space could be used to maintain the area.</p> <p>I hope my idea's are helpful. I think the old trees should be kept. As a photographer I am asked by the public to have photographs taken on that street. They are much loved.</p> <p>The wiz bins are a necessary item. They look ugly. They need to be covered or disguised.</p> <p>The footpath has hotmix bitumen on it as paving. This is an ugly form of paving.</p>
trees	retain	<p>This area is important to show off lets have things that look good and are long lasting.</p> <p>The public toilets in the area smell. They are a disgrace to Newcastle. People only use them as a last resort. If they were cleaned properly we would attract more visitors. Toilets in Homehill Queensland advertise they are the cleanest in the country and have regular stops of travellers stopping to use them. Plus the businesses in the town get a financial benefit.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I think the street should still be open to pedestrians but not to traffic! I think the way it is closed off to parked cars now is great. Who knows what the parking on the left hand side of street on the roots of trees was doing to the condition of them? Laman street is so beautiful and the state of the trees should be 1st priority.</p> <p>I think the trees should be retained. The matter of "Public Safety" should not be confused with "fear of legal support for irresponsible action" by litigious individuals.</p> <p>Some minimal sensitive pruning of dead branches may be necessary; but why not build some sort of covered walkway, one that blends in &amp; is not the typical el cheapo monstrosity that would be an eyesore &amp; could be foisted on us only if we allow it. Surely we have architects who could design something harmonious.</p>
trees	retain	<p>As to parking, isn't there vacant land up near railway st, I think Nesca used to own it, the tax office employees used to park there once. Build a decent multi level parking station there. One is needed in the area anyway.</p> <p>Money to fund the parking station could be the money council (stupidly) accepted in lieu of the required parking the approval for the building consent of the tax office building, augmented with the extra \$\$\$ required by grants from the state &amp; federal governments from one or other or several of their slush funds or pok barrel funds. elections are after all on the horizons, &amp; god knows we don't get our fair share from either of these branches of government.</p>

If the "local rag" converted itself to an intelligent newspaper (from being an active participant in the subversive "dumbing down Australia society"), it could start to be a responsible campaign leader for the region, help wake the locals up & turn the area into swinging seats & gain some fair political outcome for the region.

The art gallery should be expanded as a matter of urgency.

Civic Park & the environs should be maintained & upgraded.

trees	retain	<p>I would have to consider it further. However I do feel very strongly about the trees and that they remain. They add a wonderful ambiance to the street. There must be a way to fortify them or something to ensure we can keep them.</p> <p>I recently saw the gallery extension proposal and think it would be a fantastic addition.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I would like it to remain the prettiest street in Newcastle, with the fig trees, access to park, galleries and libraries. parking not required if alternatives provided.</p>
trees	retain	<p>i would like to see the trees remain in laman street as it provides plenty of shade to that area.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I would love to see civic park kept and the trees kept too...if Sydney Botanic gardens manages to keep them we can too! It's a lovely place to study, read, have a picnic with your family, and have close access to Darby street and the city library and art gallery. It would be nice with a little more security at night though, especially with Finnigans club around the corner.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I would love to see the canopy of fig trees remain. Some branches could be pruned based upon expert opinion. The art gallery could be expanded upon the land currently reserved for RTA and Samaritans. A second deck garage could be placed over the Queen St space. Parking appears to tight following the decision to permit expansion of the Delaney Hotel. No commercial structures should be permitted in Civic park. Close the park by a reasonable hour and enforce it.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I would make every effort to keep the trees. Close Laman St and make an extension of civic park, get rid of the hard surface road replacing it with a lawn or garden like surface that will encourage a healthier root structure for the trees.</p> <p>A parking area at the Darby St. end would provide some parking close to the public buildings, not as much as in the existing arrangement, but maybe relooking at the existing parking along side of the Gallery combined with a parking area at the Darby St end of Laman St. even if it encroached into the Darby, Laman corner of Civic Park may provide enogh parking to service the public buildings.</p> <p>I really beleive we should look at all options to keep these trees.</p>

trees	retain	<p>I would really like as many of the trees as possible to remain, especially after the loss of similar trees in Tyrrell Street, which still looks bare and devastated. Of course, safety is always important, but a more staged and gentle approach, aimed at maintaining what we have as long as we can, would be my preference to wholesale and immediate destruction of a most beautiful and climatically useful avenue which complements our cultural precinct so well. If traffic needs to be redirected for a time, so be it.</p> <p>I'd like to see the fig trees remain as it makes it unique in Newcastle. Its the Newcastle Insurence company who insists that any alight liability they have is attended to.</p>
trees	retain	<p>I'm in NZ at the moment and they don't seem to have the same concern for safety that we have in Australia.</p> <p>People of my age do not have time to wait for new trees to grow to the height of the fig trees so leave them alone.</p> <p>If there is a way of preserving the trees, then that would be my wish. If the trees are in fact dangerous (and from my reading and research this is not proven) then suitable advanced trees should be substituted.</p>
trees	retain	<p>If the art gallery is to be expanded, it should be designed in such a way that it does not impact on the Memorial Grove, which is a dedicated war memorial site.</p> <p>Perhaps the roadway should be closed to cars and levelled into a promenade with seating and a small outdoor cafe (Juicy Beans style) A drop off area could be established at the Darby and Dawson street ends to allow access for the less mobile.</p>
trees	retain	<p>If well-meaning people start dictating that most of the beautiful old trees in Melbourne are unsafe and need removing.....I'm sure they would come up with something.....and so should we in the case of Laman Street. If the area is a Art/Culture corridor.....leave the trees that can be saved but have public art style structures designed and put in place to support the trees and also signify the theme of the area.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Keep fig trees in current location</p>
trees	retain	<p>No change to park</p>
trees	retain	<p>Keep the trees - put up warning signs. Don't allow people to linger in the area.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Keeping those big trees.</p>



Laman street as you state is a very important cultural link to Newcastle. The Hills Fig trees play an important roll in the visual and historical part of the precinct.

Firstly, let me tell you of my experience in Tyrrell Street...At the time I was living in a town house 19/116 Tyrrell, one morning I looked over the balcony to see a team of council workers cutting the roots of the fig tree in front of our property, I ran downstairs asking them what they thought they were doing. I was told they had orders from council to cut the roots as they were causing damage to the road. I explained to them that if they cut the roots (which they were about 500cm from the trunk circumnavigating the tree) and they didn't cut the top branches back, in the next storm the trees would fall over. They told me to complain to council and they proceeded to cut the roots of two other trees going down to Darby.

I rang the council and put forward my complaint, explaining that the tree roots had been lifting the road to my knowlege for more than 30 years, why all of a sudden did three trees need to have their roots cut.

trees

retain

Well I found out why, of course in the next storm the three trees in question fell over, very strategically placed so as not to cause much damage to property, but who knew when they would fall and if people would be injured. Next the council announced the trees were a danger to the public and must come down, they subsequently removed all the fig trees from the middle of Tyrrell to Darby - funny thing is the Electricity Commission was putting a new sub station in and they needed to dig huge trenches, 2 meters wide and about three deep to lay their cables...the amazing thing is they happen to be where the trees were removed and surprisingly, the trees on the upper part of Tyrrell Street which was past the sub station were not dangerous and could stay.

My question is what ulterior motive has council this time, how many tree roots have they cut or will cut, would it be that it is necessary to have a clear space to build the new Art Gallery?

We as citizens of the city I am sure would all agree that we will take our chances walking and driving down Laman Street, it should be left alone, it is perfect the way it is, blocking the street as it is now is disruptive to traffic flow and restricts the access to the Art Gallery and library etc. - LEAVE IT ALONE.

Laman Street between Dawson and Darby Streets should be closed to traffic and the road ripped up and replaced with grass. The giant fig trees provide a natural arch way, and, especially if there were a small flag-stone footpath down the centre of the street, it would be an incredibly popular place for weddings. I've lived in Cooks Hill for 13 years, and see SEVERAL bridal parties nearly every weekend almost queueing up to use Laman Street and Civic Park for pictures. Council could charge a small fee for the use of the arch-way on Laman Street and certainly make enough money to check and maintain the trees.

As the Art Gallery is planning to expand, during the renovation process, the main entrance to the gallery could be moved to where the RTA carpark is.

If weddings were taking place on Laman Street, it would be possible for the renovated Art Gallery to have a function room, which would be a revenue-raiser for the Gallery. There would be a natural progression for the use of the space all around Laman Street near Civic Park.

The park itself should have a rotunda (another wedding revenue-raiser), probably between the fountain and Darby Street, and DISCRETELY, tucked away in the corner near Auckland Street, a SMALL good-quality coffee bar.

trees            retain

In a GRADUATED fashion, as the fig trees need to be replaced, they should be replaced with a single variety of tree that has the arching quality of the figs without the fruit, fruitbat, and tree root issues. Something native would be good for a start!

The events that occur in Wheeler Place need to be COORDINATED with what is on at the Civic Theatre and at the Playhouse. I've paid for tickets at those venues before, and had noise interference from free events, like the Latin dancing, in Wheeler Place. It is unforgivable to have that sort of sloppy planning in an area that is so often disused!

Wheeler place could be used in the daytime by local workers, and people waiting for trains IF there were a shade structure connecting the tourist information building to the Civic Theatre (I'm envisioning something very tall, and louvered, so it let in light during winter and closed in summer for maximum shade. Then, restaurants / take aways could gain licenses to put tables out under the shade structure (another revenue raiser for Council) for certain periods during the day, and perhaps some Council-owned picnic tables on the periphery for people who bring their own lunches. Wheeler place also needs a fountain - perhaps one of those under ground ones that sends up shoots of water at intervals, and most, importantly, can be turned OFF and made unobtrusive when there are big events there.

trees            retain

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trees            retain

The trees in question are of historical significance to the local area. I feel that these do not create any more of a risk to the general public than other trees in the local area. Acts of nature can not always be foreseen. There may never be an issue with these trees. Parking or drop off areas should be incorporated within this area in order to allow physically challenged people equal access to our cultural centre.

Hopefully, more parking could be accommodated in plans to update the Art Gallery which would still keep the ambience of the tree lined street which borders Civic Park.

I see this area growing in tourism opportunities providing flow on effects for the city if we are able to maintain a visually attractive and accessible area unique to the city of Newcastle.



trees	retain	<p>LEave it just as it is, thank you very much. I live just around the corner and am happy with the current situation. The trees can be removed and pruned as they age. I do not understand why these trees are considered particularly dangerous when there are similar trees all over newcastle - eg top of tyrrell st outside the school, further up laman street, at the park in Adamstown on Brunker road, etc etc that are clearly of similar age that have not had signs erected or safety fences installed. Where trees have been removed - in Tyrrel st - the results are ugly and the trees that are clearly the most at risk - at the top of the hill outside the school where the wind load is greatest have not been touched. Just leave it alone and spend councils money where it is needed - on aging infrastructure - rather than on pointless projects like this.</p>
trees	retain	<p>leave the area as it is. if it is thought necessary put up warning signs about the trees</p>
trees	retain	<p>Leave the trees alone or replace them with trees that are the same size.          Leave the trees</p>
trees	retain	<p>Leave the park. Why does a half baked idea like a car park under the park warrant so much attention ???          My vision for the future of Laman Street and the Civic Precinct is firstly for the area to protect the beautiful fig trees. They are the heart of this street, just as they were the feature that made Tyrell Street such a special place (now it's just an unattractive, bare hill). The other features that should be retained at all costs (in my opinion) is the Library (especially the wonderful entrance - although I am glad they got rid of the blue lights in the toilets!) and the fountain in Civic Park (and the surrounding trees and gardens - and PLEASE don't seriously consider building an underground car park - with the pitiful visitation to the CBD, it's hardly warranted, is it?), the war memorials and Civic Station - which will hopefully continue running all the way through to Newcastle Station! The Art Gallery is looking shabby - inside and out. NCC or Newcastle's leaders who will be determining the future of the Gallery should take a look at some of the other regional galleries throughout NSW (at places like Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bathurst, Dubbo, etc.) to see that these places can rival Newcastle's gallery despite being in country locations. Please put the pointy sculpture back at the front too!! The one that's there currently is awful - I'm surprised some drunk hasn't drowned in it yet!!</p>

My vision for the future of the Laman Street - Civic Precinct is simple.

My vision is to keep the Hill Figs.

It is to take additional steps to establish the viability of the Hill Figs and to maintain their presence and the natural heritage of the area.

trees	retain	If it is proven (given the recent depth assessment findings regarding the roots, this is not yet the case) that the trees are failing and do need to be removed, my vision is for a staged removal of the Hill Figs to allow for new trees (of similar size and which grow in a timely manner) to grow in the place of the existing trees.
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The precinct is enhanced by the trees on many levels, socially, economically, culturally and environmentally. It would be a disgrace for them to be removed in the name of development if no genuine risks is actually present.

If a genuine risk is determined then my vision would be to investigate safety measures that allow for the trees to remain for as long as possible.

trees	retain	My vision is for a street with a beautiful overhanging archway of trees like those there at present. I believe there is a need for an alternate through drive either there or in Swan Street for east bound cars.
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trees	retain	My vision is to be able to walk along this street in twenty years time and still see those magnificent trees arching over the street!
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trees	retain	No cars, removal of tar and replace with hard packed soil so you feel like you are in a forest. Allowances for water to enter good drainage systems. No cement or concrete at all. As you near buildings you do need proper footpaths made out of stone. Timber seats for people to have lunch on. Water fountains so the public can get a drink. A feature fountain with bubbling water. Stone steps down to Civic Park. Stone steps up to the Library. Night lighting should also be a feature so all buildings can be accessed at night without large dark areas. The Art Gallery should also have stone paths and steps. The trees should be made safe for falling branches. I feel the Music Con and the two Churches should connect together with this design by similar stone paths.
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trees	retain	Public safety? WTF? When will it end? Keep the trees!!!
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trees	retain	Remove the asphalt surrounding each tree and make an open soil area parallel with the footpath, remove each alternate tree and plant a more appropriate tree, preferably a native as succession planting so that the green corridor can be retained. By narrowing the roadway between Darby and Dawson streets creating a one-way thoroughfare with short term parking and having wide garden beds, the street and trees will be made safer for pedestrians and motorists.
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Retention of the fig trees.

		Removal only to be considered if there is strong evidence that the trees represent a danger to public health which is at least as great as car driving in Newcastle.
trees	retain	If removal of some trees is judged essential under the criterion above, this should be done in a staged fashion over 5-10 years. I understand staged removal is the preferred approach in other jurisdictions such as Canberra and some Sydney shires.
trees	retain	That it be a focal point for art/sculpture and craftworks of Newcastle. That it could include more street sculptures and the "him and her" figure sculptures from inside the library are moved outside as they were originally intended. That the fig trees are always preserved.
trees	retain	That these beautiful trees be maintained. That the flow from the art gallery and library continue with the cascading stairs.
trees	retain	The area has always been the highlight of my visits to Newcastle. I have wonderful memories of what it was like to live in such a culturally rich place that embraced the history of the city. If the trees in Laman Street were to be removed just as the Tyrrel Street trees have been, it would rob this beautiful, peaceful part of the city of soul. It is such a shame that tree management in Newcastle has been reduced to removal as the cheapest option. Many sacred trees in Japan for example have been protected for centuries.
trees	retain	The avenue of fig trees is a valuable part of the newcastle landscape. Ideally I'd like to see the trees retained for as long as possible - with plantings of established trees between to grow and form a new avenue to replace the current one.
		The Coral trees are a wonderful feature of the area in question and should remain there if this is possible.
trees	retain	It should be possible to wire the weakend branches (limbs) back to eaiter the truck or an opposing branch on that same tree. I have seen this done in England - at a hotel on York; with two large steel cables holding the large tree banches. I was there in August 2009 and I took two photos of this grand old tree in the courtyard of this relatively upmarket accomodation where I had stayed.
trees	retain	If the traffic flow would not be too restricted around this area then perhaps the street in front of the galley and the library would benefit from being shut off. Provided that the large Coral trees could be safely maintained then this streetscape could be converted into a paved corso for public use. The Council's tree program should include a city wide program of continuous care for these precious avenues. I have had contact with the Council officers over the years in <b>my roles on Park Committees</b> . It has always been my opinion that decision makers in council take a 'too little too late' approach to the preservation and regeneration of our trees in the city. Every effort should be made to preserve the existing avenue of trees in Laman Street. I feel strongly that other cities and countries solve the issue of avenues of trees without resorting to removing them because of public safety risk. Responsibility for safety should also rest with the public and not be wholly the responsibility of public authorities.

		<p>The emotional 'pull' of large shady trees should be retained.</p> <p>When a design has been decided upon, planting of suitable trees, which will not drop dangerous branches, but providing beauty and a sense of seclusion from City bustle, should start immediately.</p> <p>The existing fig trees could be removed progressively so citizens don't have to endure a hot dry 'wasteland' for many years where there is now shade and quietness.</p> <p>Laman St could be made traffic free, up as far as the Gibson St intersection, making a plaza where there is now a large intersection at the junction of Laman and Auckland Sts.</p>
trees	retain	<p>This would link the pedestrian area right thru from the end of Darby St to The Conservatorium with its concert hall.</p> <p>Traffic re-routed down Gibson to Auckland Sts &amp; thus to King St Auckland St intersection, round the rear of the Block the Con stands on.</p> <p>St Andrews church would then be displayed more advantageously and the Plaza would offer opportunity for Food, and drink Al fresco, and even performances if power was supplied to the plaza..</p> <p>Having said that, extension of the Gallery-upwards for preference- access to the library can then be incorporated into the plan. Facilities to present markets and concerts in the Civic Park and plaza, a playground &amp; a Wading Pool perhaps, could be included, making the area a quiet yet well-used place which citizens feel is used by THEM for their recreation and as a quiet hub during the working week.</p> <p>this is a great opportunity for NCC to use its imagination and initiative. The figs must remain as it is a picturesque avenue and as a visitor to the library I always admire the street and if they were cut down it would look bare and uninteresting. It is better to have no parking and limited car access during high winds than remove the trees. I thought that these trees not being very old had a longer life span of possibly hundreds of years, but they must remain. Newcastle is losing to many natural assets making this a dull and uninteresting city. The park is okay but I do believe the Art Gallery should be moved and the library expanded into more exhibition space. The Old Post Office would make an excellent art gallery with tourist already in the East End being able to move from the new Museum to the gallery and it would also help the CBD. If the Post Office was adopted as an art gallery we would have one that all Newcastle would be proud of.</p>
trees	retain	<p>The trees need to be retained. Newcastle lacks large trees especially in the CBD. The trees can be pruned and not removed.</p>
trees	retain	<p>The Hills Fig Trees in Laman St is probably one of the highlights and all possible options to preserve them should be explored.</p>

		The library to be relocated to the Old Post Office, where transport is better, and no hills.
		The trees remain.
trees	retain	No one dig up civic park for car park ! Shuttle bus around town to include destinations, not just bus stops.
trees	retain	Parking at about three venues,(no 1 sportsground, old co-op store, that park in George st Tighes hill- ) and shuttle bus combined service. to retain the trees, just trim branches off that are long & hanging horizontally.
trees	retain	the answer to the tree problem doesn't have to be so severe as cut them all out.
trees	retain	Trees need to be maintained but maybe cut back to an acceptable and safe level.
trees	retain	We see the Laman St figs (and indeed all other large figs in the NCC area) as very valuable, both aesthetically and environmentally, and would be disappointed for them to be removed without serious consideration of alternatives. We are pleased that the Council is consulting widely with the community before making a final decision regarding this matter.
trees	retain	What Cait says is what we think
trees	retain	What's wrong with it now? Not everything has to change to be good. Ripping the trees out would be devastating to the area and make it look terrible.
trees	retain	With at least 15 years experience dealing with the health of native vegetation and after having a look at the trees concerned I am not convinced they need to be taken down! I do not think the health of the figs is in jeopardy by any means other than the council. If the council is set in its path of removing any tree that "may" pose a risk then I would prefer to see the street made a walking zone with limited traffic rather than a traffic thoroughfare as it is at present.
trees	retain	Without the trees Laman Street is nothing more than any other street. So without the trees I can't see the point. We take so many risks driving a car that I can't imagine the chance of the tree falling on me could compete! The failure of the pedestrian precinct in the city suggests "pedestrianising" it would be a similar failure.
trees	retain	Would like to see everything possible done to preserve avenue of Hills fig-trees in Laman St along southern side of Civic Park. Feel it very important to preserve architectural landscape on southern side of Laman St: art gallery, regional library, Baptist Tabernacle (Menkens design complementing his other significant design of St Andrew's Presbyterian church opposite). Also important to preserve character of Civic Park and building landscape on northern side of King St: University House (former Nesca House), city hall, administration building. Feel something could be done to enhance Wheeler Place. While important to preserve this "open" space for major outdoor functions, also necessary to overcome present "barrenness" in appearance.
trees	retain	Would love to keep the fig trees, but not entirely sure that is the correct option.

trees	retain	<p>You can not have enough trees in and around the city. Remove the trees that are a problem and leave the rest. I have only lived in Newcastle the past 18 months coming from Brisbane. They had a similar problem, so the council removed the trees and placed them in parklands in and around the city precinct. It will cost but the public will love you for it.</p> <p>The Laman Street figs are Novocastrian icons and serve an important cultural and recreational role to residents and visitors.</p>
trees	retain	<p>Denuding Laman Street for purposes of new buildings would be a philistine act. The "public safety" defence is highly dubious when considered in the light of numerous areas throughout Newcastle that pose a more visible and serious risk prospect eg the gums that line Scenic Drive opposite MHPS.</p> <p>Strong evidence to indicate the figs' longevity is compelling. They need to be preserved and protected. Avoidance of a Honeysuckle West ghetto – ie the sterile ugly urban .....text not scanned ...enough of blight on Newcastle.</p> <p>My vision for the Laman Street is much the same as the wise, foreseeing City Leaders who planned the Art Gallery, Library and above all the magnificent shady avenue of Giant Figs which give Laman Street its unique and welcoming character.</p>
trees	retain	<p>My vision is to see these trees properly maintained by qualified carers who will know how to apply anti-fungicides and other protective treatments when branches are sawn off.</p> <p>My vision is for Council to employ competent and observant staff which can report regularly on the extreme good health and vigour of these trees over the next 100-200 years of their lifetime.</p>
trees	retain	<p>My vision is for my great grandkids to stroll along shady Laman Street on their way to improve their cultural awareness with gratitude in their hearts for our wise councillors in the 1940's and 1950's</p> <p>I am unable to open the Newcastle Voice Survey on the Laman Street Civic Precinct however I would like to see the trees remain and vehicle and pedestrians still able to use the street. There are other more dangerous areas eg between Corlette and Bruce street on the southern side which is an absolute disgrace and when walking along there at night it is easy to fall over due to the condition of the pavement which has been patched several times. The trees in Council street between Darby and Bruce street would appear to be causing more damage than those in Laman Street but nothing is said of these....makes one wonder if Newcastle Council just want to close the road between Dawson and Darby Street.</p>
		<p>I also think the sculptures in the Library should be moved to Civic Park as their true beauty is spoilt due to the library doors and windows which do not enable the full view of them.</p>
trees	retain	<p>The existing character of the precinct should be maintained. The fig trees should be taken care of as much as possible to extend their lives and over the next 10-15 years, any dying fig trees should be replaced with new trees. The precinct should remain as a cultural centre of town.</p>
trees	retain	<p>The fig trees are beautiful - they are the best part of Laman St!!</p>

# Access

subject	subject2	your_vision
		A Cultural Precinct.
access	linkage	Street scape: the link between the cultural assets needs to be part of the cultural experience. Design of this public space to draw people into each of the cultural venues and likewise the for the venues to link into / engage with the public domain. More than items of public art, but the whole street designed to reflect the place. Site specific street furnishings and scaping.
		Gallery: incorporate a cafe to complement the gallery, extend visits (you are loosing people around the corner when they get peckish) and a great revenue stream for the gallery. Air bridge to the Library gallery?
		Library: add meeting rooms
access	linkage	A pedestrian-friendly interconnected precinct with a focus on trees (large scale), art (gallery and public space installations), cultural activities and community gatherings (eg live bands). Succession planning - as the fig trees are removed due to safety risks, they should be replaced with an equally grand and long term vision of the urban natural environment.
access	linkage	A useful space for all - opening up the area. Keeping the library as a central theme of information for the region
access	linkage	Accessible and beautiful.
access	linkage	An area that is safe to use, and has great gardens and access to all areas. Better connection between street and park - therefore natural flow between city hall and art gallery/library.
		Removal of the fig trees is unfortunately necessary - turn this into a positive. Removal of the trees will open the street up to the park more. This will create better connectivity so Laman St and the park become more unified, and being more open and visible would improve passive security in the park.
		Create a shared traffic zone to slow traffic down - maybe oneway traffic only - should retain car parking though.
		Provide some commercial space for a cafe. Could also have a kiosk-style takeaway shop or similar within the shared traffic zone.
access	linkage	I believe Laman Street should be a pathway linking the park and gallery to darby street. I believe Laman St should continue to represent the cultural values of Newcastle.
		Firstly I believe the results of the surveys and exactly what the dangers are with the Figtrees should be made public. Also, if there are significant issues with the Figtrees, what is to be considered in preference and what happens to those that might already be in place?
access	linkage	I believe access to/from this area and the Civic Precinct needs to be upgraded. I would like to see some type of walkway built over King Street. At present the only access to the Civic Precinct is via the crossing near City Hall. I believe there are a number of safety issues with this. There is no lighting at night time and the general parking of vehicles on the side of the

road make it difficult for approaching vehicles to see pedestrians entering the crossing. Secondly, the pedestrians using the crossing, severely effect the traffic flow on King St. This is an issue in the afternoons/evenings in general, but particularly towards the end of the year when various functions are being held in the Laman St/Civic Park and Town hall areas. In the interests and safety of all community members (both pedestrian and motorists) I believe this walkway over King St is a necessity. I think that the money could be spent on other places within Newcastle LGA and surrounding suburbs including to Beresfield.

If its just all about spending on Laman St I think this.

Nature should take its course with the trees.

The fountain, memorial etc should remain and be in the plans.

Toilets should be within the area and maybe every rate payer could have a card with access to the Public toilets within NCC area. (ALL AREAS) Maybe 2 cards to every household. (one may get damaged)

access linkage

Overhead walkways erected instead of road crossings. (Ramps instead of stairs) Eg From on side of the park to Town hall that would have access to Civic area.(Wheeler Place) All the arts, council,Taxation and govt building. By having overheads traffic would flow easier.

Many years ago I stated that Water,Tax,Electricity,Council,Centrelink (For Newcastle) should be in one building as its easier to go to ONE place pay everything as we have an aging population. I know they are all different places but an office to cater for people who do not have internet,transport,friends to do it for them.

If they are underground it may create a Haven for damage misuse and flooding.

access linkage

I think that the trees in laman street are part of its appeal- and feature. Cutting them down should be an absolute last decision. In the meantime, the area is already not accessed from both directions of Darby street and perhaps should be closed to traffic completely. (Darby to Dawson segment)As a pedestrian area,it could have outdoor cafe facilities(art gallery) It could be linked in with the bike path in some way augmenting a safer cycling route than King street from city centre onto fernleign.(or through Dawson to Merewether beaches) I would be most upset to see those magnificent trees touched. i love the way they are a backdrop to the fountain in civic park.

access linkage

With the expansion of the art gallery Laman st would be a wonderful avenue for pedestrian traffic only, by closing off the area between Auckland st and Darby st this would be such a pleasant area to wander between park land,library and art gallery lots of seating between the trees. this would be a delightful area. Alfresco dinning set up along the area nearest the Art Gallery.

I know that this is not the topic on the board at present but my suggestion is lay off the tree destruction and put Hunter Street back to its original glory. I have fond memories of Hunter St with its beautiful trees and wonderful shops. All visitors to our area are appalled at the state of dereliction that they are faced with.

access

linkage

I would like the unique qualities of Laman St further developed. The trees in the block adjacent to the park and Library are integral to this unique ambience but it doesn't end there. The Civic Precinct should NOT be disconnected from the surrounding area which is historically valuable. The Civic Precinct of Laman St gives City Hall and the park a warm and welcoming ambience that should be nourished, valued and expanded - there needs to be a sense of safety and vibrance introduced. The park is really at the centre, or could be. The whole area between Laman St, City Hall including the park needs to be connected as a whole, and relevant as a central focus that spreads out into the lovely historic precinct in one direction, the new and vital harbourside in another and the entertainment areas of Darby St and King St.

There needs to be a sense of vitality introduced that is lacking - the new warning signs and the road closure need to be created into a positive space. On top of that hill, the Laman St civic precinct needs to shine day and night - with welcome and even activity. An outdoor cafe visible or open to the street would help to generate a sense of pleasure rather than fear.

I would like to see better connections between the cultural facilities and Civic Park. The trees are a wonderful asset but the precinct has other assets too, ie the art gallery, the library, the Baptist Tabernacle - these are distinctive of the architectural style of their respective periods and part of the "story book" character of the Newcastle streetscape. This extends around the park with the Conservatorium building, St Andrew's Church, the art deco University House and City Hall - it is possible to do a self-guided heritage walk around the block already but this could be strengthened with better sight lines and way finding, as well as more interpretation of the precinct.

access

linkage

Is it not possible to have trees - different ones that give greater visibility - and views of the buildings as well?

Laman Street could be pedestrianised and become part of the park, with Queen Street opened to provide vehicular access.

People need to understand that trees are living things that eventually fall over and die. If / when someone becomes a victim of a fallen tree, there would be an outcry over Council's failure of its duty of care.

Oh, and what about toilets?

If the figs have been identified as a risk to traffic and pedestrians they should either be removed entirely or a cost effective and efficient solution be found to ensure they are not a risk.

access

linkage

When all's said and done they are only trees which can be replaced. All living things are finite and I don't believe we should be too precious over a few trees

I'd like to see, if possible, Laman Street closed to traffic and become an extension of Civic Park

access

linkage

It should be shady and pretty and not just an extension of Darby St

		It would be a shame if the trees were removed as they add a lot of character to the area.
access	linkage	It would be nice if any further development in the street could tie in with the library and art gallery and keep a community/arts theme Keep the beautiful trees and make Laman St area a pedestrian & bike zone only, linking to Civic Park. Sculptural art could be introduced in the pedestrian zone and continue into a Civic Park sculpture garden top complement the fantastic existing fountain.
access	linkage	Additional parking in surrounding streets should be provided for short term library users - not sure about disabled access to the Library & Gallery if Laman street not accessible - are there options for a second entry at the rear of the buildings? Laman street is iconic and I believe needs to remain a key part of the Civic Precinct.  I would like to see:
access	linkage	Greater use of the park - using it for outdoor dining or a cafe to encourage people to use the space. there are a lot of office block surrounding it and I think having some small cafe's, gelato stands would encourage people to use it. Greater connection between Wheeler place and the park would be good. The kind street crossing is a hazard though.
access	linkage	Bike racks would be good. Laman street should be included in Civic Park. Walkways and cycle paths could link the two areas. The road should be removed and a paved courtyard with art features would be a visual link. With an area such as this a number of trees on the north side of Laman street could be removed without affecting the visual effect.
access	linkage	Laman Street should provide a landscaped entrance to the Art Gallery, current Library building and the two churches. It should provide access to these buildings and particularly the Art Gallery. Once the extensions to the Art Gallery are built the entrance to the Gallery can be in Darby Street or at least on the corner of Darby and Laman Streets. This would allow the Laman Street side of the building to open onto a landscaped sculpture garden. This area might allow for disabled and occasional access but not need to be a thoroughfare for general traffic. The plantings in this area need not be of a tunnelled nature (as are the current figs) but planted more to give a gentle transition from the Town Hall across the park to the buildings in Laman Street. This area would lend itself very nicely to the creation of a sculpture garden much like that attached to the National Gallery in Canberra. The garden would be integrated and would commence within the current park.

Laman Street, with the location of the Art Gallery, City Library and the heritage Baptist Tabernacle (a legacy of Frederick Menkins) bordering Civic Park is one of Newcastle's more significant and indeed iconic streets. The concept of a civic precinct appeals, bringing City Hall, Civic Park and Wheeler Place together to include the Laman Street precinct.

I am old enough to remember the carpark in Civic Park on the corner of King and Darby streets with its chitter base and wire fence. An eyesore in the civic precinct. Thankfully the park is now a more attractive civic venue.

access	linkage	It would be wonderful to have a pedestrian zone outside the prestigious public buildings in Laman Street, however extending Civic Park into Laman Street could cause problems. Blocking off Laman Street to vehicular traffic would preclude people from visiting the Art Gallery, Library and Tabernacle for lengthy periods. Ease of access is needed for the elderly and people with disabilities. Given the focus of these buildings they are destinations, so people need easy access. While a park in Laman Street appeals, one must be realistic: there would need to be a service road; limited parking (designated longer than the present 5 minutes) so that visitors can access the venues in a reasonable time frame because library research/borrowing or viewing an exhibition can take time.
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Vision: maintain a leafy arbour using suitable/appropriate trees; seating; grass; limited parking; limited vehicular access e.g. one way traffic from Union Street into Darby Street (or the other way) to provide egress into (from) the city, rather than increasing the traffic flow through Cooks Hill streets.

The ticketed, limited parking at the rear of the Library and Art Gallery could be designated for visitors to those venues rather than the present situation. With the redevelopment of the Art Gallery, the NCC's/RTA carpark will "disappear", so parking at the rear of the buildings off Queen Street would be desirable. Queen Street would have to be opened to allow vehicular access.

access	linkage	With its prestigious venues, Laman Street should be attractively landscaped, user-friendly and practical for the community's use. Link Laman Street better with Civic Park. Signage in the park to darby st and laman st/gallery/library would make the area more accessible.
access	linkage	Maintain the civic precinct and provide improvements to Civic Park including improved landscaping, shade trees, and improved pedestrian environment. Establish new shade trees within Civic Park and in Laman Street where possible prior to any removal of figs. Preferably leave figs in. My vision includes:

an holistic plan for entire length of street

focus on heritage and the place of Laman St as key element in Civic precinct

access	linkage	new art gallery facade, as in the extensions currently planned
		large shady street trees, whether the present trees or a replanting
		present access to Civic Park seems OK, but there may be better options
		maintenance of heritage facade of Cultural Centre, Tabernacle domestic

buildings

maintenance and cultivation of heritage right along Laman st (including Cooks Hill School)

heaps more car parking nearby (don't ask me!)

My vision is one where the park is connected to the cultural precinct so that people can move freely and safely from park to library to art gallery without traffic concerns.

This extra area could then be used for other purposes perhaps an outdoor cafe to give patrons a much needed space to relax and enjoy a coffee or light meal as a way of extending their time at the Gallery. I know I would welcome time to contemplate what I've seen, have a robust discussion with friends or just enjoy the surroundings.

access	linkage	<p>The figs whilst of concern are integral to the ambience of the area and must be retained if at all possible. I'm not sure why there is so much hysteria over them and the danger they pose when they surround Newcastle East Public school and are dotted throughout the area. Do they all pose a risk? Everyone knows that branches of any tree may fall in certain weather conditions and it is just one of the many risks we face everytime we leave the front door.</p>
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Laman Street is one of Newcastle's best assets and I believe it can be utilised fully not only for Novacastrians but for the many tourists who visit the area each year.

Remove any truly dangerous trees / tree limbs - specific and in-depth risk assessment to find true risk as well as reasonable controls, considering that many people would like to preserve this public amenity.

If necessary, I do not think it unreasonable to close off the street to traffic to assist with risk control if deemed necessary.

access	linkage	<p>If Laman St was fully closed to traffic, it would create a lovely "flow" from Art Gallery / Museum into parkland / open space recreation areas - all but involves running the park right up to the Art Gallery / Museum areas. If the trees need to be removed, there is no reason why the street cannot still be closed to traffic, with a sympathetic tree planting exercise to be conducted.</p>
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access	linkage	<p>Removing the trees removes the atmosphere of Lamen Street, I think that you need to replace them with a feature that gives the street character.</p>
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access	linkage	<p>Reopen Laman street with signs "use at own risk". Sympathetically connect the Cultural Centre (library), to Art Gallery. Possible multi story Car-park adjacent to gallery on Derby and Queen streets. Build new library on Hunter and Burwood streets corner. Civic park is already a pleasant piece of green space.</p>
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The art gallery needs more space - it also need easy access as does the library. Are the trees seriously dangerous? Walking there on a summer's day is a pleasure. Is there a possibility of judicious pruning to prolong their lives. Any replacement trees would need to be huge.

access	linkage	<p>It is also necessary to have parking in Laman St for people attending city hall and civic theatre. Perhaps closing street altogether and extending civic park to give a green space in front of library and gallery - problem with this is access for older or disabled patrons. This area is one we always show out-of-town visitors who admire the trees, gallery and library and it links</p>
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weel through the parkto City Hall..

The civic precinct presents and opportunity to build a sustainable 'civic heart' for Newcastle.

access linkage

Central location, green and spacious, historical focus...It can become the recognisable core of the city.

Needs to incorporate - people & pedestrians, vehicle traffic (which can be excluded if events require no vehicle conflicts, community focal point and engagement district (markets, expo's, cutlural displays)

The cultural precinct needs to be a high profile Grand Square. My vision for the cultural precinct is creating a SQUARE. Laman Street could be closed to vehicle traffic between Darby and Dawson Streets. Steps leading up to Laman Street from Darby Street. Laman Street can be paved to make a level footing with pavement, then large stepping / seating can lead down into Civic Park from in front to the Art Gallery and being at a width to accommodate the width of the Art Gallery. This would lead to a paved section leading across the Civic Park to the roadway where a paved speed hump is installed between Burwood Street and Devonshire Lane. This would effectively make the ground space from Civic Part the existing paving around NCH & CAC Civic Theatre all one level.

access linkage

Paving could be placed on the other side of the existing path leading to the fountain thereby creating the SQUARE. The trees could be paved around metal fretwork fence surrounding them in the paved section. If suitable to save, the Fig Trees in Laman Street, maybe an arch framework could be installed for under protection. More trees, benches and landscaping needs to be done on the grassy sides to the park. Extensions made to the rear of the Art Gallery and more parking made available, also Queen Street could be open to thru traffic. The paved Square could have many uses, displays, festivals or just a natural place for people to congregate.

Perhaps it could be home to a monument in front of the old Newcastle Post Office.

An indoor cafe could be incorporated into the extensions of the Art Gallery at the front on Laman Street.

The first and prime objective must be the long term safety of pedestrians in an area fronting major public cultural facilities. This safety must be secured by removal of the most dangerous trees and immediate planting of replacement trees. As many trees as possible should be heavily lopped to try to retain some of the canopy. The aim should be to gradually over a period of years, replace all old trees with new to secure the long term appearance of the area.

access linkage

A paved and landscaped pedestrian public open square should be created in the street and pavement area directly in front of the entrances to the Library and the Art Gallery. This square should be linked into the Park, to create a series of linked public spaces from Laman Street, down to the Town Hall and the Civic area. King Street can be incorporated into a open space in front of the Town Hall. Traffic can continue to flow through, but on a visually demarcated surface. Traffic would be stopped on relevant occasions.

The facades of the Art Gallery and Library should be remodelled to create a harmonious public streetscape.

A parking structure will need to be incorporated into the Art Gallery extensions.

The iconic visual trademark of that area is the tree scape and the fountain in the park, all drawing the eye up to war memorial. sadly the icons may now be a liability.

access linkage

since the area is a cultural spot - library, galleries, public art (fountain), how about an avenue of large statues. think the Thames bank in London outside Parliament House, near the london eye (fantastic large Dali works) These could be interspersed with other trees ? Norfolk pines, to retain the green corridor effect.

I am told that there was public outcry when the fountain in Civic Park was initially installed, yet now it is a much loved icon. A new look display to replace the dying trees could eventually become accepted in the same way. The Laman Street area must retain its unique landscape, incorporating the fully mature trees on an on-going basis. The combination of the Art Gallery and Public Library in an area that is part of Newcastle's initial early settlement and therefore history, part of a public green space and serviced by nearby Darby Street all combine to offer people a place of calm, respite, culture with the convenience of modern living, access to information and a place to eat and be entertained.

Retention of this feeling and community space is essential. I believe that the section of Laman Street between Civic Park and the Gallery and Library should be closed to motor traffic and restricted to pedestrians to enjoy. The road strip could be developed into a mix of walk space and gardens with covered seating to enjoy the open space, partake of reading outdoors and a picnic in a relaxed environment. Given the high number of residential units and houses in close proximity this would enhance the living experience for residents of this area and visitors to the city.

access linkage

The area would also benefit with the reduction of public street car parking spaces. Street Car parking should be limited to residents only and a site developed for off-street public car parking to compensate for the loss of spaces. Given the issues that residents experience with visitors taking their spaces at busy times this would alleviate the issue whilst offering an alternate solution to minimise the impact to local businesses.

And finally, any removal of trees should be delivered over a longer period of time under a replacement change-out program. That is, remove a tree but re-plant that tree space at the same time with a new fig tree, permit re-growth time to a defined stage before the removal of another tree with the next tree for removal to not be directly next to the first removed tree, re-plant in this second space etc. etc.. This method will maintain much of the existing canopy in place over Laman Street, permit a new growth canopy to develop before the complete removal of unsafe trees but eventually see the removal of all unsafe trees, yet to be defined by an arborist, via a structured and phased approach.

		<p>The precinct at the moment is adequate, but I don't think there are enough facilities to satisfy the users of the park. Noty enough seats, shade shelters mor some sort of food delivery.</p>
access	linkage	<p>The end towards the library has too many stairs and that end is like a wall that does not do justice to the public buildings. i.e.you cannotg see them in their best light Removal of the diseased trees will help. The fountain is a bit crummy.</p>
access	linkage	<p>I also feel that the area needs some sort of enclosure, either by way of hedges or interesting fencing, but I undedrstand the need for security and evacuation if suddenly required. A more specific pathway system leading to a more defined road crossing to the north would help traffic flow. To promote activities for all age groups in civic park and the surrounding areas. More user friendly information centres, such as tourist centre, access to the fore shore and the Maritime Museum. Remove the rail line have light rail which could travel from the beaches to Wickham and Carrington and Civic Centre. The opportunity to open up the dockside to the Cruise ships that are coming to Newcastle. This would be great for Newcastle, we have a lot of wonderfull history and the best beaches, people enjoy learning about different places, but we do need a light rail to enable easy transportation for every one. Even the children would benifit from this. Tranquil space  larger gallery with cafe and shop</p>
access	linkage	<p>Open and accessible - landscaped public space out the front with coffee kiosk/outdoor cafe.  Connection between laman street and civic park</p>
access	linkage	<p>Create a hub for 'A Day Out' - families/couples individuals could make it a desitnation and venture to other parts of Newcastle after the viist. Library, Art Gallery, Cafe, Playground in civic park for children, then a walk to the harbour or Darby Street</p>
access	linkage	<p>Leafy, shady and safe space. Tree line road pleasant to walk along and key facilities including library and art gallery and leading into Civic Park and town hall and darby St restaurants</p>
access	linkage	<p>Tree lined street with high pedestrian activity between parks, gallery, library, town hall, civic precinct etc. I enjoy &amp; look forward to cultural events held in Civic park &amp; Laman street which are accessible to me as a public transport user.</p>

		Unify the separate elements of the precinct as much as possible.
		Minimize vehicular traffic by maintaining one-way westbound only traffic in Layman Street for the block per current temporary measures.
access	linkage	Remove trees assessed as currently dangerous and replace with similar species, providing appropriate growing/stability soil zones.
		More parking may become available by changing to 90 degree parking in front of the blocked off half of Layman Street.
		Incorporate the Coastal Cycleway off-road - within, or on the perimeter of the precinct.
		With due regard to public safety, the Fig Trees are an integral part of this part of our city.
access	linkage	Current use of Civic Park may be limited by the current design. Design features that may merit consideration are shaded seating through the use of gazebo-type structures to allow for lunch-time reading etc; play areas; sculptures and increased signage to enable navigation around the precinct.
access	linkage	Limiting vehicle access may be difficult however additional parking and weekend pedestrian zones may facilitate more foot traffic and a greater flow of people between the precinct's attractions.
		retain existing character with large tree lined street. improved visual connection from library to civic park.
access	parking	Another public entrance installed at the car park side of the Regional Library, though maintaining the Laman Street front entrance. This car park relocated for public use, the library and art gallery. Purchasing properties encompassing Corner Queen and Dawson along to Corner Queen and Darby and along Darby. This area needs a public multi storey parking station for use during normal business week parking, particularly office workers and would be financed by parking fees (public private venture similar to John Hunter Hospital's parking facility.)Public safety is paramount. Remove all the trees in Laman street. Revert Laman street to park land, and extend Civic Park to the entrances of the Art Gallery and Library. Install walkways through Civic Park connecting Darby and Wheeler and King Street. Up grade Lighting in the all these areas. Install security cameras in park and emergency stations similar to Rail stations.
		More big name exhibitions at the Gallery. Promoting subscription membership of the Art Gallery and Civic Theatre and Playhouse. Promote these places as the focal point of Newcastle's cultural centre.
access	parking	Art Gallery and Library to be joined with a single access (from the back) in the centre leaving the current space for public use. The vista of trees is important for many reasons. The current footpath and road should be an outdoor area for coffee, lunchtime concerts, impromptu public speaking, with the present view - the fountain, the City Hall, the park and gardens. No traffic. A dedicated parking space at the back of the Gallery (short term) for library users and a more organised (several levels) parking space there for visitors to the Gallery.(metres) The present car parking ground level would become a new part of the Gallery-Library. The Darby Street front of the Gallery should revert to the Gallery, should be landscaped and its use decided by the Gallery.
access	parking	Being able to actually park your car there, thats my vision!
access	parking	close laman street to traffic and open up eastern end of civic park for art

gallery customers car parking

I believe the Laman street panorama should remain a green expanse. To this end I suggest a a staged (? every 2nd tree?)replacement of existing figs with a suitable replacement, arboreal experts to determine suitability of course.

access parking

I think Laman street should be a one way corridor, with reverse angle parking on one side of road, with disability/ coach parking on the other, thereby effectively increasing total parking but also enhancing access to art gallery etc. Access to Laman street should be from Darby st.. The existing toilet block must be renovated, patrolled and cleaned regularly, with opening hours extended to suit use of nearby facility's.

access parking

I believe this Precinct should be treated as a cultural oasis in the middle of the city with parking available nearby but not necessarily in Laman Street. Access for disabled persons should be provided. The fig trees should be preserved if at all possible and lush gardens installed at the front of the library connecting it with Civic Park. To protect this beautiful feature, it may be necessary to employ security guards to patrol the grounds to prevent vandalism.

The Civic Precinct also needs a good cleanup and have more functions for Novacastrians to enjoy.

I would like to see that only the trees that are considered dangerous to be removed however saving the healthy trees that currently exist.

This would give slow change as new trees planted to replace the old trees grow into the overall picture.

I would like to see more extensive parking made available close to the library as it is currently often a long walk from any available parking to visit the library.

access parking

The city needs to be made more people friendly to attract more people into the city, especially that there are so many attractions like the city hall, library, etc all close together.

We need cleared walways between car parking and the sites that the city invites the residents and visitors to visit. Some of the areas are poorly lit making the area unsafe at night.

Currently we only consider cost and aesthetics without considering making the city people friendly.

Plan on making the inner city more attractive to people 24 hours each day.

It is obvious that the tree problem in Laman Street needs to be addressed somehow. I see the choices being leave as is and hope nothing happens, remove trees one at a time and replace with more suitable species (over an extended period of time to lessen the visual impact), remove all of the trees and transplant with large, mature suitable species (this would probably be the more expensive option but would ensure an 'instant' result)

Parking in the area is a problem. Better results for the amount of cars serviced with parking, would be that the entire area of paid parking should have white 'parking bay' lines....that would ensure each vehicle had a space and drivers would not be exploiting/using large areas etc to park their vehicles.

Parking meters need to be more visible (some sort of 'higher' sign that can be viewed easily, especially above larger cars) and information on the meters needs to be more user friendly...especially the 'how to use' information

With council looking to install more parking meters into areas that are now just time limited, parking spaces, illegal parking and impacts on the Cooks Hill areas will escalate....what to do?

access                      parking

Big problem here....people will not use public transport as they should...too busy...too lazy...quicker in a car.....need to liaise possibly with the Newcastle Buses...I understand recently that Sydney got some sort of new 'cheaper multi pass' that enables users to have one ticket for the bus, train and ferry...Newcastle missed out AGAIN. Involved the Parking Officers that are walking these areas every day and see all the problems and may have possible solutions, but also may never be asked or heard when putting forward suggestions.

Tree scaping as much as possible. Council does a pretty good job at the moment but it can always be better.....incorporate lots more seating/tables as well.....that will always then give visitors and the local public a chance to sit, admire, relax and enjoy.

With more and more people opting for push bikes and motor cycles, Council needs to make sure that there are enough available 'parking' spots for these types of transport and have them well signed.

There are some areas that are beautiful and some that are just plain dirty. The Fred Ash building looks like it is going to fall down....out the back it is just grubby....a good mow and a coat of paint could make all the difference.

I love this city and have watched to change over some decades.

Some hard and brave decisions need to be made, taking into account global warming, economics, the future growth, as well as catering to the needs of the community today. We now have some good people at the helm and some new blood sitting in council. Let's hope they are visionary's with good eye sight.

		Keep the beautiful trees and make Laman St area a pedestrian & bike zone only, linking to Civic Park. Sculptural art could be introduced in the pedestrian zone and continue into a Civic Park sculpture garden top complement the fantastic existing fountain.
access	parking	<p>Additional parking in surrounding streets should be provided for short term library users - not sure about disabled access to the Library &amp; Gallery if Laman street not accessible - are there options for a second entry at the rear of the buildings?</p> <p>Laman street should still remain as a two way thoroughfare, with MV parking. All the Fig Trees should be gradually removed over a suitable period of time (say 5yrs) and replaced with more suitable species, spaced out still to create the canopy effect, when you compare the site from old photos, we have to some extent lost the view of the street buildings themselves, particularly the Cultural Centre and very Historic Baptist Tabernacle, from a street scape perspective, Locals and Visitors to our city this is very sad, but can be rectified and planned with the above suggestions.</p>
access	parking	<p>My vision for the future of Laman Street and the Civic Precinct is firstly for the area to protect the beautiful fig trees. They are the heart of this street, just as they were the feature that made Tyrell Street such a special place (now it's just an unattractive, bare hill). The other features that should be retained at all costs (in my opinion) is the Library (especially the wonderful entrance - although I am glad they got rid of the blue lights in the toilets!) and the fountain in Civic Park (and the surrounding trees and gardens - and PLEASE don't seriously consider building an underground car park - with the pitiful visitation to the CBD, it's hardly warranted, is it?), the war memorials and Civic Station - which will hopefully continue running all the way through to Newcastle Station! The Art Gallery is looking shabby - inside and out. NCC or Newcastle's leaders who will be determining the future of the Gallery should take a look at some of the other regional galleries throughout NSW (at places like Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bathurst, Dubbo, etc.) to see that these places can rival Newcastle's gallery despite being in country locations. Please put the pointy sculpture back at the front too!! The one that's there currently is awful - I'm surprised some drunk hasn't drowned in it yet!!</p> <p>No car parking station underneath Civic Park! Surely there are other viable options</p>
		If the fig trees really have to go, replace them with native equivalents that won't pose dangers in the future.
access	parking	Limited driving (near gallery / library) - perhaps allow cars with disability stickers to be able to park outside the venues or arrange a shuttle bus from several parking/train stations so that those who can't walk easily can still have access. Even better have a few stops along the way.
access	parking	<p>That's all - thank you</p> <p>Removing alternate trees would enable replacement trees to grow without denuding the area. Parking is also a major issue for visitors.</p>
access	parking	Providing vehicle access with suitable drop-off points and some short-term parking, for access to library and art gallery.

Some long term considerations could be to move the council offices out of the current building and relocate somewhere in the west end. (What a pity they don't still own the S&W Miller site, the old museum site etc)

The council building would then be a good site to relocate the art gallery to, with the current art gallery being used for other cultural activities.

access parking

In fact the west end of Newcastle would be a more suitable place for the relocation of as much business as possible which would free up a lot of the parking issues in town.

Cultural, educational, residential, appropriate retail and recreational activities will revitalize the east end through to civic.

access parking

Laman St- I do think the trees add a lot of character to the area, their removal could be visually catastrophic. No easy solution in the short term... That it remains as the city's cultural hub, but is developed with consideration of the important traffic routes that pass through it. It should be an area with a unified identity and be something we can all be proud of. I don't think we need an underground car park in the middle of it. This is a really difficult expectation that you have of residents who know nothing of some of the infrastructure solutions that you asking us to provide vision on.

One thing I will say is that there is constant parking issues in that area. The Town Hall books functions for periods of two hours or more at lunch time for business people to attend. There is an expectation that everyone stays in the room and yet parking is available for two hours only. Watch the parking officers on those days as they swoop like vultures to book the business people attending those events. Shame on you NCC.

access parking

In terms of the trees, if they have to go due to safety issues then fair enough. However, the shade there is lovely and provides a gorgeous landscape for wedding photos, walking and more. I suggest that the trees are replaced with a structure that provides a shady, mottled sunlight environment instead. By the way, has anyone thought about the birds and other fauna that live in those trees and what their future is likely to be?

I think the access to surrounding areas including Wheeler Place works well as it is. The Pedestrian Crossing is convenient and does not hold traffic up too much. Perhaps roundabouts instead of traffic lights at either end of Civic Park may be more appropriate.

To me the Fig Trees are one of the main beautifying features of the area and it would be a great shame to see them go, but if they are a danger, public safety must come first and I would like to see them replaced by another large tree if they have to go.

access parking

There was a railway line that ran along Burwood St and across Civic Park that closed about 1957. It would be good if this could be remembered by a paved walking path with a paver every so often inscribed with what the path represents, as this was an important coal railway and it is the coal industry that helped Newcastle grow to what it is today.

Weddings are very popular in Civic Park but parking for wedding cars is a major problem, can there be spaces in King Street that can be reserved at certain times for wedding cars.

access	parking	<p>Tree lined avenue with slow through traffic in both directions and parking close to library &amp; gallery.</p>
access	parking	<p>Trees like Humans have a finite life span. With the previous centuries lack of tree knowledge, the Laman Street Figs branches have been pruned incorrectly, various public utilities have hacked through roots, bitument paving has surrounding the trunk areas preventing water penetration. Cars have been allowed to park up against the trees further compacting soil and squashing the roots.</p> <p>With an opportunity to revitalise the area I'm sure correct NATSPEC guidelines will be used for new trees that replace the Figs when they have to go.</p> <p>I suggest that Laman Street been closed to vehicle traffic (except emergency vehicles) between Darby Street and Dawson Street. The existing road area could be levelled and repaved to create a pedestrian friendly plaza area in front of the Art Gallery and Library. The steps that currently exist to the east and west ends the park from Laman Street into Civic Park could be remodelled into disabled walking/wheelchair ramps. At the moment disabled people can only get into Civic Park from its Auckland, King and Darby Street boundaries. There is no disabled access into the park direct from the Art Gallery or Library. I suggest that the entrance to the steps above the fountain on Laman Street be widened, in conjunction with steps that go done either side of fountain also being widened. This would to encourage people to site and socialise on the steps.</p> <p>Landscape Architects would be able to provide advice to improve the current seating layout in the park, and on appropriate trees species to planted in the park and on Laman street to assist in the linking of the area. Trees must be removed and replaced with non-invasive shrubs/trees.</p>
access	parking	<p>Ongoing repairs/replacements are becoming more expensive because of these trees.</p> <p>It is very difficult to find parking in the area so that people can go to the Cultural Centre with out blocking parking spaces - Maybe powers to be at the Council do not want people in town.</p>
access	parking	<p>When I think of this area, I think of Arts/crafts. It would be valuable to accent this theme with decorated buildings, sidewalks etc.</p> <p>I love the trees in Laman st. I understand the risks and therefore I think they should be resized, reshaped, cut back to alleviate the risk... but not removed.</p> <p>Parking is an issue. Investigate whether more cars could be parked 45 deg angle, nose to kerb down one side of the street and no parking down the other. Make Laman st a 'one way' street to facilitate the additional parking. Without extra parking the precinct will continue to have delays and user issues.</p>
access	parking	<p>The only solution is to provide enough parking as close as possible to serve the 1500 seat theatre, 200 seat playhouse, City hall conventions, weddings, dinner functions and concert hall functions, art gallery, library, various park usages, wheeler place events and future museum events, not to mention university, conservatory and PAN, often most of these spaces in use at once.</p> <p>Gibson st parking is nearby and could be utilised on show or function evenings or weekend days, so a temporary solution to parking issues until a better/closer parking station is built to serve our city's cultural centre may be</p>

to provide a shuttle to theatre, city hall functions, art gallery and museum on demand

A longer term solution may be to build car parking on the Civic arcade site or on the fred ash/ 'vacant land' site near the Clarendon, with Gibson st (parking) to be used as an overflow when necessary.

The issue of course is funding but finding funds to ensure the City Cultural Centre is able to be accessed easily is VITAL to its future.

Years ago I lived in Cooks Hill for ten consecutive years and even then there were significant parking issues. I believe it's DISGUSTING to charge local residents a fee that 'entitles' them to park 'for free' or without fine. There needs to be further consideration to parking for office workers, and my comment should not read 'charge more' or 'metred parking'. I have recently heard the proposal for underground parking station, I think this is FABULOUS. If Civic Park is not deemed suitable due to water issues (proximity to harbour), then I think that it could surely work in Nesca park were the entrance and exits at Brooke Street or the Light Street side. Nesca Park offers a sloped site and so could possibly accommodate a two or three storey complex. Mind you, I would NOT want the actual grassland within that park to change it's gradient for users just to service carpark underneath.

So, along with parking, I would like the precinct to maintain a free bus service, in that, regular services operate (no NEW bus routes to increase cost), but those hopping on a bus within that area travel free. In this way, office workers could park further away to disperse the parking congestion, and either walk at leisure or, if running late or during dark winter afternoons, catch the bus towards their cars.

access parking I'd like to see angled parking outside the gallery and library so as to increase usage and access, particularly for cars displaying disabled stickers.

I love Wheeler Place holding events for the city like Live Sites and feel this helps the city to feel alive and not just a Monday to Friday business district. I would like to see more FREE school tours run through the Civic Theatre and St Andrews and/or other venues of cultural and historical significance to show students the amazing architecture. Perhaps this could be conducted by volunteers or a historical society. Similarly, the restoration of, and accessibility to, Fort Scratchley should be something our rates should support as opposed to wage rises and job perks for Tate and cronies.

I love the trees in Laman Street, but if reducing traffic, perhaps making it only one way with disabled parking the priority instead of merely closing it off.

I THOROUGHLY OPPOSE the cutting of the rail line at any point. I believe the land and the infrastructure BELONGS to Novacastrians and tourists. I believe that it is there and that those who propose to cut it are interested in either short term gains like reelection or are wanting to sell off the land. I have not heard CONCRETE GUARANTEES that if the land were reclaimed from State Rail, that it would remain TOTAL parkland for the use and enjoyment of the ratepayers, but it would surely benefit conglomerates greedily eyeing off development opportunities. YOU CAN ONLY SELL THE FARM ONCE! As it is, the rail line connects residents of the Hunter Valley

to the sea and to their jobs and NEGATES the need or cost of them driving and paying for parking. This is something that Tate and Merewether Heights residents don't take into account enough when they tell us on the news that they're thinking of the future. Selling the farm, as I say, can only be done once, and by that time it's both the town residents who are affected by parking and the country workers who are forced to drive to work, thereby causing parking issues, that loose out. I agree, it's not super gorgeous to look at, but I don't want to get off one form of transport to only wait in the heat or rain with questionable souls around me at night while waiting for the next connection, when I could have stayed on a train with the safety and convenience that that affords me.

\* Fig trees to stay. They add character, history, grandeur and shade. Trim back any branches deemed "dangerous". Keep the trees.

\* Give the gallery and library a facelift. They appear dated. New technology.

access pedestrian

\* More bicycle racks for bike parking.  
\* More outdoor sculptures/art.

\* A few more tables and chairs in the park so students and workters canaccess wireless internet from library.

access pedestrian

A few factors affect my vision for Laman St and the Civic precinct, access being top of the list. Visitors to the Library and Art Gallery allready have to contend with stairs if they come from Civic Park, hills on Auckland, Darby and Dawson St and limited parking which has decreased since parking has been removed from Laman St. An ageing population and the possible increase of disabled people, as well as parents with prams and young children, trying to access the Library and Gallery will increase over time. Yes the trees must go if they are a hazard to people and ideally be replaced with trees more suited to an urban environment. All sorts of things could happen in Laman St, seating, market stalls, music, street theatre, cafes.. the possibilities are endless. In a perfect world a new Library and gallery either on King or Hunter St would be great so that it is closer to public transport and ideally with underground parking or parking station nearby making the area a real cultural centre. Which is the next point that must be addressed. Transport must be increased, both bus and rail, making this area more accessible by day and night because the one complaint people make about visiting the two buildings is the lack of parking and constantly having to worry about being booked. The library is open at night and still visitors compete for parking with Civic Theatre goers and in November with school formals in the park. I think an increased University presence in the precinct would add vibrancy to the area which makes a regular reliable transport system into the city vital . Civic Park needs a revamp, more seating, playgrounds and decent toilets. The Civic precinct is great now and is a well visited and liked area by locals and visitors alike, lets make it buzz with life but really plan for access, transport, parking and above all make it user friendly.

access pedestrian

A paved forecour area fronting a n improved library and art gallery with cafe/restaurant al fresco. Plenty of natural shade. Integration of the facilities with Civic Park to Wheeler Place. I think retention of the figs would probably be detrimental to this out come.

The figs whilst nice have problems with their age and stability, and do take over a space, over shade, disrupt services and paving. I think we can do better with a new landscaping plan and the planting of mature trees. I think

		we should let the existing parking in Laman Street go and have a forecourt area instead
access	pedestrian	A pedestrian friendly avenue. Shade trees & areas for people to sit. A well lit area at night so that it is safe.
access	pedestrian	A Pedestrian zone with concealed car parking. Engage King, Hunter St with view corridors to portside. Nodal transport hub involved for Darby St, King, Hunter St with pedestrian link to Honeysuckle. Blow-up the Crowne Plaza monstrosity, but engage with other half decent buildings
access	pedestrian	A place that is clean, maintained for all residents to have access to A safe pedestrian environment with suitable trees for the modern arts/entertainment precinct that will be easily maintained.
access	pedestrian	A place to allow quick access for library and art gallery users and park habitues.
		How would an exhibition area for small outdoor music concerts be included?
access	pedestrian	A safe place suitable for family activities at any time of the day
access	pedestrian	A shady, leafy and peaceful entrance to our library and art gallery. I can hear birds, flying foxes and the falling water of the civic park fountain. There are lots of places to sit and enjoy the surrounds.
access	pedestrian	A shared light traffic and pedestrian/cycle way.
access	pedestrian	A warm friendly place accessible by pedestrians cyclists and minimal traffic. it should be a precinct encouraging healthy use of this beautiful open space.
access	pedestrian	Access to the library and art gallery is the most important consideration, after safety. if the trees have to go we should think about replacing them for the future. Perhaps it could be a pedestrian only area and parking provided behind the gallery
access	pedestrian	An area closed to traffic, for use for cultural events, street stalls / fairs, parades, etc. It also could include seating areas / tables for use by the library patrons, families and the like.
access	pedestrian	An area free of traffic that can be enjoyed by people and families for recreational activities and access to cultural activities, markets etc.
access	pedestrian	Increased security and policing to make Civic Park and surrounding areas safe at night. Retain trees if feasible
access	pedestrian	an area people can stroll through that is also a cafe district and possibly a small botanical gardens. sculptures in the park would help to unify the area as an art precinct.
		An area that provides ease of access for all including the disabled using wheelchairs and parents with prams.
		An area free of traffic (including bicycles) from Auckland Street to Darby Street.
access	pedestrian	An area used for art markets and book stalls and provides a venue for buskers.
		Important to be realistic about the fig trees and to save them if at all possible. Alternatively, plantings of mature trees that will provide shade should the fig trees need to be pruned or removed would keep the atmosphere of this small special part of Newcastle.
access	pedestrian	An area with public access. It doesn't have to have the fig trees because they'll grow back and them get removed again in 70 years and replanted.
access	pedestrian	An open area with as much greenery as possible. Maintain as much of the environment as possible and retain the open spaces and more seating in the park.

access	pedestrian	<p>better access from wheeler place through civic park to laman street should be a priority. at the moment you basically have to go up the stairs which go around the fountain. this means you inevitably get sprayed with water from the fountain and/or have to negotiate the ground covered with the fruit/leaves from the trees which I have often seen being removed by the council. this area is also not safe in high winds due to the high trees.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I think a dedicated (at least partially) covered walkway should be erected. whether this is in the form of a subway or above ground. the most dangerous trees should be removed and replaced with varieties which cannot grow so tall and produce less fruit/mess.</p> <p>better disabled access</p> <p>Civic park and the surrounds must be kept open are for the general public. The look formed by the trees within this area - particularly on Laman street are crucial to maintaining the heritage look of the area however this must be kept within the safety feasibility. Obviously if the figs are nearing the age of potential risk they must be replaced, however I would like to see a gradual replacement, a few at a time so as to avoid the stark look that would be, should total removal and replanting simultaneously would create.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Safety risk is also to be a consideration in regard to personal safety. The area should afford a sense of security for all people. This could be obtained through the use of open sight lines, (appropriate planting) prompt response to all issues/concerns raised, and regular activities and other amenities so as to promote regular use. People in the area will assist to reduce the personal risk.</p>
		<p>While traffic flow is a necessity in the city, I would like to see greater pedestrian friendly areas in the precinct. I recognise that Darby, King and Hunter streets are critical to vehicle flow, I believe that Auckland and Laman should be closed off at their corner (at the Conservatorium of Music), and Dawson and Gibson be terminated at their interections. In addition, there could be a reduction in pedestrian risk, through making King Street one way (travelling to the east) and Hunter St (travelling one way to the West). [This will also permit a greater volume of parking if the extra room was used to introduce angle parking - not on King at the Civic Park but further afield]</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>From an aesthetic aspect, improvements and softening the lines between soft and hard surfaces by the removal or reworking of the gutters and improved drainage could lead to a more people friendly feel.</p> <p>Close the street to vehicle traffic from the start of the historic houses( beyond the SSP School) through to the art gallery.( allow access to Church for funerals etc) Develop this as a living history area. Extend the park up into this area in front of the Gallery. Make a proper forecourt. Go under the road for parking if there is not going to be enough in the new building plans.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>As for the trees. I would like to see them saved if possible. Heavy pruning and no traffic will help. I would also like to see dated evidence, plus photographs of trees that have "dropped' branches as started being the reason for their removal.</p> <p>Don't let dog owner's take their animals there, Newcastle is turning into a zoo.</p>

access	pedestrian	<p>Either retain the tree lined street or replace with similar shady trees. If it is such a risk to public, maybe a safe option would be to close the street to vehicle traffic and allowing the wonderful shade and other environmental factors that these trees have provided for many years. I feel strongly that the Council should leave the library there and develop it around that and the Art Gallery without going too big.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Extend Civic Park to include Laman St to the Dawson St intersection, removing the bitumen to allow the trees to be healthy.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Fairly simple project I believe. Block the road off from Darby to Auckland St. No access for vehicle's, pedestrian access only. Turn the Area into a sort of study campus. Leave the tree's alone... The reality is anything above the ground can be a safety risk. Manage the hazard, remove/reduce the risk. No bloody car park in Civic park. high pedestrian traffic</p>
		<p>zero car traffic or parking (make a good multi-level carpark in Queen St)</p>
		<p>remove road and pave it</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>retain trees</p>
		<p>plant new fig trees to replace old ones over time - see what has been done in Bronte for example</p>
		<p>more public art</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>introduce cafe/retail, etc - and covenants on it - no cheap looking places (eg take away fried food or \$2 shops)</p> <p>I believe this street should be kept free from all traffic. The area should be an extension of the art gallery, bringing the inside of the gallery out and the outside into the gallery. An area where all forms of art including movies (art house) can be enjoyed.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I don't mind the fact that this section has been closed to traffic. I use the library once or twice a week and the gallery once a month or so. So far finding a parking space has not been a problem. If it is going to remain closed to traffic I'd like it to be an extension of the park, with plantings, sculpture (local of course) and places to sit. I love those trees and if they can be preserved that would be great, but nothing lasts forever and it would be terrible if someone was killed or incapacitated - using that premise though, we could also close all Newcastle streets to traffic in case someone gets killed.</p> <p>I enjoy the Civic Park / Laman Street / Art Gallery / Library precinct and want to see it improved as a quiet and attractive inner city refuge with mainly pedestrian access if it comes to a choice. I feel that the trees in Laman Street must remain.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>If this means that vehicular use of Laman Street is unsafe and must cease, then so be it. This may mean construction of (strong) pedestrian covered walkway across Laman Street at the top of the Civic Park steps and some provision for covered parking that would cater for vehicles carrying physically handicapped people.</p> <p>I feel strongly that the beautiful trees must stay.</p>

- |        |            |   |
|--------|------------|---|
| access | pedestrian | <p>I envisage the Laman St - Civic Precinct to be a large pedestrian area suitable for diverse range of civic activities. There should be easy access via public transport, cycling, walking with encouragement for citizens to leave their cars at home.</p>   |
| access | pedestrian | <p>i have never seen this as a "precint to visit". it seems to be there as a benefit to residents of the area<br/>I intend to attend the meeting evening 20th Feb. To describe my vision for the futuer of Laman Street is not all that easy to do in words.</p> <p>Here goes! Consider it pedestrian only, with car parking facilities at the behind Laman street, with access to the Art Gallery and Library from the car park. I don't know how that could be achieved without huge excavation, for underground parking.....as in units and shopping centres.</p> <p>With the intended extension to the Art Gallery this sort of access it most necessary and already planned for.</p> <p>As for the street scape. It is gorgeous at present, even though the tree roots are upsetting the paths. Landscape planning a pedestrian area could help, if and when some of the tree need to go. Replant according to the layout of the area. Surely all the trees don't have to go.</p> <p>Also could there (in the futer) be a red or yellow bus run a route through the city which will set fown at the library, art gallery, council chambers, civic centre, tourist destination e.g. Nobby's, Fort Scrathly....this make happen over time, but prepare for it now. Newcastle City has huge potential, it is geographically gorgeour, always interesting as a working harbour.</p> <p>I love it, and look forward to its planned changes. I have been here three and a half years,</p> <p>originally from Sydney to Tea Gardens, and then my final choice an aprt. in Wincombe &amp; Carson's wool warehouse.</p> <p>I look forward to the meeting next Monday evening.</p> |
| access | pedestrian | <p>I love Laman Street/Civic Precinct, just the way it is with its beautiful fig trees which would be a shame to loose. I think the access to the area should be by foot only with parking and traffic not within the area of Laman Street in front of the Library etc. Signage could be erected to warn people of the dangers of possible falling branches and ensure the trees are checked and maintaned on a regular basis to minimise the chance of someone getting hurt from falling branches. Civic Park/Laman Street is such a great area for many public events and visitors that if more resources.money was used to maintain the area i think this would be the feedback from all locals and visitors to the area.</p>  |

I see the precinct as a 'green and cultural' zone that celebrates the Hunter's present, past and future, with lots more shade and trees, and an emphasis on walking and cycling access rather than cars. This is achieved by having boutique local arts and craft and quality local food shops, and sites for performances and public participation events.

There needs to be a focal point and this should be a prominent, bold sculpture that acknowledges and celebrates the Indigenous people of the region, and it could be located in an 'indigenous' garden where there are only local, indigenous plants.

access pedestrian There should also be a acknowledgment of the working class history of the region (e.g. by a mural that shows the ecological and cultural history of the region from before British settlement and also shows the coal railway that crossed the area, the steel works, ship-building and energy production heritage and future of the region (e.g. using solar energy and small wind turbines for power). be a program to remove (over time) all exotic plants, unless they have historical value. The Laman St figs fall into this category and should be kept, and replaced only when clearly identified as a safety risk, and only in a staggered fashion.

There should be a water feature/fountain in Wheeler Place (e.g. one of those fountains that emerges from the pavement that can be switched off when there are events and which is not a pedestrian/cycling hazard). This would link the Plaza to the Civic Park fountain.

The war memorials that are scattered throughout Civic Park should be sensitively relocated and consolidated into one area (e.g. near Auckland St), leaving the rest free for sculpture on the Darby St side, and with one 'iconic' sculpture located near the Darby St/King St corner.

The precinct needs to be linked to the railway station at Civic and and there should be at least one more access route across the railway line that links the precinct to the Foreshore (e.g. opening up a new pedestrian cross over the railway line near Union St/Hunter St intersection).

I think access (including access for disabled, wheelchair access, prams, frail elderly) is needed to library and and art gallery. This is slightly off the point but seating facilities within the art gallery (and the new art gallery) should also be suitable for disabled and frail aged (ie higher seating than presently exists, preferably with arms for support). Higher seating doesn't look as streamlined and beautiful but very elderly and frail people cannot stand for long periods of time required for looking through exhibitions.

access pedestrian Back to Laman Street itself. Parking has always been an issue it would be good to see some resolution - maybe no parking at all in Laman around the library and art gallery and provide good parking at the rear.

The trees are a problem. If second and even third expert opinions are sought on their safety and they still say they have to come down, so be it I guess. But I think generally the community is keen to see them stay as long as possible. Personally I think trees grow and eventually die, if they are unsafe remove them and replace them with something that could eventually be similarly shady and majestic. I wonder whether that section of Laman Street could be closed to traffic and turned into an open paved area like that alongside the Civic Theatre, so that art gallery/library related outdoor functions could be held there, right near the gallery and library.



access	pedestrian	<p>I think Laman St should be an extension of Civic Park. By this I mean a mall closed to traffic with plenty of seating for picnics or coffee. The park could be modified to integrate more with the street behind. A cafe or sandwich shop for refreshments before a visit to the gallery or library. Perhaps a forecourt at the library. The fig trees are beautiful and iconic and should be kept IF it is safe to do so. Obviously some attention to parking would be required even if it were a parking station integrated into the gallery or library buildings somehow. Not as visible or random as the lot on Darby St at the end of the gallery.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I think Laman Street should be shut off to traffic from Dawson Street to Darby Street and turned into a paved garden area either full of native plants, or a community garden. If the fig trees have to be removed, then the area should have more mature trees planted in their place, and the road area should be paved and include tables, chairs, outdoor lounge areas similar to what is currently in New York - called The High Line. This outdoor walking area has many areas for the public to sit and enjoy the sun  <a href="http://www.thehighline.org/">http://www.thehighline.org/</a> including some excellent sundecks, some big enough for up to 4 people to sit on.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I think the street should still be open to pedestrians but not to traffic! i think the way it is closed off to parked cars now is great. Who knows what the parking on the left hand side of street on the roots of trees was doing to the condition of them? Laman street is so beautiful and the state of the trees should be 1st priority.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I would like to see a public space with maximum pedestrian access and safety. For example, a car-free zone would be lovely. I love the greenery of the trees and the protection they offer from the sun. They make Laman St a welcome place to visit and removing them would greatly detract from the appeal of the area. We visit the art gallery frequently with our children and have never felt unsafe from the trees. Cars, however, do pose a real a high danger with car-accidents being the leading cause of non-disease related death in Australia. Tree-related deaths do not even occur in the statistics available from the ABS.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I would like to see the trees retained if possible and the section of Laman Street from Dawson Street to Darby Street made into a pedestrian only walkway. This would mean a reduction in parking for cars which could possibly be accommodated by building a multi-storied car park in the area behind the Art Gallery and Library which is currently used for parking but is inefficiently used. We do not want to discourage people from visiting this precinct and I think the above options would assist in encouraging people to use the area. When the trees were removed from Tyrel Street I personally think we lost a wonderful resource. I am aware of the problems with the trees as discussed by the professionals and the problems with leaves in guttering etc. however, despite these problems, I would like to see some way around these issues in order to maintain the wonderful aesthetic of the mature trees.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>I would like to see vehicle access shut down into Laman St. I think this area does have plenty of potential &amp; could like to see it more people friendly re; access/child friendly.</p>

		<p>I would suggest making that section of Laman Street a public walking thoroughfare with no cars.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Council should find creative solutions for keeping the existing fig trees such as creating larger areas around the roots filled with mulch instead of trying to pave or put roads over the top. The trees provide character, shade and beauty to the area and without cars that section would still have space to accommodate tree roots and pedestrians in a safe manner.</p> <p>Council's removal of the trees in Tyrell Street was criminal and I suggest they need to be a bit more creative with the way they solve these issues.</p> <p>Plenty of cities have large trees and accommodate them and their roots even if car access is restricted or removed. It is a cleaner, healthier and more beautiful option for the city.</p> <p>If there is a way of preserving the trees, then that would be my wish. If the trees are in fact dangerous (and from my reading and research this is not proven) then suitable advanced trees should be substituted.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>If the art gallery is to be expanded, it should be designed in such a way that it does not impact on the Memorial Grove, which is a dedicated war memorial site.</p> <p>Perhaps the roadway should be closed to cars and levelled into a promenade with seating and a small outdoor cafe (Juicy Beans style) A drop off area could be established at the Darby and Dawson street ends to allow access for the less mobile.</p> <p>It must be as ethically sustainable as possible.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>No access to any cars (they are dangerous, kill, and their pollution kills as well).</p> <p>Pedestrian and bicycles access only (and delivery trucks with fully separated bike/vehicle lanes). Speed limit 10km/hr.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>If a tree is dangerous from an independent tree expert then get rid of it. Replace with more trees.</p> <p>It still would be lovely to see the trees remain and the beautiful green arch but I understand that these trees can be very destructive. Maybe Laman street near the art gallery / library needs to be a pedestrian zone only to continue the relaxed feel as you visit these two buildings. Maybe some kind of "green" barrier can be put up around the trees so pedestrians don't fall over tree roots, etc if the trees remain. If the trees are removed they have to be replaced with suitable green foliage otherwise the area will look to bare and boring.</p> <p>Layman street as it is is an iconic street in Newcastle.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Blocking traffic totally in the eastern end of Layman street and making it purely pedestrian with a more grand entrance to the park - ie get rid of the black concrete and gutters and make the art and park precinct link</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Minimal traffic flow easy access site for all including prams, pushers and wheel chairs</p>

access	pedestrian	<p>My vision for the Civic precinct starts by closing Laman St permanently to all traffic. Turn this area into an extension of Civic Park with picnic tables and seating. Include garden beds of low growing plants that need very little water, some sculptures by local artists and KEEP THE TREES. King St between Darby and Auckland could be restricted to traffic one way with no parking at all along there. This would give a clear cultural and administrative area that would be easily closed to traffic for events. King St would also benefit from some tree plantings and garden areas. To compensate for the loss of those parking spaces a multi story car park could be built behind the library and art gallery with entrances to those facilities from it. The upper levels could be all day paid parking for workers in the area while the lower levels would be restricted paid parking for library and art gallery visitors. The entrance and exit would be either end of Queen St.</p> <p>My Vision is that Laman Street be closed between Darby Street and Dawson Street and be transformed to be part of Civic Park. It would include a walkway from Dawson Street to Darby Street lined with over arching fig trees on both sides. This could be achieved by planting additional advanced trees now and then gradually removing and replacing any unsafe trees.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>The existing walkway from King Street through the park up the stairs and across Laman Street to the Library would be retained but upgraded where it crosses Laman Street and enters the Library building.</p> <p>The Section of park replacing part of Laman St would also include a sculpture garden with sculptures representing the history of inhabitation of the area, before and since the arrival of Shortland.</p> <p>My vision is that the street become a paved Terrace overlooking Civic Park and the Town Hall. There would be an arched avenue along that stretch of Laman Street. The arch would be covered in greenery so that the steel arch is invisible. That's my endpoint, but the execution is the best part...</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>The steel arches would be erected NOW, and would prevent the existing figtrees from collapsing on the people below.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Management of the figtrees would be done in a controlled program. For example, 4 trees would be removed each year and replaced with very mature trees of a different kind. At that rate, it would take 20 years to eventually replace all the trees - but the entire transition would be smooth, and at no stage would the street look totally denuded.</p> <p>No cars road blocked off seating and tables under the shade of the existing tree canopy. An open public space for people to relax in with some outdoor artworks/sculptures for aesthetics.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>No cars, removal of tar and replace with hard packed soil so you feel like you are in a forest. Allowances for water to enter good drainage systems. No cement or concrete at all. As you near buildings you do need proper footpaths made out of stone. Timber seats for people to have lunch on. Water fountains so the public can get a drink. A feature fountain with bubbling water. Stone steps down to Civic Park. Stone steps up to the Library. Night lighting should also be a feature so all buildings can be accessed of a night without large dark areas. The Art Gallery should also have stone paths and steps. The trees should be made safe for falling branches. I feel the Music Con and the two Churches should connect together with this design by similar stone paths.</p>

access	pedestrian	<p>No traffic on Laman Street between Darby and Dawson so the gallery and library open out onto a terrace with cafe facilities. Much needed expansion of the gallery to include a shop and cafe/restaurant(s) as well as more exhibition/function space. Plant new native trees to replace the figs.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>cheers Reconstructed as a pleasant shady avenue that is safe to traverse, particularly as a pedestrian. Must provide easy access to public facilities such as Civic Park, the Library and Gallery. The cultural precinct needs to be a high profile Grand Square. My vision for the cultural precinct is creating a SQUARE. Laman Street could be closed to vehicle traffic between Darby and Dawson Streets. Steps leading up to Laman Street from Darby Street. Laman Street can be paved to make a level footing with pavement, then large stepping / seating can lead down into Civic Park from in front to the Art Gallery and being at a width to accommodate the width of the Art Gallery. This would lead to a paved section leading across the Civic Park to the roadway where a paved speed hump is installed between Burwood Street and Devonshire Lane. This would effectively make the ground space from Civic Park the existing paving around NCH &amp; CAC Civic Theatre all one level.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Paving could be placed on the other side of the existing path leading to the fountain thereby creating the SQUARE. The trees could be paved around metal fretwork fence surrounding them in the paved section. If suitable to save, the Fig Trees in Laman Street, maybe an arch framework could be installed for under protection. More trees, benches and landscaping needs to be done on the grassy sides to the park. Extensions made to the rear of the Art Gallery and more parking made available, also Queen Street could be open to thru traffic. The paved Square could have many uses, displays, festivals or just a natural place for people to congregate.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>Perhaps it could be home to a monument in front of the old Newcastle Post Office. An indoor cafe could be incorporated into the extensions of the Art Gallery at the front on Laman Street. The street being completely closed off. The civic precinct as a university precinct. The street has become a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists through a mid block road closure, allowing cars to drop off people at the gallery or library, but not to drive along the street.</p>
access	pedestrian	<p>A shady canopy of large trees makes it a haven in hot weather. Part of the space freed up by it not being a vehicle road is a skate park so that the Civic area caters to some people under the age of 60. Some new public sculpture.</p>

This street, and the importance of the buildings adjoining, in the cultural life of our city cannot be overstated. Its siting on the southern boundary of Civic Park and the Civic Precinct forms part of a visitor's experience of Newcastle.

Up until now the defining element of the fig trees has been a distinctive feature, but many recognise this as an opportunity to enhance the area.

In the event that the trees are no longer viable, the street should be closed from Darby Street to Dawson Street and the roadway redeveloped as an extension of Civic Park. This may include some of the viable fig trees or other advanced and appropriate trees, as shelter and shade are paramount.

access pedestrian Ideally the adjoining park area will include a Japanese Garden that may be a gift from our sister city, as was the case in Gosford. Whether or not a Japanese Garden becomes part of this vision, it needs to have a sympathetic parklike flow from the City Hall through to the Art Gallery and the Library.

The vision is that there is a large, beautiful, uninterrupted and harmonious progress possible from harbour to the Darby Street precinct. The enhanced and redeveloped art gallery is the jewel in the crown of such a vision. It will have a corner opening to invite visitors inside and the proposed sculpture court will provide a natural extension of the parklands that will include the present Laman Street tarmac.

access pedestrian To be designed as an Avenue for ambulation solely. It ought to complement Civic Park and Laman Street. Indeed, Laman Street, from Darby Street and Auckland Street, ought to be structured for pedestrian accomplishments.

access pedestrian To keep the fig trees and create additional access points to civic park. If necessary, close Laman st to traffic completely and use the road surface as an outdoor coffee terrace overlooking the park

access pedestrian To remove Laman Street as a public road between Darby and Dawson Street, and to have Civic Park extended to the very doors of the Art Gallery and the Library.

I wanted to tell you about my vision for Laman Street Newcastle, but the link for that was closed before I had the chance to have my say, which I'm not impressed about, considering I was trying to do it on the day such ideas were due.

access pedestrian Anyway my idea is that the section of Laman Street where the figs are should be closed off from traffic and become part of Civic Park leading up to the steps of the Library and Art Gallery. This of course would include saving the figs because they are an iconic and much loved part of Newcastle and its history and it would be an absolute tragedy if these trees were removed

access pedestrian people friendly. Get the locals to catch public transport. have al frecco cafes, bars, restaurants, a jazz venue and of course closed off to traffic.

access pedestrian Peoples precinct with no through traffic and cost free access

access safety \* Close Laman Street between Darby and Auckland (say) and integrate the Library and Art Gallery into Civic Park (along the lines of NSW Art Gallery and Domain).

access safety \* Do what is necessary to save the fig trees and make them safe. Access to the library and art gallery is the most important consideration, after safety. if the trees have to go we should think about replacing them for the future. Perhaps it could be a pedestrian only area and parking provided behind the gallery

Fig Trees - If determined that they are posing a risk to public safety they, unfortunately, need to be removed. The integrity of Laman Street as a tree lined avenue will presumably be retained with new plantings but if these specimens are approaching the end of their life cycle, the sooner they are removed the better.

access safety Art Gallery redevelopment - I am all in favour of the redevelopment plan as a Gallery Member. I would like to see perhaps the library and gallery joined in some way to form a single cultural building but the redevelopment and enlargement of the gallery is essential to the future development and reputation of Newcastle Region Gallery. The current exhibition space is simply too small and an embarrassment compared to many regional galleries in similar or smaller sized cities.

The existing usability of Civic Park is fine. I would like to see some replacement for trees that were felled during the June 2007 storm. Firstly I envision a safe area for people to go to. Therefore the trees that the experts have found to be unsafe must be removed.

access safety Secondly I would like this area to have no vehicular traffic, it should be an area for pedestrians and bicycles only with a view to this concept stretching to more of the city over time. This could mean the tarred road removed replaced by a more suitable surface. The city's cultural precinct should embrace realities of the environmentally dominated future. Let's start with Laman Street.

access safety Thirdly this area should become much more vibrant than it is. Often when I am in the area I could just as easily be in the middle of nowhere as nothing is happening. Let's introduce activities etc which encourage people to the area. Given that the park is not far from a CentreLink office it could perhaps be put to use for the betterment of our less fortunate.

I believe that Laman Street should be left basically as it is. Maintenance should be carried out on the trees to ensure they are safe - however they should not be removed. The Council is taking the easy way out by trying to remove them. One day a branch may fall if they are not properly maintained. Laman Street is the most beautiful street in Newcastle. (the trees have already withstood many storms)

access safety I would like to see the trees stay but due to safety issues, I would like to see the area paved like in Hunter Street Mall instead, so that no cars can enter this section.

If the Fig Trees are a risk they should be removed or made safe. (Public Safety a priority). Replace with trees that do not break up the roadways, they could be planted on the footpaths, and leave the road free of trees.

access safety

Because the area has so many community facilities in this street, there should be ample parking. Is it possible to build a parking station behind the library and the Art Gallery? I know there is a car park there now, but I am thinking on the lines of a multi-level car park.

access safety In Civic Park I would like to see more night lighting installed and increased security. The Art Gallery extended to facilitate major art exhibitions similar to the National Gallery's (French Masters and Australian exhibits) Public safety needs to be considered in regard to the trees. A plant replacement would be desired.

access safety It would be nice to keep it a nice green, leafy site but safety is of utmost

		<p>importance.</p> <p>It would be nice to keep the trees much the same as they are - it's a beautiful arcade which makes a great back-drop for photos, is cool and inviting, and frames the Civic fountain.</p>
access	safety	<p>To keep the area safe, the tree branches could be wired (much like bonsai trees are) in order to stop them from falling in high winds. Perhaps trimming some of the branches to make them less bushy and likely to capture the wind could work as well.</p>
access	safety	<p>Good luck, but it's important to keep the heritage and character of our town. Keep the Fig trees if at all possible, I would like to have more details re the risk involved. Turn Laman Street between Darby and Auckland into a walking area. parking is the major problem for that whole area, which must be solved, is underground parking a possibility?</p>
access	safety	<p>Maintain as much of an environmental, green appeal as possible without causing danger to anyone</p> <p>Make it safe by removing any trees that are obviously unsafe but not wholesale removal.</p> <p>The upgrade of the art gallery is just too costly (even before bowouts). There are greater needs around the city and the backlog is already over \$100M - need to live within our means.</p>
access	safety	<p>No underground car park for Civic Park - what a stupid idea - the council is trying to offload the car parks they have. Better to make car park parking much cheaper but must be as safe as possible AND try to get workers to use them!!</p>
access	safety	<p>Other than this I would like to comment on proposed plans.</p> <p>Make safe &amp; public friendly</p> <p>My vision for the future of Laman St, is to provide safe access for the community to the library and art galleries while retaining appropriate native plantings. I see nothing wrong with gradual management of the damaged trees that may cause harm to property and the community. Having appropriate green spaces in the city that blend with the park and Civic fountain help to maintain a peaceful atmosphere, attract birdlife, provide shade and also have benefits for greenhouse gas management.</p>
access	safety	<p>The most favourable way of dealing with the current trees that may be causing a level of risk is to assess how it can be best managed gradually, causing minimum harm and impact on the community and infrastructure - if this is at all possible. However, I believe that safety must come first. The cost and risk of maintaining the trees should be taken in context with other major projects around the city where equal needs exist.</p> <p>Why should we be spending tens of thousands of dollars for a plan about trees which aren't natives, when there are many of our community members doing it tough, children, homeless and elderly people alone in their homes? Remove any truly dangerous trees / tree limbs - specific and in-depth risk assessment to find true risk as well as reasonable controls, considering that many people would like to preserve this public amenity.</p>
access	safety	<p>If necessary, I do not think it unreasonable to close off the street to traffic to assist with risk control if deemed necessary.</p> <p>If Laman St was fully closed to traffic, it would create a lovely "flow" from Art Gallery / Museum into parkland / open space recreation areas - all but involves running the park right up to the Art Gallery / Museum areas.</p>

		<p>If the trees need to be removed, there is no reason why the street cannot still be closed to traffic, with a sympathetic tree planting exercise to be conducted.</p>
access	safety	<p>Reopen Laman street with signs "use at own risk". Sympathetically connect the Cultural Centre (library), to Art Gallery. Possible multi story Car-park adjacent to gallery on Derby and Queen streets. Build new library on Hunter and Burwood streets corner. Civic park is already a pleasant piece of green space.</p> <p>The current ambience in Laman St is lovely. The trees are probably the main reason that this street has such character.</p>
access	safety	<p>If the trees have to be removed, it would provide a good opportunity to repair the road, and then provide some other kind of vegetation that over time could create the "avenue" feeling once again.</p> <p>Safe access to the Librarby and Art Gallery are of course the main considerations.</p> <p>The trees are wonderful, but if they are dangerous they have to go.</p> <p>Perhaps a mall-type effect could be created, eg. sun cover/roof to provide protection from sun and rain - even artificial trees?</p>
access	safety	<p>Specific parking, not metered, nor extended, as the need for some limited drop-off and pick-up areas should be provided - so, yes, a need for traffic access is important, eg. disabled, guests attending functions at the library/art gallery, dropping off library loans.</p> <p>I don't think people visiting the library should have to pay parking fees in the near-by streets. The library is for the community, and some families with young children may not be attracted to go the Regional Library because of the need to pay. Perhaps a library only parking (1 hour only) area can be created - which perhaps would have to be manned to ensure others did not park there. The library staff could issue or stamp vouchers etc. Or, as some tourist associations have, will provide a limited-time voucher for people to park for free - this would allow people to use the parking areas around the library and would not require a specific parking area.</p>
access	safety	<p>This area should remain the cultural hub of the city, with beautiful gardens and shade trees in the park and surrounds. The park should be well lit at night to discourage anti-social behaviour. I don't know how it can be achieved, but somehow people need to feel safe when walking in this area at night, rather than being too scared to walk through the park</p> <p>To me the Fig Trees are one of the main bueatifying features of the area and it would be a great shame to see them go, but if they are a danger, public safety must come first and I would like to see them replaced by another large tree if they have to go.</p>
access	safety	<p>There was a railway line that ran along Burwood St and across Civic Park that closed about 1957. It would be good if this could be remembered by a paved walking path with a paver every so often inscribed with what the path represents, as this was an important coal railway and it is the coal industry that helped Newcastle grow to what it is today.</p> <p>Weddings are very popular in Civic Park but parking for wedding cars is a major problem, can there be spaces in King Sreet that can be reserved at certain times for wedding cars.</p>

access	safety	<p>Unfortunately, the trees must go, they are a safety risk, and they are causing huge problems with infrastructure like phone, power &amp; water, and cracking and damaging footpaths.</p>
		<p>It would be nice if that section near the Library was blocked off and made into public space. Access to the Newcastle Region Library - No problem with the current arrangement and restricted parking.</p>
		<p>Future plans for extending the Art Gallery - A great gallery, hopefully the extensions promise more and better exhibitions</p>
access	transport	<p>Public safety relating to the Hills Fig trees - Fig trees give wonderful shade, soft filtered light and are a great asset visually. However I can understand the safety issue. Is it possible to retain them safely ?</p>
		<p>Parking and traffic issues - Free parking on weekends and holidays.</p>
		<p>Enjoyment and uses of Civic Park and Laman Street - Probably clean up the public toilets and open them during daylight hours. Accessible for pedestrians &amp; motorists.</p>
access	transport	<p>fig trees either removed or pruned. Clearly the trees have to go. Keeping them will only prolong the issue of not having a mature avenue of trees in the street. Once the trees are removed it will be true that the space will look very different for a reasonable period of time, so.....</p>
access	transport	<p>Why don't you look into creating steel arch structures at various points along the street whilst the more appropriate trees you have chosen have a chance to mature. Vines could be grown over these quite quickly to create an avenue feel as well as some shading and the steel fits in with Newcastle's industrial heritage.</p>
access	transport	<p>Also, now that the street is one way. why don't you pave it to make it a passive one way driving space (ie don't re-open it to 2 way traffic) cut the trees if necessary for public safety and open the street back up to 2 way traffic First of all the road known as Laman st cookshill should be opened to all traffic both way's, as this is a convenience to all that live in the city, a good short cut around the lights in king st.</p>
access	transport	<p>Secondly the said trees have grown over the years from when they were young in 1955 Him &amp; Her where taller. Cut them out the lot and replace them with local native cedar trees, evergreen with spreading branches &amp; fragrant find grain wood. This will cause a stom, but time moves on. remove the old fig trees as well in the park, and replace with Cedar trees, this will look and be better for the park in 20 yrs or so. plus the price of cedar wood is expensive and it is dollars in the bank for the city come replacement time, in 100 yrs or so, not wood chip. The fountain and war marmor are good why change. widen king st from union to darby take 10 Ft off the park, when removing the fig trees. Remember when they said burwood park would never have a road though, Ha Ha, Take trees out of scott st for smother traffic flow. Cut rail at woodville juntion, open up city to forshore.</p>

access transport

For a start I am anti fig tree. Apart from creating problems with road and footpath surfaces the fruit and leaves create a mess where ever they have been planted. Bat droppings add to my problem. they trees themselves create a problem with parking. The art gallery and library have been built and subsequently developed with little consideration to FUTURE parking and without some demolition or underground parking facilities being developed it will always remain a problem. Laman Street is not currently a well used street, people avoid it because of the narrowness in some places and the fact that one can only turn left when driving in an easterly direction towards Darby Street. The park itself is used by some interest groups for weddings etc and for military related services. The toilets were for some time regularly used and were a meeting place for some homosexuals. Currently parking is a problems and when more of the university courses transfer to the city area it will deter non residents from even looking for a parking spot in this area. Any develop in Laman Street will only affect local residents and either enhance their living standards and increase their property values or expose some of the buildings for what they are, an eyesore. From what I have already written the reader would have formed the opinion that I am not into the preservation of "all things old ." A little bit on sunlight in this Street would be greatly appreciated by some. I am a Novocastrian by birth and attended Cooks Hill High School in the 1950's. If the figs have to go, they need to be replaced with something more maintenance friendly. Car access is a necessity.

access transport

If the trees are unsafe then they need to be removed and more planted. There is no point in having a street the public cannot access because of the danger.

access transport

People need access to the Art gallery and the library. It is important to maintain a green backdrop to Civic Park and a cool leafy street for pedestrians around the Art Gallery and Library. It is not necessary to maintain the present fig trees but they should be replaced with trees which will serve the same purpose - they must be fairly large both in width and height.

access transport

The street should have low traffic flow. it would be a great shame to lose the archway of trees in layman street - particularly now that many of the trees in tyrrell street have gone.

access transport

i must say however that since the traffic arrangements in layman st have changed to prevent people turning in and out of it in certain directions on the darby st side, I rarely drive down layman street, as the main directions I used to use it from are no longer available, so I use the main roads instead. this probably provides benefits to people living in cooks hill etc as it takes traffic out of that area, but it does mean you don't have people driving past the front door of the gallery and library as much and remembering that they are there.

I would like to see the trees preserved if at all possible - even to the extent of making the street one lane only and removing the parking etc. parking for these venues could be at the rear - the parking in that area is currently used by commuters - unnecessarily in my view, as I work in the area and in 20 years have have never found it necessary to park more than a kilometre from king st, no matter how late I arrive at work. many people tell me they 'have' to park there as there is nothing else available, when they arrive, but this is just because they won't walk more than 300m.

If the trees have to be removed, perhaps the opportunity could be taken to open up the area a little visually, but I also think the replacement of the trees with a type that is more suitable would also be a good solution (perhaps trees that are not so spreading, with the branches starting further up the trunk and with a bit of space between, even when fully grown. I think the background of the trees looks great behind Civic Park when viewed from King St. Perhaps a compromise might be deciduous trees so that at least during the winter, there would be more sunlight going onto the street, and for some part of the year, the library and the gallery would be visible from King St.

Laman Street is wonderful, with its archway of trees. If these are truly a danger, as stated, then I believe they should be taken down gradually, according to their danger, and more suitable trees planted.

Because of the Art Gallery, Library, and Church, on the left hand-side of Laman Street, as facing west, parking is needed, including a bus drop off site. This would still be possible with the planting of suitable trees.

access transport

It is essential that the proposed extensions to the Art Gallery go ahead. Storage and display areas need to be increased, and a restaurant / cafe area, Art Gallery shop, and lecture areas are essential, to improve the Art Galleries facilities, and also to allow the Gallery to earn cash to enhance its facilities for the City.

Access is needed to the residual parking area behind the Art Gallery, and to others in the vicinity. The current streets with access to Laman Street should remain accessible.

access transport

Civic Park is a wonderful Newcastle area, and should remain. The trees should be regularly assessed and removed when necessary, with previously agreed suitable replacement trees.

My vision is for a new Gallery commensurate with the size and importance of our city and its wonderful (mostly hidden) collection.

I would like to see a better connection between the Laman St cultural facilities and Civic Park. Ideally, I would like the steep drop in levels between Laman St and the park mitigated by landscaped terraces. The new Gallery coffee shop design might be altered so that it faces the park, ideally with a large outdoor deck, rather than the RTA building on Darby St.

It would be lovely for people to be able to step out of the Gallery and Library into a green parkland, best if there was no road there at all. This would require vehicular access and parking to be provided elsewhere, eg on Queen St.

Access to the Laman St cultural facilities is, of course, presently severely hampered by the part-closure of the road. The restriction on access from Darby St (no right turn when travelling south) and the 'no thru road' status of Queen St exacerbate the problem.

		<p>Remove all fig trees make street into pedestrian mall Plant Native Australian trees Put in seats &amp; sails Fig trees are dangerous and destructive to surrounding buildings and infrastructure including roads, utilities (phone Gas etc) and buildings and probably the civic fountain, they are messy with their "fruit" with birds spreading the seeds With a pedestrian mall outdoor exhibitions could be undertaken Looking out over Civic Park would be an ideal way to eat lunch enjoy a drink or icecream This would attract tourists to the inner city if something was done about the lack of "access" to the city decent public transport system not a system designed by someone in Sydney BRING BACK THE TRAMS and preserve the rail line into the city with possible extension through the hill to Mereweather beach either via Nobbys or along the old coal rail line through Civic Park to the junction and Mereweather with tram or light rail Put the car parking under the cathedral park by digging in to the hill rather than down below the water table More use of the area under the hill could be utilised Tell Jodie McKay to butt out and stop crawling to her political mates in Sydney and listen to what the public want not the few yuppies on the hill Cut the rail and you KILL the city Its now a no go for tourists due to the parking policies of the council BRING BACK Free Parking get rid of the meters Remove the trees that are existing - beautiful but costing a fortune in road and path maintenance. Plant other trees and/or lots of small/tall bushes.</p>
access	transport	<p>Keep the street open to traffic.</p>
access	transport	<p>Make sure the street is well lit with solar lighting.</p> <p>Exhibit all types of art/craft/poetry and story telling at the Art Gallery &amp; Library - ones that suit all walks of life and all ages.</p>
access	transport	<p>That it remains as the city's cultural hub, but is developed with consideration of the important traffic routes that pass through it. It should be an area with a unified identity and be something we can all be proud of. I don't think we need an underground car park in the middle of it. The trees on Laman St should be kept. Restrict vehicular access in both directions near library &amp; art gallery.</p>
access	transport	<p>Add some area for children to play eg playground.</p> <p>Add an under cover area eg rotunda This green area is a credit to Newcastle. My vision for the area is, with minor tinkering, remaining untouched. Yes, the dead wood on the trees should be culled as required, and minor adjustments to the Fig roots system modified, as long as it does not reduce the viability, by introducing diseases.</p>
access	transport	<p>Entrance from Darby street north should be re-introduced, in tandem with traffic calming. Tree lined avenue with slow through traffic in both directions and parking close to library &amp; gallery.</p>

access	transport	<p>Whatever the outcome, there must be easy pedestrian and car access to the library. If this is not possible then move the library to the old post office!</p> <p>I am unable to open the Newcastle Voice Survey on the Laman Street Civic Precinct however I would like to see the trees remain and vehicle and pedestrians still able to use the street. There are other more dangerous areas eg between corlette and Bruce street on the southern side which is an absolute disgrace and when walking along there at night it is easy to fall over due to the condition of the pavement which has been patched several times. The trees in Council street between darby and Bruce street would appear to be causing more damage than those in Laman Street but nothing is said of these....makes one wonder if Newcastle Council just want to close the road between Dawson and Darby Street.</p>
access	transport	<p>I also think the sculptures in the Library should be moved to Civic Park as there true beauty is spoilt due to the library doors and windows which do not enable the full view of them.</p> <p>From the time of the design of the Town (now City) Hall this area has been regarded as the Centre of the City.</p>
access	linkage	<p>When the Cultural Centre was built the original Axis was preserved and extended from the original</p> <p>Council needs to resolve the issue surrounding the safety of the trees. This has a large impact on my 'vision' for the area. If the trees are safe I would like to see the area left largely as it is now. If the trees are not safe, I would like to see a suitable replacement tree found and installed along the frontage of the library and the art gallery. If the trees are removed, it would be beneficial to improve the visibility of the library and the art gallery from Civic Park and City Hall. At present, these building are concealed from these vantage points.</p>
access	safety	<p>Parking should not be allowed to encroach on Civic Park from Darby Street and any parking improvements that can be achieved should be found along Laman Street. Consideration should be given to a permanent one way road in front of the library and art gallery.</p> <p>Further, Council should properly line mark the car park behind the library as many people are unable to park in the designated spaces properly due to the absence of appropriate line marking. This would alleviate some of the pressure on the surrounding areas.</p> <p>All proposed changes to the Civic Park precinct, as a result of this project, should be incorporated into a revised Plan of Management for the Park. The Plan should identify a suitable natural asset maintenance/replacement program so this issue is not revisited in the future.</p> <p>Small pedestrian improvements can be made in certain areas of the park, such as connecting the footpath near the toilets to the Darby street footpath.</p>

First of all you need to see if the trees are a real threat to public safety or some other hidden agenda by council for any easy fix to get rid of the trees.

Second if cost permit which i doubt join the art gallery and library into one building with a reading room and coffee lounge

access

safety

Also have a display area for future planning such as new ideas and display models also have an information centre so as visitors can see what else we have to offer in the way of tourist attractions say Blackbutt reserve Port Stephen, Lake macquarie, Fighter world williamtown airbase, Winery display ,short film on Hunter Valley gardens

Use your imagination.

The most important to be done first clean up the drunken yobbos especially at weekends do what was done in New York zero tolerance on crime if not you are wasting my time as well as yours.

Firstly the Fig Trees - councils exposure in relation to public liability and public safety must be the paramount issues considered - retention of the trees must be a secondary consideration with the noises being made by a "vocal minority" ignored.

Ideally I would see the roadway of Laman Street between Darby and Dawson Streets becoming a pedestrian plaza connecting both the art gallery and library to civic park.

For any extension of the art gallery it is essential that the area of land adjacent to Darby Street and currently used by the RTA as a parking lot be acquired by some means and added to the land footprint of the art gallery.

access

safety

Regarding parking ideally a multi story parking station could be built on the land at the rear of the library - however as this would require an injection of funds that may not be available, patrons to both the art gallery be required to use available on street parking or the Gibson Street parking station which may require an alteration to current operating hours.

All of the areas and facilities within the civic precinct are in reality a regional asset and

whatever is decided MUST be done over an extended period of time and within the borrowing capabilities of Council and not thrust upon the ratepayers of the city. All opportunities for both federal and state government funding must be investigated and pressure put upon all members of parliament within the Newcastle LG area to both support and deliver.



I believe Laman St should continue to represent the cultural values of Newcastle.

Firstly I believe the results of the surveys and exactly what the dangers are with the Figtrees should be made public. Also, if there are significant issues with the Figtrees, what is to be considered in preference and what happens to those that might already be in place?

access	safety	<p>I believe access to/from this area and the Civic Precinct needs to be upgraded. I would like to see some type of walkway built over King Street. At present the only access to the Civic Precinct is via the crossing near City Hall. I believe there are a number of safety issues with this. There is no lighting at night time and the general parking of vehicles on the side of the road make it difficult for approaching vehicles to see pedestrians entering the crossing. Secondly, the pedestrians using the crossing, severely effect the traffic flow on King St. This is an issue in the afternoons/evenings in general, but particularly towards the end of the year when various functions are being held in the Laman St/Civic Park and Town hall areas. In the interests and safety of all community members (both pedestrian and motorists) I believe this walkway over King St is a necessity.</p>
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access	safety	<p>I see Laman Street as the gate way to the Civic and Cultural area of Newcastle. I understand that we all have an emotional connection to the trees, however I think the safety concerns should override any aesthetic considerations.</p>
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access	safety	<p>i was just up at the city library this morning and i find the area around the library much better since restricted vehical access to laman street has been installed----- the trees in laman street look great and shady which makes this area so beautiful and full of character and to remove the figs in one go will turn this area into a very hot unwelcoming area for all --if the figs are too old and dangerous the problem trees should be replaced over an extended period and not remove the trees in one go--tyrell street has never been the same since all the trees were removed in one go to make the street safe and it wasn,t that unsafe to start with---trees are part of this laman street area</p>
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## Culture

subject	subject2	your_vision
culture	activities	<p>Highly relaxed, reflective space most of the time with events form time to time.</p> <p>Place to go, to be in the shade, to experience art. To read.</p> <p>This to me is a location of refuge and fun. The art, the fountain, the grass the trees/shade these are elements worth maintaining and building on.</p> <p>Commercialisation can be left for King and Darby Streets.</p> <p>I think that the over all areas for assesment is from Merwether St entrance to the foreshore up through Civic Presinct and into Civis Park up to Laman and flowing through to Darby St.</p> <p>This can be considered the new living artistic heart of the City. Four SIGNIFICANT drawcards in Newcastle Heart joined together. Think of the flow through at Sydney Harbour from Opera House to Museam Contemporary Art and eventually throught to the eating / nightlife in The Rocks.</p>
culture	activities	<p>To be honest I have no idea as to how that all may be brought together, but with LiveSites already breathing life into the area and such tremendous spaces to work in, its not hard to see it being such a dynamic area for the community and tourism.</p> <p>The realisation eventually of a new contemporary landmark Art Gallery building would bring it all together Im sure.</p>
culture	activities	<p>But for sure the elements of the beauty of Laman St with the figs must be retained or perhaps in some way slowlyly transformed. Road closure although painful may at least alleviate some risk in the interim and might be a great way to pull these elemnets together anyway.</p> <p>If the trees are unsafe they should be removed and most definately replaced with some trees that are suitable for the street, and will in time provide the same wonderful look. The area could then be use for more public events, linking Civic Park, the Library, Art Gallery and the Music Conservatorium.</p>
culture	activities	<p>It is really the jewel in the city area, and I feel not made the best of its beauty.</p> <p>If the trees have to come down I would want them replaced with similar ones. I do beleive that the one way traffic change is good. Maybe some more gardens can be put in around this area. I have no idea how big the new art gallery will be but this may effect the whole feel of the street anyway. It is a beautiful cool area and does draw people into inner city. It may be possible to close the street off occasionally and have some different music groups give performaces. I would certainly make an effort to bring a chair and listen to some music from the conseratorium.</p>

Laman Street between Dawson and Darby Streets should be closed to traffic and the road ripped up and replaced with grass. The giant fig trees provide a natural arch way, and, especially if there were a small flag-stone footpath down the centre of the street, it would be an incredibly popular place for weddings. I've lived in Cooks Hill for 13 years, and see SEVERAL bridal parties nearly every weekend almost queueing up to use Laman Street and Civic Park for pictures. Council could charge a small fee for the use of the arch-way on Laman Street and certainly make enough money to check and maintain the trees.

As the Art Gallery is planning to expand, during the renovation process, the main entrance to the gallery could be moved to where the RTA carpark is.

If weddings were taking place on Laman Street, it would be possible for the renovated Art Gallery to have a function room, which would be a revenue-raiser for the Gallery. There would be a natural progression for the use of the space all around Laman Street near Civic Park.

culture activities

The park itself should have a rotunda (another wedding revenue-raiser), probably between the fountain and Darby Street, and DISCRETELY, tucked away in the corner near Auckland Street, a SMALL good-quality coffee bar. In a GRADUATED fashion, as the fig trees need to be replaced, they should be replaced with a single variety of tree that has the arching quality of the figs without the fruit, fruitbat, and tree root issues. Something native would be good for a start!

The events that occur in Wheeler Place need to be COORDINATED with what is on at the Civic Theatre and at the Playhouse. I've paid for tickets at those venues before, and had noise interference from free events, like the Latin dancing, in Wheeler Place. It is unforgivable to have that sort of sloppy planning in an area that is so often disused!

Wheeler place could be used in the daytime by local workers, and people waiting for trains IF there were a shade structure connecting the tourist information building to the Civic Theatre (I'm envisioning something very tall, and louvered, so it let in light during winter and closed in summer for maximum shade. Then, restuarnts / take aways could gained licenses to put tables out under the shade structure (another revenue raiser for Council) for certain periods during the day, and perhaps some Council-owned picnic tables on the periphery for people who bring their own lunches. Wheeler place also needs a fountain - perhaps one of those under ground ones that sends up shoots of water at intervals, and most, importantly, can be turned OFF and made unobtrusive when there are big events there.

Laman street should be a cultural focal point of Newcastle, with the salvage or replacement of the tree canopy, there should be an abundance of local stalls selling and/or displaying arts and entertainment at specified times of the day/week.

culture activities

With future coffee and light restaurant establishments to operate within the street and into Civic Park.

This along with some type of loop or track for walkers to start using the park for recreational purposes in future.

free or account Wifi to the park and street vicinity to attract people to spend their lunch break in a relaxed environment.

buskers and street performers could be introduced by way of designated podiums and for peak weekend times ie 12-4 Saturday and Sunday, professional live entertainment could be organised on a rotunda in the park or at the Laman street steps.

Making the Park and King street a 'rendezvous' area for shuttles and cabs at night would attract more people to the area to use facilities and abolish the dark spot that has had the park renowned by locals as a dangerous place to walk though.

Eventually the old Nesca House, along with Wheeler place, the art Gallery and Library could all assimilate to offer light dining, news agency, tourist information and hospitality to liven up this dead end of the city which in turn will bring life back to the civic precinct and provide more action at the top of Darby inclusive of Finnegans.

culture	activities	<p>Major development would be reclaiming a portion of King street Strip to provide rear to kerb parking opposite the Town Hall and to make the council car park more accessible to the general public. People may be more enticed to visit shows at the Civic without the fear of being mugged at night. try not to remove the fig trees, there as much a part of newcastle, as the park itself, all must be done to preserve them, more weekend entertainment encouraged into civic park, local dance groups, drama, all community free entertainment to encourage the public back to newcastle, When I think of this area, I think of Arts/crafts. It would be valuable to accent this theme with decorated buildings, sidewalks etc.</p>
culture	activities	<p>I love the trees in Laman st. I understand the risks and therefore I think they should be resized, reshaped, cut back to alleviate the risk... but not removed.</p>
culture	activities	<p>Parking is an issue. Investigate whether more cars could be parked 45 deg angle, nose to kerb down one side of the street and no parking down the other. Make Laman st a 'one way' street to facilitate the additional parking. A summer Arts festival - imagine a play where the actors use the stairs and the area around the fountain - e.g. Commedia del arte, or an event hosted by a well-known name. The same on the stairs of the City Hall (King Street blocked off). "A Midsummer Night's Dream in the park would be magic. A tradition of such a festival would be income-boosting, a headache in some ways but bring much clout to our city</p>
culture	activities	<p>a bright, colourful and friendly area with a cultural feel, including cafes, canopies for shade, entertainment areas and a thoroughfare leading to the honeysuckle precinct</p>
culture	activities	<p>a friendly walkthru environment, perhaps with weekend activities which then stretch into the city celebrating everything newcastle and the district has to offer</p>
culture	activities	<p>A green, interesting space that signifies its historical and cultural background through public art.</p> <p>Careful attention to access for people with a disability including easy parking or drop-off.</p>



culture	activities	A precinct that attracts visitors because of the interesting range of uses there and because the space is quirky and dotted with public art, temporary installations, spontaneous activities etc that reflect the university, music, art and culture that is experienced in this area. Opportunities abound for unexpected things to happen.
culture	activities	A relaxed area, culturally diverse, with places for people to ponder and discuss issues.
culture	activities	A safe and attractive street with or without current trees A safe pedestrian environment with suitable trees for the modern arts/entertainment precinct that will be easily maintained.
culture	activities	A place to allow quick access for library and art gallery users and park habitues.
culture	activities	How would an exhibition area for small outdoor music concerts be included? A shady street, full of history. Area for street fairs and recreation in hot summers. A thriving arts and culture hub physically linking the area to Darby Street (an arts, fashion and food strip) ... offering a cluster of art and cultural experiences. Public art should be paramount to draw people to the arts hub.
culture	activities	Further research must be conducted with the view to a solution where the trees can be <b>SAVED</b> . To date it appears all studies have been conducted with a premise that they must go. If they do eventually have to go this must be done in a staged approach so that the trees are systematically replaced so as not to lose the ambience of the street scape overnight.
culture	activities	A vibrant, but relaxed hub for the city including: * public and private transport facilities including parking * restaurants and eating houses * boutique shops * parks and trees

		<p>Another public entrance installed at the car park side of the Regional Library, though maintaining the Laman Street front entrance. This car park relocated for public use, the library and art gallery. Purchasing properties encompassing Corner Queen and Dawson along to Corner Queen and Darby and along Darby. This area needs a public multi storey parking station for use during normal business week parking, particularly office workers and would be financed by parking fees (public private venture similar to John Hunter Hospital's parking facility.) Public safety is paramount. Remove all the trees in Laman street. Revert Laman street to park land, and extend Civic Park to the entrances of the Art Gallery and Library. Install walkways through Civic Park connecting Darby and Wheeler and King Street. Up grade Lighting in the all these areas. Install security cameras in park and emergency stations similar to Rail stations.</p>
culture	activities	<p>More big name exhibitions at the Gallery. Promoting subscription membership of the Art Gallery and Civic Theatre and Playhouse. Promote these places as the focal point of Newcastles cultural centre.</p>
culture	activities	<p>better area for a district level skate park than Empire Park</p>
culture	activities	<p>Expansion of the art gallery and the inclusion of more retail/restaurants in this area.</p>
culture	activities	<p>Extend the venue in the Civic precinct, where possible, such as the Art gallery, LiveSites, as well as develop the Clvic Precinct as an arts base in Newcastle to include other at organisations such as the Conservatorium, The Loft, Renew Newcastle, Peforming Arts Newcastle, Octopod, Tantrum, Circus Avalon &amp; Watt Space to name a few.</p>
		<p>If the trees in Laman street are a danger to the coommunity, once removed, replaces the trees with natives to ensure the Boulevard feel is maintained.</p>
culture	activities	<p>Family friendly, modern.</p>
		<p>I think it is very important to retain and build on the cultural strength of this precinct. It has a long time association has being one of the key cultural nodes in Newcastle.</p>
culture	activities	<p>Whilst Honeysuckle is developing its own history - it should not be the sole place where all of newcastle's cultural activity should be found.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>A useful space for all - opening up the area. Keeping the library as a central theme of information for the region</p>
		<p>Existing trees must be removed and replaced with more suitable (ie. less damaging to streetscape)</p>
		<p>types.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Addition of a cafe in or very near the Gallery would be of great benefit to visitors and provide more</p>
		<p>funds for the Gallery.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Complementing perfectly the Civic cultural precinct, incorporating the Con, Civic Playhouse and theatre, as well as the western stretch of Hunter St currently being isolated from the precinct. Later hours of activity - an extension of active street frontages from Darby St. Remove car repair workshops and replace with low-rise apartments/shops/offices with active street fronts. Remove RTA and Southern Cross Ten building, or renovate so that the building pays attention to the street, instead of looking over it.</p>

Staged removal of trees, with replanting of trees of better suitability, that will also create a shade canopy.

culture facilities

For it to be;  
 An inner city oasis,  
 cafe needed,

My vision is for a SAFE area, I have stopped seeing shows at the Civic due to a few frights from yobbos while walking to the car and waiting for a taxi. Having a hub for Art, the Library and the Civic is a great idea and could possibly support some additional coffee shops and boutique type shopping. All this is great but if the public don't feel safe they won't support it.

culture facilities

Regarding the trees.... I have always admired them and marvel at the " tree tunnell " for it's beauty and cool on a hot day but Council must remove them due to the safety concerns.... no tree is worth someones life. Perhaps Laman Street could be closed to traffic and the area transformed to the coffee shop area mentioned before with outside dining and large canopies for shade until the replacement trees are big enough to provide shade

Does the Civic still have it's projection plant? Maybe it could be utilised as an Art House type cinema between live shows using only the stalls area to save costs.

Just some thoughts, Good luck with the project

culture facilities

I believe that the Laman St Cultural Precinct is an outstanding asset to Newcastle. It is the area that I show off to visiting friends who often comment that this area is one of the most beautiful examples of such precincts that they have seen in regional Australia. I have had similar comments from overseas visitors. The Laman Street fig trees contribute a significant part of the charm of this area. To remove them in one fell swoop would be an act of cultural vandalism. I believe that the trees should be gradually replaced by fairly mature trees that are going to provide a similar shady vista to the streetscape when they are fully grown. I would hope that suitable endemic tree species could be found to replace the fig trees, but in the absence of any such trees being available, council could consider trees such as plane trees which provide plenty of shade and natural beauty, but don't have such invasive roots.

To address the safety issue, council should retain its current traffic restrictions in the street. The one-way traffic outside the library works well in my opinion. If further measures need to be taken to address safety concerns, perhaps the road could be narrowed to allow room for the invasive buttress roots and traffic in the street restricted still further. Disabled access to the library, regional gallery and cultural centre should be addressed when considering the exact nature of these traffic restrictions.



		<p>I don't think I really have a vision. I do know that the Art Gallery needs more room and I definitely feel that a cafe at the Gallery would be a good idea and a good financial bonus for Council.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>The fig trees are amazing but if they have to go then it should be a staged removal i.e. not taken out all at once. They should be replaced with dramatic but appropriate trees.</p> <p>The parking area behind the Gallery is really useful for parking at night when eating in Darby St!!</p> <p>Parking really needs to be available in Laman Street for ready and easy access to the Library and Gallery.</p> <p>I feel if the current trees have passed their use by date they should be removed and replaced with a more suitable species. Possibly the street should be one way.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>The art gallery to me looks fine and is a herald back to architecture of the time. Any new structures should not impact on the current facade.</p> <p>I intend to attend the meeting evening 20th Feb. To describe my vision for the future of Laman Street is not all that easy to do in words.</p> <p>Here goes! Consider it pedestrian only, with car parking facilities at the behind Laman street, with access to the Art Gallery and Library from the car park. I don't know how that could be achieved without huge excavation, for underground parking.....as in units and shopping centres.</p> <p>With the intended extension to the Art Gallery this sort of access it most necessary and already planned for.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>As for the street scape. It is gorgeous at present, even though the tree roots are upsetting the paths. Landscape planning a pedestrian area could help, if and when some of the tree need to go. Replant according to the layout of the area. Surely all the trees don't have to go.</p> <p>Also could there (in the future) be a red or yellow bus run a route through the city which will set down at the library, art gallery, council chambers, civic centre, tourist destination e.g. Nobby's, Fort Scratchley....this make happen over time, but prepare for it now. Newcastle City has huge potential, it is geographically gorgeous, always interesting as a working harbour.</p> <p>I love it, and look forward to its planned changes. I have been here three and a half years.</p>

culture facilities

I like it the way that it is. Extensions to the Art Gallery should be confined to the rear of the building. The area bounded by Laman, Auckland, King, and Darby streets is one of the most attractive in Newcastle.

There is enough to be done in Newcastle without spending time and money on problems that don't exist.

I remain unconvinced about the public dangers attributed to the Fig trees.

Council has a poor reputation in regard to retention of trees. Many of us remember the removal of the Fig from Civic Park near the corner of King and Auckland Streets. As I recall it was to enable footpath work and the installation of cabling below the road. The park plan of management was disregarded and it was done in such haste that there was no reference to the Councillors. In consequence subsequent actions are regarded with deep suspicion.

I recognise that this was done under the previous administration.

If Council do determine that the Auckland Street trees be removed immediately (which I believe would be a terrible decision) then it is essential that it be done in a staged manner, and every effort be made to minimise the effect on the wildlife for which they provide essential habitat.

The retention of the trees should take precedence at all times over traffic management, parking plans, building works in Auckland Street, and indeed everything else.

I love the precinct because it is always restful there, but at the same time, it is culturally stimulating. I love the quiet activity that is always going on, even into the night, when people are parking there to visit the library, or to attend concerts in the precinct. I work at the Conservatorium, so it also represents access for all our community of students, who use the library regularly to get their homework done before or after lessons, or like to sit in the cool of the park. Mothers with very young children need close parking to facilitate their attending activities at the gallery, library, pre-school, con.

The only time traffic becomes problematic is when the formals are on, but this is only a brief period in the year, and for a brief space of time in the day.

culture facilities

I cannot understand why it would seem appropriate therefore, to limit parking to 5 minutes. For whom is that a benefit? It just takes away the life from the place, depriving the public easy access to cultural activities. The place looks deserted all the time now - an eerie feeling. What a waste!

I would like to see the art gallery developed according to the plan that was chosen. I would like to see a coffee shop as part of that. If one travels overseas, there is no great rush to remove old trees, but rather an appreciation of beauty, and deep regard for the quality of life this provides. Newcastle needs beautiful locations; an appreciation for what is graceful, inspiring, uplifting. We could be like Melbourne, valuing public art and beautiful gardens and cultural precincts because they bring out the higher virtues in people. Laman Street and the Civic precinct offers our best chance to make this happen.

If all our decisions are based on public safety issues, and these considerations outweigh all else, we will be left with nothing beautiful or useful. Surely your signage is sufficient to eliminate liability for the council

now, and we the public can enter Laman St "at our own risk".

I love trees and I think the trees, shade and coolness in summer is wonderful. I don't think council has helped these trees by putting tar all around them.

Parking is difficult anyway because roots are in the way not only in Laman St.

The bareness without the trees looks very bland and even though I was around before the trees were planted I don't remember it.

It would be nice to have this section of the street closed and have it part of an extension of cultural interest with seating, with shading be it suitable trees or perhaps some of the existing trees still remaining.

Whether a car is parked or whether someone is walking or standing if so dangerous then no-one should be able to move in this area.

Council should provide a proper assessment of the trees.

culture

facilities

People will not want to sit or walk about if seeds, branches or leaves continually fall on them.

Maybe a chalk wall can be provided so people could be creative (I don't mean huge walls) Easel type of sculpture types. If the street was closed off people could sit around in areas and perhaps have an idea, or even have starving artists painting in the street and selling their wares with perhaps an outdoor cafe area. The area is our creative area not only in the art and library side but the conservatorium has music and then there is the Civic Theatre, Playhouse, Arts and Drama with the creative TAFE just down the road. I think the Library may have been called the Culture Centre (not sure) but we could we have all the arts in one area so people can appreciate, miming, buskers, paintings, bookstall, music.

Opening up Laman Street into Civic park with a vision of being in continual use with maybe an outdoor stage in the Park could bring great activity and creativity to our area. With the Civic train station being just across the road we could have wonderful festivities and fairs.

A lot of people put time and effort into having their say on the design of the new art gallery why not do the same for Laman Street and let the ratepayers have their say.

I see the precinct as a 'green and cultural' zone that celebrates the Hunter's present, past and future, with lots more shade and trees, and an emphasis on walking and cycling access rather than cars. This is achieved by having boutique local arts and craft and quality local food shops, and sites for performances and public participation events.

culture

facilities

There needs to be a focal point and this should be a prominent, bold sculpture that acknowledges and celebrates the Indigenous people of the region, and it could be located in an 'indigenous' garden where there are only local, indigenous plants.

There should also be a acknowledgment of the working class history of the region (e.g. by a mural that shows the ecological and cultural history of the region from before British settlement and also shows the coal railway that

crossed the area, the steel works, ship-building and energy production heritage and future of the region (e.g. using solar energy and small wind turbines for power). be a program to remove (over time) all exotic plants, unless they have historical value. The Laman St figs fall into this category and should be kept, and replaced only when clearly identified as a safety risk, and only in a staggered fashion.

There should be a water feature/fountain in Wheeler Place (e.g. one of those fountains that emerges from the pavement that can be switched off when there are events and which is not a pedestrian/cycling hazard). This would link the Plaza to the Civic Park fountain.

The war memorials that are scattered throughout Civic Park should be sensitively relocated and consolidated into one area (e.g. near Auckland St), leaving the rest free for sculpture on the Darby St side, and with one 'iconic' sculpture located near the Darby St/King St corner.

The precinct needs to be linked to the railway station at Civic and there should be at least one more access route across the railway line that links the precinct to the Foreshore (e.g. opening up a new pedestrian cross over the railway line near Union St/Hunter St intersection).

I think a general theme of retaining the historical perspective and including a glance into a modern future in the overall design would be well received.

The practicalities should include adequate parking and access for all members of the community. I would think that a more interesting advertising facility than the banners that drape the eastern wall would be nice. That wall and the southern side of the building and associated parking could do with a tidy up. I love trees, don't we all, however the identified problems will only get worse and more expensive. I'm sure suitable replacements can add to the new face of the area.

culture facilities

I think the area should have drawcards which encourage visitors to stay past the completion of their original task eg if they go to Laman St to return library books, they stay to have a coffee in the park or visit the art gallery.

culture facilities

I think the whole area could be improved and made more pleasant for everyone to visit. I understand the Art Gallery is going to be redeveloped and strongly suggest this does happen. The council needs to support this venture. Cafes can be built and a much nicer space created which would be good commercially and culturally. Make the whole area family friendly and use the space the way they do in Europe - the emphasis should be on how to make it a pleasant place for everyone not a way for developers to make money

culture facilities

If the trees are a problem then make the street pedestrian only and the trees or branches that could cause damage can be removed. I do not think removing them all is necessary. An arborist could give detailed information. The situation at the moment of traffic going in one direction only seems a silly solution.

Basically Newcastle has been allowed by the council to become a very run down city - I have only recently arrived in Newcastle but am appalled at the state of the city. At least something is now being done but the council and especially the Mayor need to reflect on the way the city has been allowed to deteriorate. Having community forums is great but unless the council actually do something to regenerate the whole city it becomes a paper exercise.

culture	facilities	<p>I think we can learn a lot from the public spaces in Canberra. Great sculptures, arty landscaping, good vibe etc</p> <p>I would be most upset to see those magnificent trees touched. i love the way they are a backdrop to the fountain in civic park.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>With the expansion of the art gallery Laman st would be a wonderful avenue for pedestrian traffic only, by closing off the area between Auckland st and Darby st this would be such a pleasant area to wander between park land,library and art gallery lots of seating between the trees. this would be a delightful area. Alfresco dining set up along the area nearest the Art Gallery.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>I know that this is not the topic on the board at present but my suggestion is lay off the tree destruction and put Hunter Street back to its original glory. I have fond memories of Hunter St with its beautiful trees and wonderful shops. All visitors to our area are appalled at the state of dereliction that they are faced with.</p> <p>I would have to consider it further. However I do feel very strongly about the trees and that they remain. They add a wonderful ambiance to the street. There must be a way to fortify them or something to ensure we can keep them.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>I recently saw the gallery extension proposal and think it would be a fantastic addition.</p> <p>I would like to see Laman St closed to traffic and made into a kind of plaza for walking to the art gallery and library and cultural precinct. If there is a real and present danger of being injured or killed from the trees on normal weather days, I would suggest that no seating be provided, but if there is only a real threat considered during heavy weather days, I would like to see seating around the area. This could be closed to the public during days of heavy weather conditions. Closing the eastern end of Laman St would also allow for the possibility of extending the library or art gallery.</p> <p>I would strongly support an expansion of the Art Gallery however the issue of car parking needs to be addressed in Cooks Hill generally.Underground parking is probably the solution.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>This area would seem to be appropriate for a cinema for art films now both Lyric and Birmingham Gdns. have closed. Or maybe adaptive reuse of spaces in the library or conservatorium could be used.</p> <p>Many of the public spaces are under-utilised.Evening use of the Laman St precinct would add a lot more vibrancy to the area and would justify making it a pedestrian area in front of the gallery and library.I believe that this area does require large shade trees to maintain its character and this requires careful selection of species that grow reasonably quickly but with long-term prospects.Progressive replanting is desirable.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>In Civic Park I would like to see more night lighting installed and increased security. The Art Gallery extended to facilitate major art exhibitions similar to the National Gallery's (French Masters and Australian exhibits)Public safety needs to be considered in regard to the trees. A plant replacement would be desired.</p>

It is delightful, as a cultural precinct, with art gallery, cultural centre, conservatorium, galleries, -as it is. Especially with its setting, overlooking the fountain, park and Town Hall. The great fig trees are inextricably part of this, part of its uniqueness and charm.

The precinct needs only continued care and enhancement, with more seating, and it would be even better with a coffee shop/small bar, more galleries, bookshops, although I know there are places relatively nearby, in Darby Street. More public sculpture would be good. And historical information; eg about the traces of the old railway line from the harbour.

culture facilities The change to one-way traffic is fine.

More frequent arts markets/outdoor exhibitions/even musical performance could be encouraged. Any possibility of a small amphitheatre-type space being incorporated into the area- perhaps overlooking the park? Could there be more integration out towards Wheeler Place and events held there?

A pity in some ways that there has been so much dispersal of events that could be incorporated into this wonderful precinct eg Junction School arts markets. Certainly, interesting bookshops could be encouraged, as well as other appropriate commercial enterprises.

Laman St and civic precinct needs to have a historical feel to it with a modern theme, when you go to most capital cities throughout the world the main town precinct is their "must see" feature for tourist and locals, Civic park is just another park.

Laman St is an important part of the Civic precinct. The present trees are its crowning glory. I do not understand why council wishes to cut down all the trees. I would estimate the chance of someone being killed or injured by a falling tree branch must be in the millions to one. I believe a country municipal council plans to cut down every tree in its area in case this may happen. Does your council plan to follow suite? With global warming surely we should treasure the trees that we have. Does not council have a public liability insurance policy? I can understand that they may need the attentions of an arborist, and may need less bitumin around their bases.

culture facilities

When the Art Gallery extensions go ahead we will have a state of the art gallery which will not only be for ratepayers but will bring visitors to Newcastle and will enable our art collection to be properly shown th the public. With the gallery and the library looking through the trees and across the park we have a very attractive ,and useful, civic amenity.

Laman Street - Civic Precinct would be the leading regional centre for the arts in Australia. This would be achieved foremost by the upgrade of the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery to 21st century standards. The building would resolve all of it's current limitations, including: access from and site presentation to Darby and Queens Streets; adequate display and storage areas; education facilities to promote community & school partnerships; underground parking; and provision for retail opportunities to offset costs, for e.g. art classes, cafe and retail outlets. The Regional Library could be incorporated into the concept, and receive a modernisation of it's facilities simultaneously, thus reducing overall costs.

culture facilities

On the balance of expert opinion, if the Laman Street trees must be removed, a solution that would enhance public access and utilisation of the

space would be to close the road of Laman Street (in front of the gallery/ library) and convert it to a "piazza". The hard-surfaced, but well planted and treed, area would flow across to the steps/ fountain, and meld seamlessly with Civic Park. Such a space would enhance the "user-friendly" aspect of the Laman Street area, characterised by outdoor art installations, eateries and meditative recreational spaces. The gallery building would have positioned large balconies overlooking the space, along with it's retail access whilst maintaing the major entry onto Darby Street.

Laman Street, the Civic Precinct should be preserved. The tree lined Laman Street provides a unique and interesting border to our cultural centre consisting of the Library and the current Art Gallery. This area should be preserved.

culture facilities

The trees in question are of historical significance to the local area. I feel that these do not create any more of a risk to the general public than other trees in the local area. Acts of nature can not always be foreseen. There may never be an issue with these trees. Parking or drop off areas should be incorporated within this area in order to allow physically challenged people equal access to our cultural centre.

Hopefully, more parking could be accommodated in plans to update the Art Gallery which would still keep the ambience of the tree lined street which borders Civic Park.

I see this area growing in tourism opportunities providing flow on effects for the city if we are able to maintain a visually attractive and accessible area unique to the city of Newcastle

culture facilities

Living in the city of Newcastle I enjoy the location of both the library and the Art Gallery. The fig trees give a lovely aspect to Laman St but after walking along Laman St & down in to Civic Park on Saturday after the rain we had I found the area very slippery to walk on due to the dropped buds etc from the trees. It would be a shame for the trees to be removed but not replaced with something similiar but I don't know what. I don't feel that either the library or the art gallery should be moved from this area.

culture facilities

Multi cultural centre with cafe facilities and open spaces

My vision for Laman Street is that the trees remain however i understand that the trees can be a hazard as they have a shallow root system and a heavy canopy. but if possible they should remain.

culture facilities

as for the art gallery I feel it could be better placed if the NCC purchased the post office and the old police station next door and converted it into a new gallery. The library could expand into the gallery and also have coffee shop etc with the entrance from Darby Street.

culture facilities

I saw the original plan for the extention however it did not have provision for car parking so if the gallery is extended in Laman Street and outside the gallery is limited parking where are people supposed to park.

My vision for the space would be a well equipped and adaptable multi arts performance space across the precinct of the park which would be supportive of activities in Laman Street, the gallery, the Library, Wheeler Place, City Hall and the Roundhouse as well as Civic Park per se



My vision is for a new Gallery commensurate with the size and importance of our city and its wonderful (mostly hidden) collection.

I would like to see a better connection between the Laman St cultural facilities and Civic Park. Ideally, I would like the steep drop in levels between Laman St and the park mitigated by landscaped terraces. The new Gallery coffee shop design might be altered so that it faces the park, ideally with a large outdoor deck, rather than the RTA building on Darby St.

culture facilities

It would be lovely for people to be able to step out of the Gallery and Library into a green parkland, best if there was no road there at all. This would require vehicular access and parking to be provided elsewhere, eg on Queen St.

Access to the Laman St cultural facilities is, of course, presently severely hampered by the part-closure of the road. The restriction on access from Darby St (no right turn when travelling south) and the 'no thru road' status of Queen St exacerbate the problem.

culture facilities

No cars road blocked off seating and tables under the shade of the existing tree canopy. An open public space for people to relax in with some outdoor artworks/sculptures for aesthetics.

Obviously this is being driven by the fig tree drama. So if they really pose such a safety risk, they have to come out. So whatever vision is decided upon, the research and design team need to work out how to replace that canopy as soon as possible as it does hold a place dear to most Novocastrians and visitors hearts. Whether that canopy is provided by trees or by structures is up to the research team.

Newcastle needs to position itself in the tourism industry. I believe cultural tourism is a valid way to go. This includes architecture, design, public art, art events etc. People do travel the world to see particular structures e.g. the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Sydney Opera House etc. Our bicentenary structure (The Erektion) on Queens Wharf is a huge embarrassment.

culture facilities

By looking at Laman Street and other sites around Newcastle for some innovative architecture or statement art pieces, we would have something to market to the tourism industry other than beaches. Lets face it Australia is an island ringed by beaches, so why choose Newcastle?

I believe we should be looking for art events like Sculpture by the Sea for Newcastle. That needs a lot of money so we need to be looking to big business (hello the coal industry) for sponsorship and naming rights.

We have one of the busiest ports in Australia, yet it doesn't reflect in income for Newcastle City. We need to work out how to get a slice of that pie to fund whatever vision you come up with. Because is a vision is useless without the means to enact it.

		<p>Retain as many trees as POSSIBLE along the street. the beauty of this avenue is inspiring to Newcastle &amp; NB visitors.</p> <p>Put up sign-OWN RISK TO USE (the street).</p> <p>Needs of Gallery &amp; Library access has become a misery &amp; street must be eopened. One gallery goer who was delivering heavy material was "Booked" for staying 7 minutes in the 5 minute zone, this is Draconian.</p> <p>Parking is already a problem so perhaps some of "civic park" could be taken for as many car parks as was available in Laman St. There are many disabled people who have need of access &amp; no use to those who drive self to have a drop off zone, &amp; parents with prams, who experience grave difficulty &amp; already numbers are dropping at gallery &amp; library.</p> <p>Reopen Queen St with speed control as a through way as there is a very long block of blocked off streets between Dawson &amp; Derby Sts.</p> <p>Replacement of each 2nd tree may be an option but would need to be sensible trees that will survive &amp; be environment friendly as well as being shade trees.</p> <p>The expansion of the gallery needs to be a priority and this will require further options for work vehicles etc.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Good luck with this and hope a solution is found.</p> <p>Some where you can meet and enjoy a cup of coffee. Similar to wheeler place. Could be quite popular given the library, art gallery, and nearby Darby St patrons. Formalise oneway traffic similar to Hunter Mall.</p> <p>Street Trees: The number of trees ould be reduced. But I would like to see still a shadey canopy of trees to maintain the embience of the street. should the fig trees need to be removed it should be done in a staged manner, remove half , replant and remove the others in a couple of years time so there is a transition, less shock and some time for residents to get use to the new look, feel and fragrance or lack of.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Facilities/amenities: I would like to see a tea/coffee shop outside the Library/Gallery vicinity. this should not be seen as competing with established business in Darby Street and wheeler place. At this stage there is no refreshment facilites without a long walk and people have to leave the Art Gallery and Library area. I believe civic park, the Library , cultural Centre and Art Gallery as one entity should havea refreshment facility.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>That it be a focal point for art/sculpture and craftworks of Newcastle. That it could include more street sculptures and the "him and her" figure sculptures from inside the library are moved outside as they were originally intended. That the fig trees are always preserved.</p>

The "end of life" status of the trees provides the precinct with the opportunity to gain a much better dynamic and dividend from its creative "outlets" - the art gallery, library and memorial centre exhibition space, the conservatorium, the smaller art galleries, the university building, the town hall and the Civic theatre.

How? If the trees are not viable then take them down, make parking at each end and close off Laman Street between Darby and Auckland streets, and cantilever the art gallery across the street and into the park. Extend it with a two-story atrium facing the park with a cafe and shop. Underneath the cantilever, over the park, create a sculpture garden. Make the Library into an "Imagination Centre" for the printed and spoken word, and short moving images.

culture facilities

The space provided by excavating Laman St in front of the Memorial Centre allows for a small purpose built cinema. This would show art-house movies and have a special focus on short films. A studio would be built with editing equipment and tuition for young people to enable them to make/learn to make multi-media art and entertainment: this would be a partnership with the university. This would provide a creative opportunity for young people to make "entertainment", and be entertained, which was not based on alcohol or drugs. The front of the addition would have a public "screen" for showing digital creative works. It would show moving images which were selected by a combination of a curator and public voting. The possible images would be put on a website so that people could vote for their favourites. Voting would be open to anyone around the world, which would enable Newcastle to get global "attention", one of the hardest commodities to obtain.

Darby St is largely "private space" - cafes and shops. The park is part of the "common wealth". By extending Laman Street's buildings into the park, it would become an open cultural space. By including multi-media creativity and entertainment, it would draw young people. The more people there are in a public space, the safer it is, so families would also be attracted: there would be entertainment and creative pursuits for all ages. The benign climate means that it could be utilised in the evenings almost all year around.

Extending the gallery and the library into the park would enable the park to be "embraced" by valuable cultural buildings on three sides, and make it a wonderfully "used" centre for Newcastle.

The art gallery needs more space - it also need easy access as does the library. Are the trees seriously dangerous? Walking there on a summer's day is a pleasure. Is there a possibility of judicious pruning to prolong their lives. Any replacement trees would need to be huge.

culture facilities

It is also necessary to have parking in Laman St for people attending city hall and civic theatre. Perhaps closing street altogether and extending civic park to give a green space in front of library and gallery - problem with this is access for older or disabled patrons. This area is one we always show out-of-town visitors who admire the trees, gallery and library and it links wheel through the park to City Hall.. r

culture facilities

The art gallery should be replaced with an out standing unusual world class building that brings people from all over the world to see it. The ice cube building was a good idea

culture	facilities	<p>The figs must remain as it is a picturesque avenue and as a visitor to the library I always admire the street and if they were cut down it would look bare and uninteresting. It is better to have no parking and limited car access during high winds than remove the trees. I thought that these trees not being very old had a longer life span of possibly hundreds of years, but they must remain. Newcastle is losing to many natural assests making this a dull and uninteresting city. The park is okay but I do believe the Art Gallery should be moved and the library expanded into more exhibition space. The Old Post Office would make an excellent art gallery with tourist already in the East End being able to move from the new Museum to the gallery and it would also help the CBD. If the Post Office was adopted as an art gallery we would have one that all Newcastle would be proud of.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>The future of "Laman Street" would be best described as the ideal focal point or epi-centre for creative and artist expression. A place or environmental space that directly reflects the City Councils chambers &amp; its interest in the arts.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>The library to be relocated to the Old Post Office, where transport is better, and no hills. The trees remain. No one dig up civic park for car park ! Shuttle bus around town to include destinations, not just bus stops. Parking at about three venues,(no 1 sportsground, old co-op store, that park in George st Tighes hill- ) and shuttle bus combined service.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>This area is one of the key historic and iconic areas of newcastle. I think it is important to keep the open space of the park for a start. If the trees must be taken down (are the arborist and incident reports available? - I have seen much older trees in other parts of the work remain standing) then they should be replaced by other trees, for both aesthetic and environmental reasons. There arent enough trees in Newcastle other than in the older areas.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>The library and art gallery could do with a facelift and perhaps being interconnected.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Also the daggy car park could go/get a makeover. To be kept as is with improvements ie recreational and cultural possibly add cafes and eateries.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>To continue &amp; be enhanced as the culural precinct of Newcastle. To me as an octogenarian with limited walking ability, my wish would be for a facility where I could take visitors to enjoy our wonderful gallery with opportunity for sitting down with refreshments. A cousin recently visiting from Queensland was fascinated by the fig trees of Laman and Council Streets and I would be sorry to see them go. Overhead walkways as such would be no use to me unless serviced by an escalator which I know is impractical. When showing elderly visitors around beaches etc are of minor value and I centre their visits around our wonderful Laman - Civic complex.</p>

Wow! That's a bit of a tall order, first up.

culture	facilities	<p>The main thing I miss in the current situation (apart from the beauty of the arch of trees that one could drive through) is being able to park and pop in to see what's new in the gallery, or pick up a book. But it's unlikely that is going to be possible again unless the trees are removed. And this raises the question of whether any activity will be possible with the trees in place, as there is no way anyone can guarantee complete safety with them there. So it would seem that unless the trees are removed the only thing that could be done is to rope them off as a nice sight to be viewed from outside a fence. And this would mean blocking off the street to pedestrian traffic providing a new entrance for the public to the Art Gallery and maybe the Library too. Obviously not a practicable proposition.</p>
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So we need to remove the trees, very regretably. And then provide something else that would provide an attraction to people to visit the area and linger. More (safe) trees in the long run. Plants at least, the bigger the better, and some shade canopies in the short run. Perhaps a sculpture garden (does NRAG have enough)? Not another pavement cafe, please. Some research is needed into what has been successful/popular anywhere in the world when similar removals of trees have had to be done. Since the planned extensions to the Gallery are round the other side, there need be no real impact on Laman St, except the need to preserve the present entrance.

culture	facilities	<p>I am unable to open the Newcastle Voice Survey on the Laman Street Civic Precinct however I would like to see the trees remain and vehicle and pedestrians still able to use the street. There are other more dangerous areas eg between corlette and Bruce street on the southern side which is an absolute disgrace and when walking along there at night it is easy to fall over due to the condition of the pavement which has been patched several times. The trees in Council street between darby and Bruce street would appear to be causing more damage than those in Laman Street but nothing is said of these....makes one wonder if Newcastle Council just want to close the road between Dawson and Darby Street.</p>
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I also think the sculptures in the Library should be moved to Civic Park as there true beauty is spoilt due to the library doors and windows which do not enable the full view of them.

culture	facilities	<p>* Close Laman Street between Darby and Auckland (say) and integrate the Library and Art Gallery into Civic Park (along the lines of NSW Art Gallery and Domain).</p>
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culture	facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Do what is necessary to save the fig trees and make them safe.</li> <li>* Fig trees to stay. They add character, history, grandeur and shade. Trim back any branches deemed "dangerous". Keep the trees.</li> <li>* Give the gallery and library a facelift. They appear dated. New technology.</li> <li>* More bicycle racks for bike parking.</li> <li>* More outdoor sculptures/art.</li> <li>* A few more tables and chairs in the park so students and workers can access wireless internet from library.</li> </ul>
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culture	facilities	A city showcase for us and visitors
culture	facilities	a community center
culture	facilities	A cultural and mentally significant place to frequent

culture	facilities	<p>A cultural centre, keeping all but the five or so fig trees that were identified as being at risk of falling down in the near future. There should be a stepped replanting program that replaces the trees as they are identified as being a public safety concern. If you clear it all at once it will look like Tyrrel St. did when it was cleared - cold and lifeless.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>A cultural centre, keeping all but the five or so fig trees that were identified as being at risk of falling down in the near future. There should be a stepped replanting program that replaces the trees as they are identified as being a public safety concern. If you clear it all at once it will look like Tyrrel St. did when it was cleared - cold and lifeless.</p>
		<p>A Cultural Precinct.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Street scape: the link between the cultural assets needs to be part of the cultural experience. Design of this public space to draw people into each of the cultural venues and likewise the for the venues to link into / engage with the public domain. More than items of public art, but the whole street designed to reflect the place. Site specific street furnishings and scaping.</p>
		<p>Gallery: incorporate a cafe to complement the gallery, extend visits (you are losing people around the corner when they get peckish) and a great revenue stream for the gallery. Air bridge to the Library gallery?</p>
		<p>Library: add meeting rooms</p>
		<p>A high level Cultural precinct between the Art Gallery, The Conservatorium and the Civic Theatre. A lot of pedestrian open space through wheeler place and the civic park.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>More live brought to the area by students from the expanding University City Campus around the Con and University House, additional cafes, private galleries, bars and arthouse Cinema will create a link between the Honeysuckle precinct and Darby Street. It should be good. Heaps of potential...</p> <p>A new multi-storey council building on the corner of Hunter and Auckland streets, to house</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PAN (performance, practice and office spaces),</li> <li>Octapod (art, meeting, presentation, workshop, networking spaces)</li> <li>- community event shopfront (office HQ,shopfron, sponsorship signature) ;</li> <li>- NCC admin</li> </ul>
culture	facilities	<p>Study of the "tree environment" (tree perspective - sectors set aside for purpose of adequate root growth rather than randomly pushing up tarmac; location and avoidance of certain pipes, etc).</p>
		<p>Formulation of the (at least) three functions/purposes the trees hold for the street, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shading street;</li> <li>- cooling art gallery and library;</li> <li>- beautifying location</li> </ul>
culture	facilities	<p>An updated and considerably larger art gallery complete with shop and cafe with outdoor dining area. An updated library with reading room with pleasant aspect. Replanted trees if the figs have to go (would rather they were kept). Adequate parking and more accessible gutters.</p>



As a resident of Beresfield I do not often have cause to visit the Laman Street area. However, I know it is there and I have in the past enjoyed the tranquility and services the area has to offer. Perhaps the Council is not promoting their services in this area as well as it could. Perhaps Council is focussing too much on populist stuff instead of the sound, stable but boring stuff as appears on TV.

culture	facilities	<p>In 1000 years Newcastle Council will be remembered more for looking after the things that we ratepayers value than the day to day historical rubbish that the conservationists might find attractive and used as a medium for protest. An ugly building is as ugly now as it was 100 years ago - ugly! Conservative is good stuff but lets get this stuff in perspective! Lets look after what we have for a start that is worth preseving and build on properly thought out and costed proposals for future growth. In the meantime stop worrying about the heritage values of buildings in our city that were "bleeding ugly" around 80 years ago and have no artistic, architectural or visual attraction now.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>As an arts and cultural hub of Newcastle</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Cultural centre with easy access to library and art gallery. Community meeting place in civic park</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Expanded art gallery.          No vacant shops.          Renovated Civic Arcade Civic Hotel area.</p>
		<p>Fig Trees - If determined that they are posing a risk to public safety they, unfortunately, need to be removed. The integrity of Laman Street as a tree lined avenue will presumably be retained with new plantings but if these specimens are approaching the end of their life cycle, the sooner they are removed the better.</p>
culture	facilities	<p>Art Gallery redevelopment - I am all in favour of the redevelopment plan as a Gallery Member. I would like to see perhaps the library and gallery joined in some way to form a single cultural building but the redeveelopment and enlargement of the gallery is essential to the future development and reuptation of Newcastle Region Gallery. The current exhibition space is simply too small and an embarrasment compared to many regional galleries in similar or smaller sized cities.</p>
		<p>The existing usability of Civic Park is fine. I would like to see some replacement for trees that were felled during the June 2007 storm.</p>

## No change

subject	subject2	your_vision
no change		Have no vision
no change		Haven't got one
no change		I currently do not make heavy use of this area. It might be appropriate to direct your attention towards people who make heavier use of this area.
no change		I feel it should be maintained similar to how it is to-day, for the local residents and the public.
no change		I like it the way it is
no change		I like it the way it is
no change		I like it the way it is.
no change		Maintain the aesthetics more and more street events (like the artist market).
no change		I think is OK now
no change		I think it is beautiful as it is.
no change		I think it's good how it is. The gallery could use a makeover, but there are probably other parts of the city that need the money.
no change		It seems fine the way it is.
no change		keep it as it is. Its the nicest street in Newcastle
no change		Leave it the way it is!
no change		My Vision?
no change		Just look.
no change		What I see now is beautiful.
no change		There is no need for parking other than pick up and set down.
no change		If the trees present a danger to the public, I believe we need to find a solution that exonerates Council from any liability in this regard.
no change		The public in this area after sunset present a bigger danger to the public than do the trees.
no change		Perfect how it is now!
no change		Sory I don't have my vision for that.
no change		To me it' perfect as it is.

## Priority

subject

subject2

your\_vision

I enjoy Laman Street just the way it is with the Fig trees in tact

It is a beautiful area to walk around & could only be enhanced by being joined to civic park by removing road access completely (which would impact on councils parking meter revenue but I believe council is parking meter mad)

Future vision (long term) to create a cultural hub in the area to incorporate the Civic theatre area (again this would require the possibility to shut access to King Street in this block to allow pedestrian flow from the art gallery through civic park & down to civic theatre & to the council chambers which would further enhance its use as a wedding & culture venue on weekends & evenings when not being used for council business

priority

Mayor Tates idea to create an underground car park in civic park in my opinion is nothing short of crazy & is of most benefit to the tax office & council employees in that location. I would relocate the tax office out of the city centre as I believe the long term aim is to get traffic out of Newcastle centre & focus on improving public transport options for people which at the moment it very poor. Newcastle is already becoming gridlocked like Sydney & we would be smart to learn from their lessons before it is too late. People will use public transport if it is reliable & fast its time council held Jodie McKay to account in her safe labour seat & have her assist council to improve Newcastle by spending some money here put money where her mouth is.

Frankly I am tired of all the talk all the money being spent on consultants without any real progress being made.

I feel Council has over reacted to the "dangerous" trees. My question is if this boulevard of trees is so dangerous what is Council going to do about the hundreds probably in similar condition? A councillor has let it be known that there are plans to remove the Figs in the main street of Carrington. These trees are approximately fifteen years old. Are they considered dangerous? When will this end? When Newcastle is bald of trees?

I believe that removing parking from Laman Street is also a huge over reaction. Similarly the proposed fencing and removal of seating. All the proposals I have seen are detrimental to the uses the ratepayers have been actioning for decades.

Laman Street's attractions include the ambiance of the trees, the proximity to Civic Park, the shade, the ability to sit both in the street and the southern end of the park and the ability to visit the Library, the Art Gallery and the Lovett Gallery.

priority

Council decisions often seem to be taken without the Council living in the real world. I have watched many older people parking in Laman Street to take advantage of a short walk to the facilities. A similar thing is going to happen to the "New Museum". The old Museum had plenty of parking and I often took bus loads of people with disabilities to visit there. Parking in Honeysuckle will preclude that. I also have taken similar busloads of people to the Laman Street precinct. Since announcement of Council's plans I have avoided the area.

Council needs to get back to the old status quo which influenced people to visit there. This goes especially for the elderly and the disabled. If the trees are dangerous they should be replaced immediately. There should also be permanent shade structures built to add to the shade that younger trees will provide. If Council removes the trees its aim should be to supply shade and beauty to replace the current ambiance of shade and beauty.

Super advanced trees should be used to make sure that within a decade a large portion of the current ambiance and natural beauty is replaced. There are many older residents of Newcastle who will not be around to see even that.

priority

I have a vision of the Newcastle City Council making the hard decisions rather than being held hostage to small vocal groups that plague Newcastle. Do what you think is right?  
Progress is about managing change - not handing over to someone else  
Don't come running to me!

I like it the way that it is. Extensions to the Art Gallery should be confined to the rear of the building. The area bounded by Laman, Auckland, King, and Darby streets is one of the most attractive in Newcastle.

There is enough to be done in Newcastle without spending time and money on problems that don't exist.

I remain unconvinced about the public dangers attributed to the Fig trees.

priority

Council has a poor reputation in regard to retention of trees. Many of us remember the removal of the Fig from Civic Park near the corner of King and Auckland Streets. As I recall it was to enable footpath work and the installation of cabling below the road. The park plan of management was disregarded and it was done in such haste that there was no reference to the Councillors. In consequence subsequent actions are regarded with deep suspicion.

I recognise that this was done under the previous administration.

If Council do determine that the Auckland Street trees be removed immediately (which I believe would be a terrible decision) then it is essential that it be done in a staged manner, and every effort be made to minimise the effect on the wildlife for which they provide essential habitat.

The retention of the trees should take precedence at all times over traffic management, parking plans, building works in Auckland Street, and indeed everything else.

I love the precinct because it is always restful there, but at the same time, it is culturally stimulating. I love the quiet activity that is always going on, even into the night, when people are parking there to visit the library, or to attend concerts in the precinct. I work at the Conservatorium, so it also represents access for all our community of students, who use the library regularly to get their homework done before or after lessons, or like to sit in the cool of the park. Mothers with very young children need close parking to facilitate their attending activities at the gallery, library, pre-school, con.

The only time traffic becomes problematic is when the formals are on, but this is only a brief period in the year, and for a brief space of time in the day.

priority

I cannot understand why it would seem appropriate therefore, to limit parking to 5 minutes. For whom is that a benefit? It just takes away the life from the place, depriving the public easy access to cultural activities. The place looks deserted all the time now - an eerie feeling. What a waste!

i would like to see the art gallery developed according to the plan that was chosen. I would like to see a coffee shop as part of that. If one travels overseas, there is no great rush to remove old trees, but rather an appreciation of beauty, and deep regard for the quality of life this provides. Newcastle needs beautiful locations; an appreciation for what is graceful, inspiring, uplifting. We could be like Melbourne, valuing public art and beautiful gardens and cultural precincts because they bring out the higher virtues in people. Laman Street and the Civic precinct offers our best chance to make this happen.

If all our decisions are based on public safety issues, and these

considerations outweigh all else, we will be left with nothing beautiful or useful. Surely your signage is sufficient to eliminate liability for the council now, and we the public can enter Laman St "at our own risk".

priority

I think that the money could be spent on other places within Newcastle LGA and surrounding suburbs including to Beresfield.  
If its just all about spending on Laman St I think this.  
Nature should take its course with the trees.  
The fountain, memorial etc should remain and be in the plans.  
Toilets should be within the area and maybe every rate payer could have a card with access to the Public toilets within NCC area. (ALL AREAS) Maybe 2 cards to every household. (one may get damaged)  
Overhead walkways erected instead of road crossings. (Ramps instead of stairs) Eg From on side of the park to Town hall that would have access to Civic area.(Wheeler Place) All the arts, council,Taxation and govt building.  
By having overheads traffic would flow easier.  
Many years ago I stated that Water,Tax,Electricity,Council,Centrelink (For Newcastle) should be in one building as its easier to go to ONE place pay everything as we have an aging population. I know they are all different places but an office to cater for people who do not have internet,transport,friends to do it for them.

If they are underground it may create a Haven for damage misuse and flooding.

priority

I would like Council to seriously deal with the tough issue of public liability, if that is the factor driving any proposed removal of the trees. The value to the wider city of streets such as this is enormous and should not be underestimated. When I moved to Newcastle, this was one of the areas that actually gave me hope for the prospects of the wider city and I am sure it is the same for many visitors and potential residents (let alone the current resident population). It is ridiculous that a perceived insurance risk should be assessed at a different rate to the community's level of acceptable risk. Council needs to drive a resolution to this through the LGSA, if necessary. Please don't obfuscate around the core issue, if that is the core issue.

priority

I would like to see a public space with maximum pedestrian access and safety. For example, a car-free zone would be lovely. I love the greenery of the trees and the protection they offer from the sun. They make Laman St a welcome place to visit and removing them would greatly detract from the appeal of the area. We visit the art gallery frequently with our children and have never felt unsafe from the trees. Cars, however, do pose a real a high danger with car-accidents being the leading cause of non-disease related death in Australia. Tree-related deaths do not even occur in the statistics available from the ABS.

priority

Laman St is an important part of the Civic precinct. The present trees are its crowning glory. I do not understand why council wishes to cut down all the trees. I would estimate the chance of someone being killed or injured by a falling tree branch must be in the millions to one. I believe a country municipal council plans to cut down every tree in its area in case this may happen. Does your council plan to follow suite? With global warming surely we should treasure the trees that we have. Does not council have a public liability insurance policy? I can understand that they may need the attentions of an arborist, and may need less bitumin around their bases.

priority

When the Art Gallery extensions go ahead we will have a state of the art gallery which will not only be for ratepayers but will bring visitors to Newcastle and will enable our art collection to be properly shown to the public. With the gallery and the library looking through the trees and across the park we have a very attractive, and useful, civic amenity.

leave the fig trees they are beautiful and are an icon for the area. We can't protect everyone from every single thing that might happen to them.

priority

The park is beautiful, strategies to encourage pedestrian access would help.

Make it safe by removing any trees that are obviously unsafe but not wholesale removal.

The upgrade of the art gallery is just too costly (even before bowouts).

There are greater needs around the city and the backlog is already over \$100M - need to live within our means.

No underground car park for Civic Park - what a stupid idea - the council is trying to offload the car parks they have. Better to make car park parking much cheaper but must be as safe as possible AND try to get workers to use them!!

Other than this I would like to comment on proposed plans.

priority

My vision for the future of Laman St, is to provide safe access for the community to the library and art galleries while retaining appropriate native plantings. I see nothing wrong with gradual management of the damaged trees that may cause harm to property and the community. Having appropriate green spaces in the city that blend with the park and Civic fountain help to maintain a peaceful atmosphere, attract birdlife, provide shade and also have benefits for greenhouse gas management.

The most favourable way of dealing with the current trees that may be causing a level of risk is to assess how it can be best managed gradually, causing minimum harm and impact on the community and infrastructure - if this is at all possible. However, I believe that safety must come first. The cost and risk of maintaining the trees should be taken in context with other major projects around the city where equal needs exist.

Why should we be spending tens of thousands of dollars for a plan about trees which aren't natives, when there are many of our community members doing it tough, children, homeless and elderly people alone in their homes?

Obviously this is being driven by the fig tree drama. So if they really pose such a safety risk, they have to come out. So whatever vision is decided upon, the research and design team need to work out how to replace that canopy as soon as possible as it does hold a place dear to most Novocastrians and visitors hearts. Whether that canopy is provided by trees or by structures is up to the research team.

Newcastle needs to position itself in the tourism industry. I believe cultural tourism is a valid way to go. This includes architecture, design, public art, art events etc. People do travel the world to see particular structures e.g. the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Sydney Opera House etc. Our bicentenary structure (The Erektion) on Queens Wharf is a huge embarrassment.

priority

By looking at Laman Street and other sites around Newcastle for some innovative architecture or statement art pieces, we would have something to market to the tourism industry other than beaches. Lets face it Australia is an island ringed by beaches, so why choose Newcastle?

I believe we should be looking for art events like Sculpture by the Sea for Newcastle. That needs a lot of money so we need to be looking to big business (hello the coal industry) for sponsorship and naming rights.

We have one of the busiest ports in Australia, yet it doesn't reflect in income for Newcastle City. We need to work out how to get a slice of that pie to fund whatever vision you come up with. Because a vision is useless without the means to enact it.

priority

There is nothing wrong with Laman Street. Leave the trees as is, leave Laman St as is and instead spend the money fixing Hunter Street.

Trees like Humans have a finite life span. With the previous centuries lack of tree knowledge, the Laman Street Figs branches have been pruned incorrectly, various public utilities have hacked through roots, bitument paving has surrounding the trunk areas preventing water penetration. Cars have been allowed to park up against the trees further compacting soil and squashing the roots.

With an opportunity to revitalise the area I'm sure correct NATSPEC guidelines will be used for new trees that replace the Figs when they have to go.

priority

I suggest that Laman Street been closed to vehicle traffic (except emergency vehicles) between Darby Street and Dawson Street. The existing road area could be levelled and repaved to create a pedestrian friendly plaza area in front of the Art Gallery and Library. The steps that currently exist to the east and west ends the park from Laman Street into Civic Park could be remodelled into disabled walking/wheelchair ramps. At the moment disabled people can only get into Civic Park from its Auckland, King and Darby Street boundaries. There is no disabled access into the park direct from the Art Gallery or Library. I suggest that the entrance to the steps above the fountain on Laman Street be widened, in conjunction with steps that go done either side of fountain also being widened. This would to encourage people to site and socialise on the steps.

Landscape Architects would be able to provide advice to improve the current seating layout in the park, and on appropriate trees species to planted in the park and on Laman street to assist in the linking of the area.

priority

what to say? Seems decided already. Would also have been nice to know that there was only this one question - it's not the usual Newcastle Voice form.

When I was a child I don't think I ever referred to Laman street as the street with the library or art gallery because it was always the street with the trees.

If council holds the view that the trees should be removed in the interest of public safety then perhaps it should equally consider other things in the electorate that jeopardise lives. Should Council be banning motor vehicles, alcohol consumption and closing beaches?...What a nonsense!

priority

My understanding is that a few years ago a design for a cultural centre/cafe was proposed wherein the trees had been omitted from the design. It is understandable that nobody would want their monument to be overshadowed by trees and that creating a less obscured line of sight would give the site a greater air of significance within the landscape but I think that the view from the corner of Darby and Laman Streets is worthy of discussion. Without doubt, the corner of Darby and Laman offers the least inviting vista currently but potentially could be the most inviting and eye-catching 'gateway' to this cultural hub.

In short, I would prefer that the trees be left alone. Any design should forget "sore thumb" prominence within the panorama but should instead focus on drawing the eye towards the magnificent archway of old trees, like elderly statesmen welcoming you to Newcastle's cultural centre.

I regret that owing to work commitments I cannot be free to attend this highly selective "charette" (or is it "Charade?") on 19-20 March.

As a regular visitor to Laman Street over 50 years I would appreciate my views being made available to those attending the workshop.

In my opinion it would have been wiser and far more inclusive if Council set up a stage and seating under the very trees in question or in nearby Civic Park so that everyone with an interest could have attended for a few hours when convenient to hear progress and put their point of view.

priority

During the brief surveys I've seen carried out in front of Library and Art Gallery over 90% of those questioned want to see those trees properly cared for and retained, WHERE HAS COUNCIL UNEARTHED THIS ABSURD NOTION THAT A "NEW VISION" IS REQUIRED AT ALL?

This species of Hill's Figs was wisely chosen to beautify all 4 corners of Greater Newcastle by visionary Councillors in the 1940's and 1950's with the sure knowledge that they require little maintenance, provide solid shade, rarely, if ever drop limbs, and provide superb habitat for countless birds and fruit bats. Once established, these sleek giants would beautify Newcastle for centuries to come.

If indeed it turns out these trees are "unsafe" and I don't believe it for a moment, this would be a direct result of Council's inept and bumbling attempts to prune them in recent years. Only last week more (healthy) branches were hacked off without any attempt to apply fungicides or protective pastes over the wounds, a simple hint known to every home gardener.

Whatever Council's grand 'NEW VISION' turns out to be those glorious trees should be the focal point well into the future.

Council, for far too long has been more intent on issues that are not what they were elected to do.

Get back to basics, forget the overrated, overpaid 'consultants' and so called 'experts', represent and listen to, and act upon the ratepayers suggestion, who pay the wages and ongoings of all council staff.

Laman Street is one of many areas that has been neglected by council for far too long to the extent where we, the ratepayers, now have a major problem which once again we will pay for thanks to council's inability to deal with basic issues, preferring to be involved in bureaucratic inefficiencies.

priority

Council must act on the people's wishes, not dictate to them.

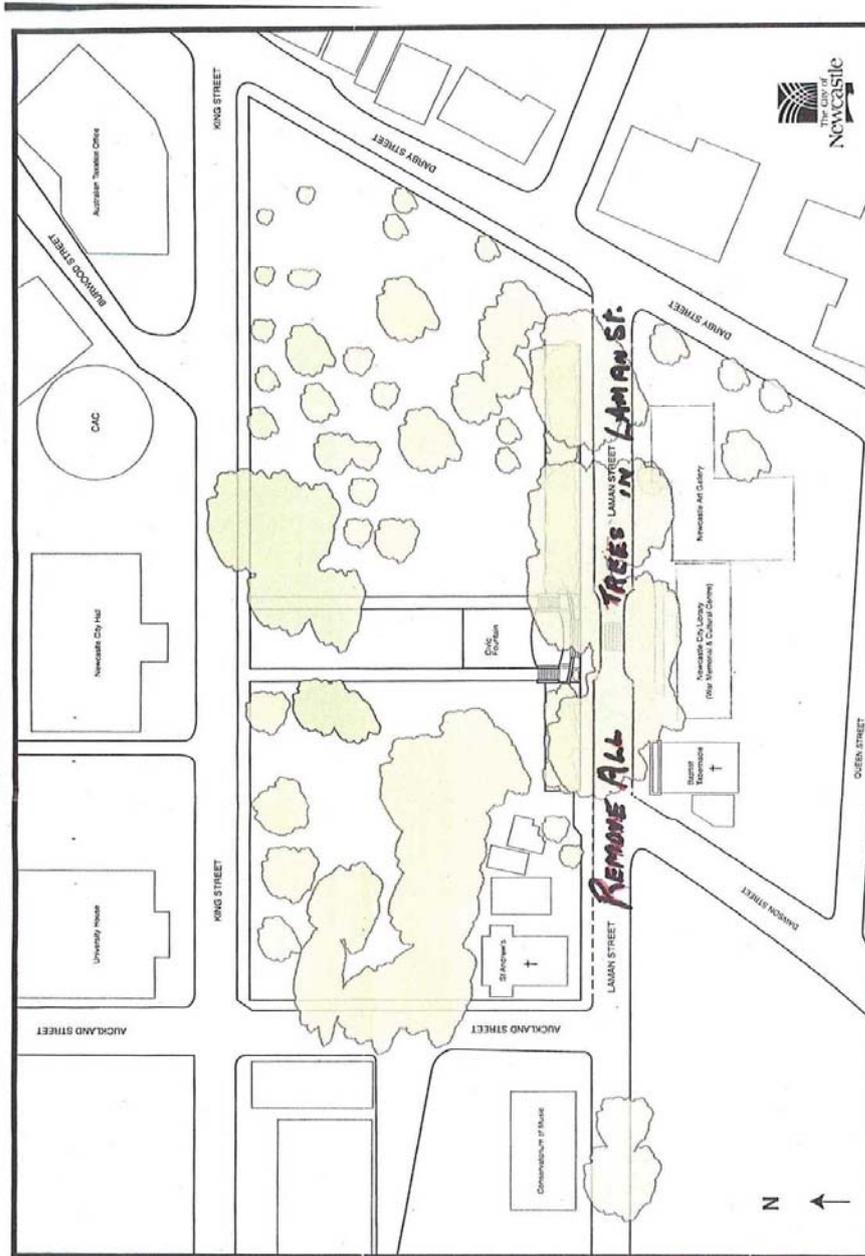
The tail has been shaking the dog for far too long.

Wake up NCC, get back to basics, stop building sandcastles in the sky, introduce value for our rates dollar.

LISTEN to and ACT upon the wishes of the people, who you are supposed to be representing.

Maintain Laman Street as close to it is today, with ongoing maintenance, which has been sadly lacking in the past.

## Drawings Received



### Vision 1

#### Tell us your vision

Council is interested in your views for the future of the precinct.

Please grab a pen or some textas and draw on the map to show us your vision.

If you can't draw, turn over to the back page of this leaflet and talk to us.

Here are some things you should consider when describing your vision:

- Access to Newcastle Region Library
- Future plans for extending Newcastle Region Art Gallery
- Public safety relating to the Hills Fig trees
- Parking and traffic issues
- Enjoyment and uses of Civic Park and Laman Street
- Connections between Dairy Street, Laman Street and the Civic Precinct (Wheeler Place, City Hall and Civic Theatre)

Please send your vision to Newcastle City Council, PO Box 489 Newcastle NSW 2300 by **Monday 22 February 2010**.

Your vision will be provided to all participants of the design workshop and be included in the report to Council scheduled for May 2010.

#### Attend a design workshop

Council is hosting a two day intensive design workshop on **Friday 19 and Saturday 20 March 2010** to investigate the options for Newcastle's Laman Street – Civic Precinct.

The workshop will include independent experts such as arborists, engineers and landscape architects as well as local residents, businesses, key stakeholders and community representatives.

Please contact Council on 4974 2854 for a nomination form.

#### Other opportunities to be involved

There will be further opportunities for you to have your say.

Design options developed at the two day workshop will be presented to Council and the community in May for further feedback. Information sessions will also be organised to discuss these options. Stay tuned for dates.

Go online at [www.newcastle.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.gov.au) to find out more about the Laman Street - Civic Precinct design workshop and process.



**Vision 2**  
**Tell us your vision**

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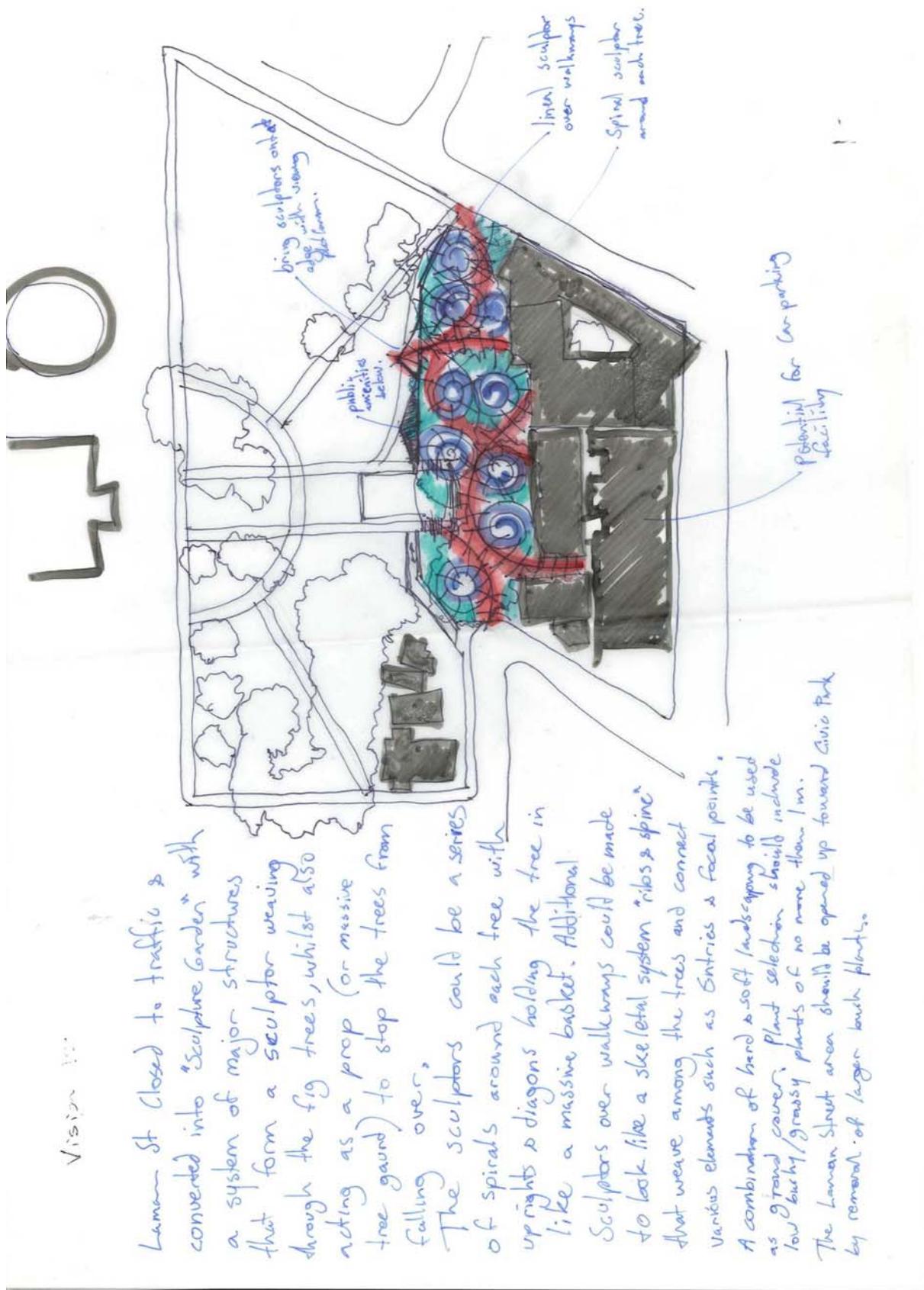
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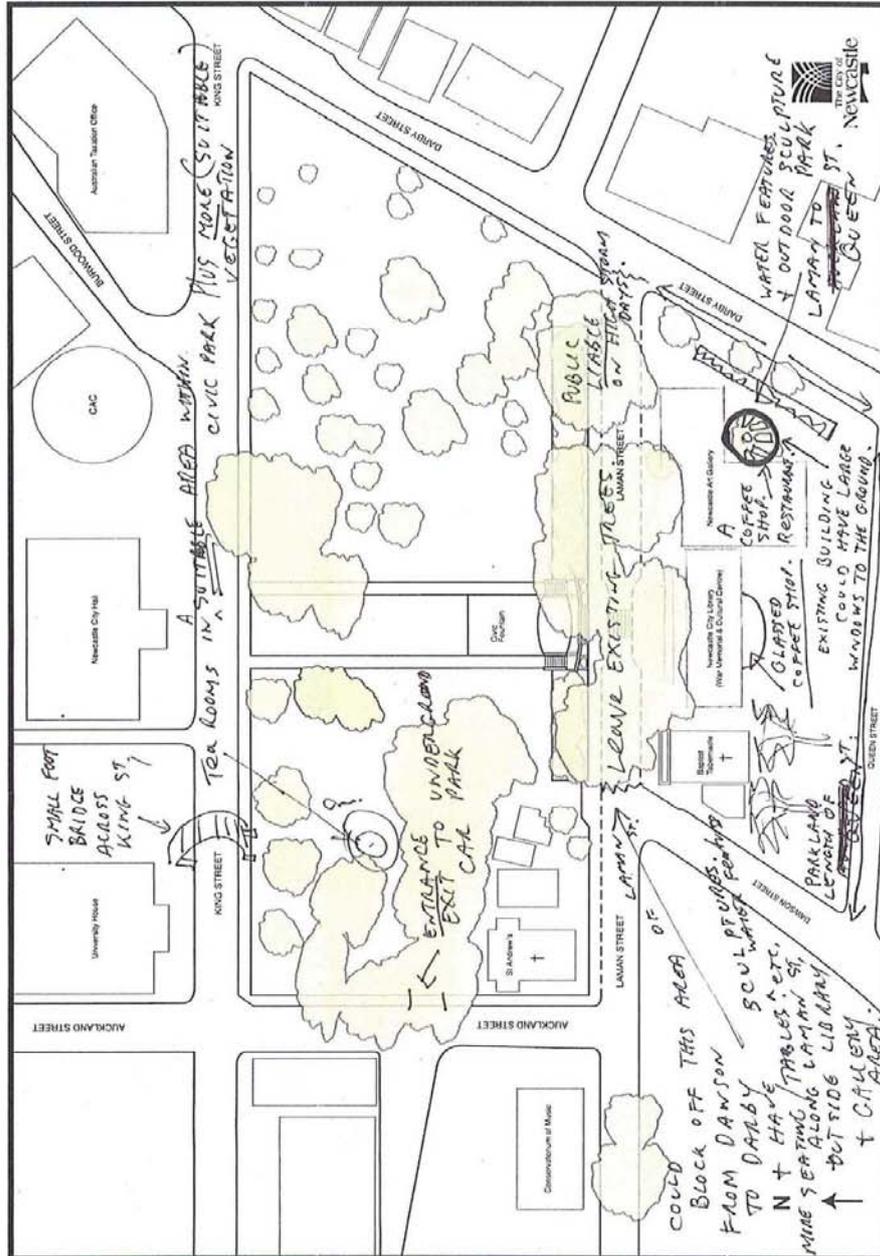
Vision

Laman St Closed to traffic & converted into "Sculpture Garden" with a system of major structures that form a sculptor weaving through the fig trees, whilst also acting as a prop (or massive tree guard) to stop the trees from falling over.

The sculptors could be a series of spirals around each tree with uprights & diagonals holding the tree in like a massive basket. Additional

Sculptors over walkways could be made to look like a skeletal system "ribs & spine" that weave among the trees and connect various elements such as Entries & focal points.

A combination of hard & soft landscaping to be used as ground cover. Plant selection should include low bushy/grassy plants of no more than 1m. The Laman Street area should be opened up toward Civic Park by removal of larger bush plants.



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## **Appendix IV – Promotional Materials and Media**





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## Media Releases

15 December 2009

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### Tree management is a balancing act

Community input is being sought for design options for Laman Street, Cooks Hill after a recession motion about the iconic fig trees was successful at Council's meeting last night, Tuesday 15 December.

Infrastructure Services Manager JOHN JOHNSTON says Council has provided clear direction for how to proceed and from the beginning of 2010 a series of workshops will be held to look at design options.

"There is no argument that these trees are an iconic feature of our city and removing them is the last thing anyone wants to do. In an ideal world the trees, traffic and pedestrians could all coexist and the tree canopy could remain forever. However the reality is something has got to give."

"As part of the process, the community will need to consider how we want this area to look in the future. Do we want Laman Street to remain a street? Do we want to extend the park to incorporate the existing road? Should we be extending the art gallery or library into this space? These are just some of the questions that will be investigated as part of the design process."

The risk associated with the existing Hills figs will also need to be considered.

"There are some decisions from risk management point of view that Council has an obligation to resolve and these include immediate options to reduce risk. We can't ask the community to take responsibility for making technical decisions, we need to follow the advice of experts in the field and this is what has been done."

To help to reduce risk in Laman Street a number of mitigation options are being implemented and work will start immediately on these measures including

- Newcastle City Council's Traffic Committee has agreed to the closure of Laman Street to east bound traffic with a diversion at Dawson Street
- the removal of all parking in the street
- the creation of two drop off spots for Art Gallery and Library visitors
- removal of seating in Civic Park which is under vulnerable trees (complete)

The mitigation options above are only an interim measure and further options including more extensive pruning and exclusion areas under the trees may be required in the future.

More information about the consultation process and the Hills figs in Laman Street, Cooks Hill including expert advice and frequently asked will be available on Council's website by the end of the week, go to the [trees in our city](#) page.

**For more information and interviews call JOHN JOHNSTON on 4974 2625.**

29 January 2010

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## Community design for Laman Street - Civic Precinct

Details of the community design process for Laman Street – Civic Precinct will be considered by Newcastle City Council at the first meeting for 2010 on Tuesday 2 February.

Director Future City JUDY JAEGER says council officers have developed an inclusive design process to progress the Laman Street project which incorporates council's resolution from 15 December 2010.

"Community interest in the Laman Street figs has been substantial and this will continue in the coming months as options for the site are investigated."

"There are restrictions to what can be done in this area and compromises will need to be made to ensure both community expectations and risk management requirements are incorporated into the final plan for the area."

"The design process we have developed will allow the community to come together with industry experts and council officers so all ideas can be explored."

"Council will consider the proposed community design process at next Tuesday's council meeting to ensure it meets the brief. Once the process is finalised, an extensive communication campaign will get underway to ensure all interested community members, business representatives and other stakeholders are aware of how to get involved."

### Proposed community design process for Council's consideration

- A design workshop (charette) will be held on 19 and 20 March 2010 and it will be facilitated by an external consultant and supported by technical advice from both internal and external specialists.
- Place making principles will help guide the workshop.
- Experts in arboriculture, architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, heritage planning, civil engineering and traffic engineering will be in attendance.
- Between 60 and 70 stakeholders will be able to participate in the design process, this will include:
  - one third participations from government and other stakeholder groups such as churches, the RTA, the art gallery, the library and schools
  - one third participation from local residents and businesses within a one kilometre radius of Laman Street
  - one third participation from a random sample of the remainder of the Newcastle community
- Options developed at the workshop will be considered by Council and placed on public exhibition in May 2010.
- Interested community members will also be able to submit their vision for the Laman Street precinct prior the workshop being held.

**For more information and interviews call JUDY JAEGER on 4974 2709.**

9 February 2010

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## Register now for Laman Street - Civic Precinct design workshop

Recruitment is underway for interested individuals and groups to be involved in the design process for Laman Street – Civic Precinct.

Director Future City JUDY JAEGER says Newcastle City Council is developing a vision for the future of the Laman Street – Civic Precinct and anyone interested in this area is invited to get involved.

“Community interest in the Laman Street figs has been substantial so the all inclusive design process that has been developed is the best option to gauge the range of opinions and develop reasonable options for the site.”

“There are restrictions to what can be done in this area and compromises may need to be made to ensure both community expectations and risk management requirements are incorporated into the final plan for the area.”

“The design process we have developed will allow the community to come together with industry experts and Council officers so all ideas can be explored.”

### Community design process

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  - one third participants from government and other stakeholder groups such as churches, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the art gallery, the library and schools
  - one third participation from local residents and businesses within a one kilometre radius of Laman Street
  - one third participation from a random sample of the remainder of the Newcastle community
- Options developed at the workshop will be considered by Council and placed on public exhibition in May 2010.

“Successful applicants for the design workshop will be provided with a comprehensive information pack. The pack will include all relevant reports such as the quantified tree risk assessment, results of the ground penetrating radar tests and existing plans for the precinct.”

In the lead up to the design workshop, Council is also encouraging people to send in their vision for the area which will also be provided to the workshop participants.

This vision can be written or drawn and Council has put together a brochure to assist with this. Hard copies are available at Council’s Customer Enquiry Centre, 282 King Street, Newcastle, all branch libraries, or can be downloaded from [Council’s website](#).

For more information and interviews call JUDY JAEGER on 4974 2709.

**26 February 2010**

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## **Investigations continue in Laman Street**

Investigations are underway for the next few days to reveal the complex world beneath the ground in Laman Street, including tree root systems and the location of utilities such as drains and electrical cables.

Infrastructure Management Services JOHN JOHNSTON says these investigations add to the extensive research already completed over many years to understand the health and structure of the Laman Street trees.

“A number of trenches will be dug at specific points along Laman Street to allow Council to investigate and map the conditions and content underground. We will be looking to see what, if any, roots are within the road reserve.

“The findings will be presented to participants of the two day design workshop on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 March to help them understand the circumstances that prevail in Laman Street precinct as they consider future options for the area.”

The work is predicted to take place over a five day period and should be completed by Tuesday 2 March 2010.

The nomination period for the Laman Street Civic Precinct Design workshop has been extended until Friday 5 March. Contact 4974 2854 for a nomination pack.

**Interview details: Contact John Johnston 4974 2610.**

## Media Clippings and Advertising

Press and advertising during consultation period

HERALD NEWS

# Orders in pig Latin, court told

**By STEPHEN RYAN**

HAYLEY Jackson's boyfriend spoke in pig Latin to her over the phone when he ordered her to retrieve a sawn-off shotgun that was later used in a robbery, a jury heard yesterday.

Jackson, 23, of Medow, pleaded not guilty in Newcastle District Court to being an accessory before the fact.

Crown prosecutor Wayne Creasey, in his opening address, said the jury could infer that Jackson played a role in the Hexham Bowling Club robbery of December 10, 2008, because of conversations she had with her boyfriend.

In one conversation before the robbery, Jackson's boyfriend spoke in pig Latin when he ordered her to retrieve a "ross", a slang term for a shotgun, from where it was hidden, Mr Creasey said.

Jackson told police one month later that she did not



**LOOK AT ME** Dominique Gray, Kristy Tass and Erin Daniels at The Junction's Red Cross boutique, which sells new and recycled fashion.

**By ALISON BRANLEY**

GONE are the days of rattling the tin can. Australia Red Cross has found a different way to raise revenues – retail.

The Red Cross will open its second boutique dress shop tomorrow in The Junction.

It follows the runaway success of its pilot store in Hamilton, which made \$100,000 in its first six months.

Red Cross area retail manager Jason Fox said their boutiques were more than just second-hand stores.

The concept stores have been developed by the Red

know what her boyfriend meant when he spoke to her on that occasion, the jury heard.

Armed thieves took about \$35,000 when they stormed the bowling club about 11pm on December 10, 2008.

Defence barrister David Price told the jury that even though Jackson's boyfriend was a car thief, a drug dealer and an armed robber, that did not mean that Jackson was responsible.

"She is not her brother's keeper or in this case her boyfriend's keeper," Mr Price said.

"She is not responsible for everything he does."

Mr Price said Jackson, who had no criminal convictions, had known her boyfriend since she was eight years old.

"There's no suggestion that she was anywhere near the Hexham Bowling Club on December 10," Mr Price said.

The trial before Judge Raymond McLoughlin continues.

## Retail the secret to revenue

genuine find like you get in an op shop," he said.

"We have an extremely high standard of recycled clothing."

The shops also include an extensive range of plus-size clothing and new swimwear.

The Red Cross operates two other second-hand clothing stores in the Hunter at Kurri Kurri and Maitland.

Money raised from the volunteer-run stores goes to Red Cross works in Newcastle, Australia and overseas.

Volunteers and donations of quality clothing are always welcome.

### A Kawai Piano Sale? Kawai Not!



This is the biggest Kawai Event of the Year. Unprecedented savings across the entire Kawai range. Kawai Grand Pianos, Kawai Upright Pianos, Kawai Digital & Stage Pianos. This once a year Kawai Event is on now. Own a Kawai today from just \$995. Kawai - The choice of those who know.

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YOUR LETTERS

**Short takes**

This is the forum for those who want to make a point fast. Brief opinions may be phoned to (02) 4979 5800 between 9.30am and 1pm Monday to Friday or emailed to letters@theherald.com.au

I am a relative newcomer to Newcastle and have voted Liberal, Labor and Independent in the time I've lived here. I think Newcastle would vote Labor into office if it put Donald Duck on the ballot. Greg Harborne's comments (Letters 1820) don't reflect reality. The reason governments don't spend money in Newcastle is because it's taken for granted - the problem of living in a safe seat. I urge voters to vote for whoever isn't in power at any given time. Marginalise "very fast" and we might get a "very fast" train.

Rhett Morson, Cooks Hill

After the recent announcement of a \$109 million deficit, Bruce MacKenzie was reported in *The Post-Standard Examiner* of February 10 as saying "That deficit is rubbish. It's a paper deficit based on the devaluation of some property. I take accountants with a grain of salt, what we need to do is push on, we are not broke." If this is the case, why do we need an 8.89 per cent rate increase?

Stephen Kuehn, Willamstown

Scott Hilliard (Letters 1620) obviously has not travelled to Wallsend, Glendale, Edgeworth or our outer suburbs where the problem of graffiti is progressively worse. Can't really blame a legal graffiti wall for that. But add to that the fact that our roads are potholed, parks are not maintained and we are ignored by council services and you can almost draw a line where the forgotten ratepayers live. Also, why is the derelict system on Wallsend Head allowed to remain in our suburb to breed rodents and be a potential risk to our children right in front of a bus stop?

Neil Morris, Wallsend

Laura Hopkins (Letters 62), what a brilliant suggestion that you put forward about a future use for Newcastle post office. Turn it into the courthouse. It has all the space that would be needed to accommodate the needs and also the chance to bring back a beautiful building.

Betty Parkinson, Abermain

As a resident of Tighes Hill I readily accept coal loaders are part and parcel of our daily life. Coal plays a vital role in the economy of NSW and Port Waratah Coal Services is a major employer. What I don't accept is that on a relatively windy afternoon water spraying of the coal dumps is not taking place. This was the situation when I drove along Industrial Drive recently. I would be interested to read PWS's response.

Rob McCormack, Tighes Hill

Not satisfied with allowing pushbikes riders to use our footpaths unpolliced and uncontrolled, Newcastle City Council it seems is now allowing all types of bikes to park on footpaths. Already having to dodge pushbikes is tiresome as they abuse our footpaths are we going to have to dodge motorbikes also? Remember the word is footpath. Pedestrians are ratepayers and voters.

Ted Harvey, Mayfield West

**SMS your say**

For the short, sweet and text-savvy, SMS your opinion to 0427 154 176. Please include your name, suburb and a landline. At a public meeting Robert Coombs called Gillian Sneddon a "rathog". Now he is asking our puppet Premier to do something. Is he serious about wanting to be re-elected?

Roland Millbank, Adamstown

# Dig that civic ambience

JUST when you think things can't get any worse, John Tate rolls out his plan to excavate Civic Park. A quick spin around the block in the mayoral limo will reveal a dozen or more alternative sites for a car park, among them several derelict buildings in council hands that contribute to the current ambience of Hunter Street. Clearly part of the council approach to being a welcome city for refugees is to make the CBD resemble downtown Mogadishu. A cable-strewn car park would be vulnerable to stormwater inundation, require the destruction of Civic Park to Job already started with the removal of fig trees, and like all council projects, in my opinion cost many times the original estimates. Or Tate clearly takes his lead from the NSW Government - grand pronouncements about fantastical infrastructure that will never appear while the critical staff is neglected. The New South Street wall, City Hall's crumbling facade and the Ocean Baths are all a civic disgrace.

With my rubbish bin about to be downsized by this council, just what am I supposed to do with the garbage that ~~scrapes~~ **Scott Hilliard** New Lambton



## Punished for bravery

THE plight of Gillian Sneddon raises many worrying questions for those who really want to choose to live by the principle "do the right thing", but are frightened into inactivity ("Premier to act on staffer" *Herald* 18/2). The ongoing bad publicity could quickly be reversed and a whole-of-community attitude affected positively if Ms Sneddon's position was rectified. I believe the community sees this case as someone being punished for being brave and honourable. She assisted police. If her action meant exposing a political figure for their wrongdoing - so be it. A healthy community identifies wrongdoers and calls them to account.

If the rapid decline in this once values based community is to be halted, spinning Ms Sneddon's ordeal into a positive example with a thoughtful and appropriate outcome for her might be a very good start.

Robyn Cotterell-Jones Newcastle

## Developers back to the fore

ONCE again we see the ALP going out of its way to accommodate developers against the wishes of the very people who elected them to office. Planning Minister Tony Kelly has failed to take note of the ruling of the Land and Environment Court that land trade-offs are a bribe. With an election looming it is no surprise the minister can, with a stroke of his pen, reward a public document that now favours developers and doesn't take into account community comment.

With the former NSW ALP chief fund raiser now the Premier many developers would be delighted with her appointment. I am sure the Minister for Planning has this in mind with a state election around the corner. What he has overlooked is that regardless of how much a developer donates to a political party they still only have one vote, the communities affected by poor planning decisions represent thousands of votes. I feel the ALP should concentrate on rebuilding its credibility before trying to rebuild communities. The sooner it's gone the better NSW will be.

Roger Lewis Ellalong

## Not all kids fit the mould

JEFF Corbett's reference to irresponsible and leechy bonus-chasing parents (Opinion 1820) is highly judgemental stereotyping. No one could read his article without feeling contempt at his level of disregard for individual circumstance. I take personal offence to the comment that it is a fair guess the mother is in a dirty pink dressing gown lounging next to a mug of instant coffee and an overflowing ashtray, while her children are out on the foreshore and carelessly destroying other people's property.

As a parent of a behavioural child, I don't lounge around not caring or worrying, but rather calling the police, finding friends' phone numbers or addresses, or driving around myself hoping to see my child.

I spend a considerable amount of my time advocating for my son in the public school system, child welfare programs and mental health systems with varying degrees of success. I spend the

more time continually adjusting curfews and explaining consequences and actions, and teaching all of my children to be respectful of themselves, their elders and their community. Does this guarantee that the child is an outstanding scholar and citizen? Absolutely not. Does it mean I have provided all I can to lead to a productive and successful life on the right side of the law? Absolutely it does.

A parents' court? Brilliant. I am ready to defend, present my defence and accept legitimate accountability, and Mr Corbett, I call you to the stand.

Loft Dent Mayfield

## Sharon states her success

SHARON Grierson (Letters 182) created interest in what she didn't mention rather than what she did: "This week's Hunter unemployment figure of 4.9 per cent is testimony to the successful collaboration between industry, business, research institutes and

the Rudd Government..." The letter left the struggling State Government out in the cold.

Fred Soundors Waratah West

## Clean machines at Honeysuckle

NEWCASTLE isn't ready for visitors. One Friday night after calling out of Honeysuckle and wanting a coffee to complete dinner we were told the coffee machine had just been cleaned. It was 9.30.

We walked along the foreshore visiting five restaurants that still had patrons, and all the coffee machines had "just" been turned off and "cleaned" and couldn't supply us with a coffee. It was 10pm. How can Newcastle expect to invite tourists when we can't even offer them a coffee?

Julie Nagy Whitebridge

## Don't park under those deadly figs

NEWCASTLE City Council has decided to destroy the beautiful Laman Street figs, subjecting them to "death by a thousand cuts". In reducing the street traffic and prohibiting parking outside our library and art gallery, council has dealt a death blow to both these institutions, all because of an in my opinion imagined threat from falling branches.

As I sat watching the lorikeets screeching and singing through this shady canopy, an elderly lady came pulling past on her walker, lugging a large bag of books. She had to park 50 metres away in the blazing sun and take her life in her hands by walking under seven of these "deadly" trees, instead of parking under one.

These same trees have survived a major earthquake and countless savage storms without a single fatality in 60 years. Why doesn't the council close Newcastle Beach in view of past drownings?

Laman Street belongs to everyone.

Robert Blignell Brunkenville

## Letter of the week

This week the letter judged the best, most succinct and interesting will win a double pass to the Greater Union cinemas, courtesy of *The Herald*. The winner will be announced on Saturday on this page.

**Message board**

Your chance to say a brief "thanks" or contact people. Phone (02) 4979 5800 between 9.30am and 1pm Monday to Friday or email letters@theherald.com.au.

From Elaine Darby: The P&C Federation of NSW district council will hold a meeting at Cardiff RSL on Wednesday, February 24, at 7.00pm. Come and find out how P&C district council fight for your children's education in NSW public schools. All welcome. Inquiries: 0433 748 103.

**Letters**

Letters should be fewer than 200 words, include your full name, home address and daytime telephone number for verification. If sending by email, do not use attachments. Letters may be edited and may also be reproduced in electronic form, by photocopying and other means.

**Complaints**

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www.theherald.com.au

**Online poll**  
Have you given approval to donate organs?

YES: 42.1%  
NO: 57.9%

YOUR LETTERS

Short takes

This is the forum for those who want to make a point fast. Brief opinions may be phoned to (02) 4979 5980 between 9.30am and 1pm Monday to Friday or emailed to letters@theherald.com.au

Who are these clowns trying to fool. Even if a very fast train did get off the ground it probably wouldn't be completed in the next 50 years and at most it would only be the Sydney to Gosford section. Just another snow job from a desperate Government melting faster than any VFT will ever go.

Peter Dunn, Elmore Vale

Very fast trains into Newcastle? It's a pity no one can work out what to do with the ones already there. Or perhaps this is the replacement. If so, then bring on the much-needed flyover at Stewart Avenue.

Mark Olive, Rutherford

John Tate's thoughts of having a carpark under Civic Park makes one wonder. There are more vacant areas around Civic Park than underneath the park itself that could be used as carparks. There is the vacant land in Queen Street behind the library and art gallery, or the corner of Burwood Street and Hunter Street. These areas have been used as parking areas for longer than a decade. They are half done carparks. Maybe it's time to make these parking areas multistorey as it would be a benefit to all.

Richard Walters, Wallsend

THE expanding hole in the ozone layer was of great concern to the world's health authorities, none more than those of Australia in the late 1980s. A meeting of world leaders, after getting scientific advice, reached the decision that the fluorocarbons had caused this problem. The use of alternative gases for our refrigeration and fire extinguishers were found and the fluorocarbons banned. The result today is that the hole is now reducing and should be wholly repaired by year 2050. Man's pollution on Earth causing damage in space, identified by science and repaired by political will. In the present climate change debate, we have the science but lack the political will.

Bob McChesney, Carey Bay

Thank goodness for the Friends of the Regal group who have kept up their effort to reopen the theatre after renewal. Films that we used to enjoy watching have not been shown since the sad closing of the Lyrique in town. We have been promised some small cinemas in the West End but they never seem to materialise. Everyone does not wish to view the "blockbuster" films, so let's have some commitment soon please.

Maureen Ray, East Maitland

SMS your say

For the short, sweet and text-savvy. SMS your opinion to 0427 154 176. Please include your name, suburb and a landline.

Hooray Isabel Reed (Letters 1622). Legalising all recreational drugs is the only intelligent way to end the war on drugs. It would empty prisons and the pockets of criminals. What's not to like? Illegality is the reason horror drugs like ice exist.

Kath Leahy, Cooks Hill

Just want to say thanks for the good laugh Alan Creek (Short Takes 172). One-way tickets would be ideal.

Graeme Bennett, Warners Bay

How can we stop the anger and violence in our young people, when adults say "it's OK" by producing violent films and games.

Linda March, Merewether

# Very fast train is very old



## Old miner's wheel deal

IT is disappointing that Lake Macquarie City Council did not honour its written agreement with the local precinct community group over the restoration and retention in its existing position of the mining poppet head memorial. This memorial was dedicated to the many coalminers in the district who lost their lives contributing to the wealth of the city and is considered sacrosanct. The council agreed that during the GPT shopping centre expansion some changes would be required, but that consultation would be undertaken with interested "community groups" before changes were finalised. The spirit of this agreement was broken by the council's act of sending in contractors over the quiet period of the Christmas/New Year holiday break to destroy nearby beautiful gum trees without the promised consultation. There is also the matter of a tree preservation order.

As a retired coalminer, I say Lake Macquarie City Council has treated my fellow miners and community with contempt.

Eric Roddom  
Charlestown

YESTERDAY'S front-page story ("Labor express") declaring the ALP is about to "woo" voters in the Hunter with a very fast train between Newcastle and Sydney is old news to say the least. The very fast train idea has been on the drawing board for more years than I'd like to remember and this is not the first time Labor has made this announcement.

Talk about raising the Titanic, this old chestnut shows Labor's desperation. It's another feeble attempt to win over Hunter voters. Years and promises of neglect and other false promises, delays in building roads, loss of shipbuilding contracts and the withdrawal of funding for vital Hunter projects have tarnished Labor's reputation and left even the most fanatical Labor voters to reconsider their allegiance to the so-called "workers' party". The backing of the Federal Government changes nothing as Mr Rudd continues to fail to deliver on his election promises in much the same way as the NSW Labor Government has for more than a decade.

Greg Harborne  
Warabrook

## Keep up those radical solutions

REGARDING "Park under the park" (Herald 162), what a splendid idea C. Tate. If we are going to get serious about this we need to look at other "radical solutions" to improve our city.

I propose we build a monorail that will nullify traffic snarls around level crossings and appease the 2000 people who use the rail every day in and out of Newcastle and our menagerie of transporters who call Newcastle home. This monorail probably needs to terminate near the proposed carpark in Civic Park via a quick dog-leg down Hunter Street so tourists can visit a genuine old-style "ghost town".

Upon alighting, tourists will be greeted by an enormous graffiti wall covered in local "artists" wares. Next to this will be a gigantic skatepark. How will we pay for all these wonderful things? Simple. Cut down the Laman Street figs and replace them with money trees.

Tom Wasley  
Merewether

## Good walk cops a bagging

DOG owners have destroyed one of the most scenic walks Newcastle has to offer. It has become a disgusting trend to leave plastic

litter bags tied up to the trees that line the Redhead boardwalk. The plastic bags are non-biodegradable and sit there in the trees prolonging the life and the smell of the defecation.

The boardwalk was once a pleasant leisure activity that was appreciated by all members of the community. Now it has become an appalling representation of people's lack of respect for their own environment and community.

Natalie Donovan  
Redhead

## TAFE teachers student-focused

IT'S healthy to have comment about government-funded organisations and Ken Hungerford (Letters 152) wrote with passion about the "greed" of TAFE teachers. He's the type of person we need in Australia's main provider of vocational and education training courses.

Come and join us Ken. You obviously have skills and views our society demands, especially in relation to the importance of an educated workforce. Enjoy the 11 weeks holiday and

\$83,000 each year. Just put aside layers of state and federal bureaucracy, intimidation over the privatisation of the system and a 75 per cent casual workforce. That's the minimum requirement before being considered for employment. It will help you understand why an award that reduces your hourly rate and increases hours of duty is so fiercely rejected. We do this work because it is important and rewarding. We are invigorated by our students' success.

The golden goose is the dedicated, hard-working and student-focused teachers at TAFE, not the \$83,000 per year government position that you assert is somehow less subject to rules of accountability. Look out for the next TAFE teacher recruitment calling for goose-slaying experts.

Scott Alcorn  
Booralgul

## NIB is at it again it seems

WHEN NIB sold my "small parcel" of shares without informing me, I was more than a little upset. As a

result I pulled out of the health fund. No regrets there.

NIB has long since ceased to be the family friendly fund that my father, as a BHP employee, used as a "sick visitor" in the 1950s and '60s. Aren't we glad now?

It appears NIB is at it again. Has the time come for Mark Fitzgibbon to go? First came his totally innocent "dealings" in trying to secure a government contract, then the selling-off of members' shares at a massive profit without their consent and now he's the DNA guru.

I am no fan of the 7.30 Report's Kerry O'Brien but I was delighted to see him in fine form as Mr Fitzgibbon stumbled his way through an interview on Monday night. I find it hard to believe him when he claimed that NIB would not have access to reports on anyone with a predisposition to cancer or another genetic finding. I also find it hard to believe that his doctor had never told him to have a test for prostate cancer.

How long will it be before those 500 invited NIB guests are told that if they don't have the DNA test (at a highly discounted price) they don't have NIB membership.

Carol O'Donnell  
Newcastle

## Hazzard at least listened

THANKS Brad Hazzard, shadow minister for housing, for visiting the Department of Housing development on Charlestown Road. It was refreshing to see a politician actually listen.

To readers of this page, our protests are more about quality of life for all than saying "not in our backyard". Tenants need to feel that this is their home, where they can live a peaceful, enjoyable life, with the facilities that are needed. This model on Charlestown Road is far from that ideal. Residents will have little room to enjoy the outdoors or hang washing and nowhere for visitors to park.

No doubt the development will go ahead as a series of "little boxes", but residents nearby will remember the lack of support and trust Matthew Morris and his mates at the next election.

Leanne Rankin  
Charlestown

## Letter of the week

This week the letter judged the best, most succinct and interesting will win a double pass to the Greater Union cinemas, courtesy of *The Herald*. The winner will be announced on Saturday on this page.

Message board

Your chance to say a brief "thanks" or contact people. Phone (02) 4979 5980 between 9.30am and 1pm Monday to Friday or email letters@theherald.com.au.

From the Property Rights Support Group: We are holding a meeting to discuss issues that impact on all landowners on Monday, February 22, 6.30pm at the Motto Farm Motel, five kilometres north from the Hesham Bridge. All invited. Call Lyn on 0412 170 569 for information.

Letters

Letters should be fewer than 200 words. Include your full name, home address and daytime telephone number for verification. If sending by email, do not use attachments. Letters may be edited and may also be republished in electronic form, by photocopying and other methods.

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Letters to the Editor, PO Box 510, Newcastle 2300 Fax (02) 4979 5988 Email letters@theherald.com.au (Full address and phone number required)

HERALD NEWS

## Radical solution to city's car crisis

From Page 1

growing CBD will be thousands of car spaces short in the coming years have prompted the new thinking. "There's a big demand for parking," Cr Tate said. The lack of CBD parking is set to be compounded with the University of Newcastle's impending move into the city, new development and office tenancies, growth of City Hall and Civic Theatre business and a redesign of Laman Street that could shut out cars. The future of Newcastle City Council parking stations, such as in Gibson Street, is also in question, with an organisational review suggesting ageing sites be sold. "When you take all that into account, there's need for increased parking in this area," Cr Tate said. Cr Tate wants strategists to



BENEFITS: John Tate said building an underground car park in Civic Park would meet parking demand.

— Picture by Jonathan Carroll

consider new and innovative ideas as part of planning for the city's future. "The area I would like investigated is underneath Civic Park," he said. "Dig it up and put a car park station underneath." Although the proposal is expected to shock many Newcastle residents, Cr Tate believes the park could be restored to create something

akin to The Domain in Sydney. "People are going to freak out about digging up the park," Cr Tate said. But excavation could exclude sensitive areas such as war memorials and well-established trees, with green space built back on top of the parking station, he said. As well as hundreds of extra car spaces, there might

be other benefits if elements such as a pedestrian walkway under King Street were built into the plan. The council might use money from the proposed Gibson Street parking station sale to finance the Civic Park project. "I think it's an option that needs to be thought about in terms of this precinct plan and in terms of this future

city," Cr Tate said. Newcastle-based Lindsay & Dynan associate engineer Brad Wilkes said building a car park beneath Civic Park was possible, but cost would be a major consideration. "From a technical perspective, yes it's possible," Mr Wilkes said. "We build tunnels under the Sydney Harbour, it's not hard in comparison to that to

build a car park under Civic Park. It's a question of money. "They obviously have to do a cost-benefit analysis and assess whether it's the best option financially." Civic Park was used as a car park in the 1950s and 60s before the Captain Cook fountain was built.

Editorial, Page 8  
Online poll, Page 10

# Levels of thought

## Workshop on changes for precinct

By JACQUI JONES  
Civic Reporter

MAJOR changes could be in store for Civic Park, as stakeholders and community members consider design options for the area around Laman Street. Plans for an underground car park might be considered in the context of the broader urban planning project, Newcastle Lord Mayor John Tate said. Newcastle City Council is hosting a workshop on March 19 and 20 with community, business and government representatives.



CLOSED: Traffic changes in Laman Street.

With help from specialist advisers, the delegates will propose ideas for Laman Street and the surrounding civic precinct. The subject area is between Hunter, Darby, Queen and Auckland streets and includes the library, art gallery and Civic Park. Public submissions are being accepted, with a map available for marking out ideas. The council said all options were on the table, including a

2005 Civic Park management plan. It proposed closing Laman Street to traffic, removing the fig trees in front of the library and art gallery and creating grassy, tiered platforms in front of the buildings. The workshop follows concern about the potential safety risk of Laman Street's figs, and councillors' delaying a decision to chop them down. Parking in the street has

that there would be a shortfall of between 3500 and 4000 parking spaces if the university moved into the city centre. The university has indicated that it intends to make a move by 2020.

been banned and traffic reduced to one-way flow. Cr Tate said the study of the precinct presented an opportunity to consider ideas such as an underground car park. "If Laman Street becomes a plaza, you've got parking available to the art gallery, the library and Darby Street," he said. "I'd like [Civic] Park to flow up to Laman Street, Laman Street become part of the park."



AUTO ALLEY: Civic Park full of cars in 1957.

### A COLOURFUL HISTORY

- 1847 - Land granted to A.A. Company. Rail line for coal trains bisects the area.
- Early 1900s - Timber yards and windmill machinery manufacturers occupy the land.
- 1920s - Fires destroy timber yards. Newcastle Electric Supply Company takes over land west of railway line, Newcastle City Council resumes eastern portion.
- 1929 - Council designs a planting scheme for a park.
- 1930s - Public access blocked while grass and plants grows.
- 1937 - Park opens as a public rest area, but access not encouraged.
- 1954 - Last coal wagons runs through park.
- 1958 - Newcastle City Council buys strip of land to add to the park from A.A. Company, to which railway corridor reverts when Glebe coal pit closes.
- 1960s to 1980s - Area east of the railway line used for car parking.
- 1965 - Retaining wall and planting along Laman Street and Captain Cook fountain built.
- 1960 - Fountain opens.
- 1978 - Council dedicates area between King, Darby, Laman and Auckland streets as a public reserve known as Civic Park.

Source: Newcastle City Council, Herald archives



# WIN \$1000

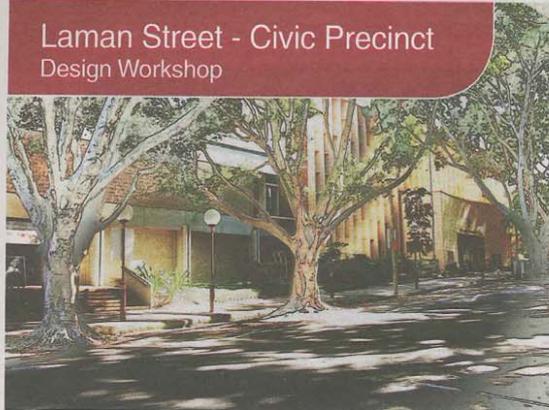
## ENTER THE MCDONALD'S® UNDER 18'S SPORTS TEAM OF THE MONTH

BETWEEN MARCH AND OCTOBER 2010 MCDONALD'S® ARE GIVING AWAY \$1000 TO THE UNDER 18'S SPORTS TEAM OF THE MONTH. PLUS A TEN SECOND TV COMMERCIAL.

McDonald's® Restaurants in the Newcastle and Hunter Region have awarded over \$20,000 in cash prizes to local sporting teams since 2004 as part of the McDonald's® Under 18's Sports Team of the Month Competition. Get your entry form in Tuesday's Junior Sports Lift-out of the Newcastle Herald or visit [www.nbnlv.com.au](http://www.nbnlv.com.au)



SPORTS TEAM OF THE MONTH



## Laman Street - Civic Precinct Design Workshop

Council is developing a vision for the future of the Laman Street – Civic Precinct\* and we encourage you to get involved.

Interested community members are invited to attend a two day intensive design workshop with independent experts on Friday 19 March and Saturday 20 March 2010.

**Nominations close 22 February 2010.**

Please call Council on **4974 2854** or email to [mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au) for a nomination pack.

If you can't be part of the workshop, you can still send us your vision for the precinct. Go to [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au) or pick up a leaflet from all branch libraries and Council's City Administration Centre (King St, Newcastle).

For more information on the Laman Street - Civic Precinct consultation process go to [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

\*Civic Precinct area is bounded by Hunter, Darby, Queen and Auckland Streets.

## Waste Services



The Newcastle community is invited to a workshop to talk about household waste collection and waste reduction as recently surveyed through Newcastle Voice.

Now all residents have the opportunity to discuss different bin sizes for weekly waste collection, a future recycling education program, and recommendations to improve waste collection and diverting waste from landfill.

## Household Waste Collection Workshop

**10am - 12noon or 6 - 8pm**

**Wednesday, 24 February**

Adamstown RSL, Bruncker Road

RSVP: Phone **4974 2823** to register  
*limited numbers*

## Newcastle by Night

The Newcastle community is invited to a workshop to talk about all issues related to the night time economy.

**6 - 8:30pm**

**Monday, 22 February**

Newcastle City Hall, Banquet Room

RSVP: Phone **4974 2823** to register  
*by 19 February, limited numbers*

The workshop is an opportunity for interested community members to work side by side with government agencies and service providers including venue staff, the transport, enforcement and health industries, as well as local residents of all ages. Discussions at the workshop will include communication and education, transport, safety, infrastructure, enforcement, entertainment, collaboration, alcohol supply and large events.

## Ward 4 Forum

Council is holding a community consultation meeting for **Ward 4** residents who are invited to talk about the opportunities and challenges facing their ward.

**6:30 - 8.30pm**

**Tuesday, 23 February**

Beresfield Bowling Club, Rainbow Room, Anderson Drive, Beresfield

RSVP: Please call **4974 2465** to register and nominate your main topic to speak about (maximum of three minutes).

Ward 4 includes the suburbs of Beresfield, Birmingham Gardens, Black Hill, Callaghan, Elermore Vale, Fletcher, Hexham, Lenaghan, Maryland, Minmi, Sandgate, Shortland, Tarro and Wallsend.

To register to speak (Ward 4 residents and ratepayers will be given preference) please call 4974 2465 or email [ksullivan@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ksullivan@ncc.nsw.gov.au) (and include name, topic of interest and contact details).

**Registrations close Friday, 19 February 2010.**

## Sharing the path



Council has started work on Stage 1 of the NSW Coastline Cycleway at **Stockton**.

Running from Punt Road to Chester Street, the 1.2km long x 2.5m wide off-road shared path connects to the existing cycleway completed in 1998. The work is jointly funded by Council and the State Government and will take up to four months to complete.

Stage 2 of the NSW Coastline Cycleway, from Chester Street along the foreshore to Stockton Bridge is dependent on future funding.

Make **Clean Up Australia Day 2010** the BIGGEST yet. Australia's largest community environmental event is celebrating its 20th national anniversary.



Residents and community groups can register their interest and preferred sites through the Clean Up Australia website at: [www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au](http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au) or by calling 1800 282 329.



[www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

HERALD NEWS



SPLENDID: Enjoying a walk in Laman Street were Lucas Hodge, left, Paul Hodge, Fee Dreincourt and Charlee Hodge. — Picture by Ryan Osland

By IAN KIRKWOOD

SUPPORTERS of a row of mature Hills figs in Laman Street, Newcastle, are putting their faith in a ground-penetrating radar survey they hope will show the trees have stronger roots than first thought. The trees are likely to be the main subject of discussion at a two-day design workshop or "charrette" organised by Newcastle City Council for March 19 and 20. Cooks Hill GP Caitlin Rashke, a

## The Hills are alive with the sounds of community help

member of the Laman Street Action Group formed to save the trees, said yesterday that the radar survey contradicted earlier advice to the council that the trees lacked "radial" roots growing out under Laman Street. Newcastle City Council

infrastructure manager John Johnston confirmed that the radar survey indicated the presence of roots but said the council had dug at some spots without finding any. The radar spat is the latest round in a long-running battle over the Hills

figs, a rainforest tree that grows naturally in north Australia and Asia. Fourteen Laman Street figs were destined for the chainsaw until a rescission motion in December gave them at least a temporary reprieve. Council future city director Judy Jaeger said 70 people would take part in the charrette, with one third coming from government and council, one third from nearby residents and businesses and one third from a random sample of Novocastrians.

## Ex-pub site now a local for addicts

From Page 1

The 2080-square-metre site includes the old Empire Hotel on Hunter Street and a former boxing gym next door. Vacant for more than six years, the site is not secured and is strewn with rubbish and drug paraphernalia. At one stage it was proposed for a 15-level apartment and retail complex. Hunter New England Health's drug and alcohol clinical services area director Adrian Dunlop said staff contacted police if they suspected people were dealing drugs outside the clinic. Dr Dunlop encouraged members of the community to do the same and said methadone was given orally to patients at the clinic and they were not permitted to take the drug from the premises. "Methadone is a widely used and approved... treatment and patients on the methadone program are actively trying to stop illicit drug use, typically heroin," he said. "Methadone is effective in retaining patients in treatment to promote health, reduce fatal overdose and reduce crime." Newcastle Alliance chairman Paul Murphy described the old Empire Hotel site as an "absolute disgrace" and said it was about time Newcastle City Council and the State Government did something about it. Mr Murphy said it would be far better to demolish the building and leave the site a vacant block. Newcastle City Council's environmental health coordinator Paul McMurray said the council had gone to great lengths to get the site cleaned up and had pursued action through several courts. Mr McMurray said the council was successful in April last year in getting the former owner, Obsidian Holdings, wound up and a receiver appointed. Sydney firm Grant Thornton was appointed as receiver last year. Grant Thornton's head of recovery Paul Billingham told *The Herald* there was "no money" for a clean-up but that he had instructed contractors to secure the site immediately in an effort to fence people out.

# Car fans riling police

By DAN PROUDMAN  
Chief Police Reporter

POLICE are considering shutting down parts of the Newcastle foreshore at night as they try to stem the brawls and gridlock arising as hundreds of car enthusiasts descend on Nobbys after dark. Newcastle City police said they were forced to move on up to 1000 people from Wharf Road on Thursday night after countless brawls broke out along the strip which turns

into a giant car park several nights a week. Senior police reacted to the loutish behaviour by vowing to crack down on trouble makers who meet in huge numbers on Thursday and Sunday nights either at the foreshore or on Kooragang Island near the Stockton Bridge. Visitors to Nobbys car park can expect a heavier police presence and possible closing of Wharf Road if they continue misbehaving, police said. "We do not want to penalise the good people wishing to use

NEARLY 900 drivers were caught talking on their mobile phones on NSW roads during a one-day crackdown on dangerous driving practices across the state. As part of Wednesday's Operation Compliance, police caught a total 1675 motorists breaking road rules. "We are certainly not going to put up with it every Thursday night." On Thursday, police chose to move on the large crowds to stem the problems rather than attempt to arrest the brawlers. One P-plate driver was fined for performing a burnout in a Toyota Lexcen. The strip between Watt Street and Nobbys Beach has long been a problem area for

police because of the large numbers that congregate. Inspector Gallagher said motorists were simply "doing laps" between the two roundabouts, causing traffic gridlock. Police were forced to close the road, he said. Inspector Gallagher estimated that on some occasions there were up to 400 cars in and around the foreshore, carrying up to 1000 people.

P-plate 'blew 0.2' Page 10

## Not all home loans are the same

At NAB, we've maintained the lowest standard variable home loan rate of any major bank, for the last 8 months. Why? Because we really are committed to delivering better banking for all our customers.

	NAB	Westpac	ANZ	CBA
Standard Variable Rate	6.49% p.a.	5.76% p.a.	6.66% p.a.	6.61% p.a.
Comparison Rate*	6.62% p.a.	6.89% p.a.	6.76% p.a.	6.74% p.a.

All information accurate as at 3 February 2010 sourced from CANSTAR CANNEX.

NAB Home Loans  
Call 13 13 12, visit your nearest branch or [nab.com.au/lower](http://nab.com.au/lower)

more give, less take

Comparative table information accurate as at 3 February 2010 and sourced from CANSTAR CANNEX. \*Comparison rate is based on a loan of \$150,000 over 25 years. WARNING: This comparison rate is true only for the examples given and may not include all fees and charges. Different terms, fees or other loan amounts might result in a different comparison rate. Subject to normal lending criteria. ©2010 National Australia Bank Limited ABN 32 004 044 937 AFSL 230696. NAR3000

>> Mount Hutton residents concerned

# Students' lives at risk

Mount Hutton residents are battling for traffic lights outside their primary school ...

By MARK CONNORS

Children's lives will be at risk if a roundabout is favoured over traffic lights, say residents living near Mount Hutton Public School.

Lake Macquarie City Council is considering several options to upgrade the Dunkley Parade intersection, which is less than 200 metres from the school.

Initial council plans flagged a roundabout as the best option, costing \$800,000 and lasting 20 years, with a \$700,000 state grant used to place pedestrian lights in front of the school.

The second option of traffic lights further down the road would cost \$1.4 million and last 10 years.

But a newly-formed community committee say an Aldi supermarket planned to be built next to the school would worsen the traffic flow.

Mount Hutton Road Safety Committee president Jason Brown said a roundabout would complicate the area with merging lanes and would make it dangerous for students wanting to cross the road.

"We had 142 people at a public meeting last week all in favour of traffic lights," Mr Brown said.

"The next intersection further up the road is federally recognised as a Blackspot, and people are coming down around a blind corner towards the school."

"We are getting all our research together from the ambulance, police and fire brigade just to show how often accidents happen on the road."

A spokesperson for Lake Macquarie City Council said Councillor Kay Fraser raised the issue of council officers investigating the cost of other options further at last week's council meeting.

This included installing traffic lights or opening up Warners Bay Road, which is currently blocked off at the top of Dunkley Parade.

The spokesperson also said a fibre-optic cable rumoured to be under the Dunkley Parade inters-



Some of the Mount Hutton residents against the proposed roundabout at Mullington Park.

tion was not a factor in favouring the roundabout. The Aldi development application is still under assessment no timeline has been set for its approval. The Mount Hutton Road Safety Committee plans to speak at the next council meeting on Monday, February 15.

## Roundabout cuts into park

Mullington Park will be cut by up to 15 per cent if a roundabout was put in place.

The park was donated by former Mount Hutton Progress Association member Arthur Mullington.

The Mullington family has memorial trees planted at the edge of the park where it would be cut.

Arthur Mullington's daughter, Noreen Radford, and her husband Harry Radford are rallying with the Mount Hutton Road Safety Committee to have the proposed roundabout replaced by traffic lights.

"The park was donated to council about 50 years ago, along with land for Mount Hutton Public School," Mr Radford said.

"My wife's younger sister's ashes are scattered around the tree."

"I think the best option will be to leave it as it and have traffic lights installed. "We have a lot more traffic in Mount Hutton with people coming from Gateshead to get on the bypass."



Trees in Newcastle chairman and arborist Ian McKenzie in Laman Street.

## Council decides on workshop

A community workshop on the Laman Street fig trees will be held in March and will produce options on what to do with the iconic trees.

Newcastle City Council decided to hold the two-day workshop after the community refused to accept council's decision in November to remove the trees from the street because of safety reasons.

Arboriculture, architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, heritage planning, civil and traffic engineering experts and council staff will attend the workshop as well as local residents to develop alternative options for the street.

The workshop, March 19 and 20, is estimated to cost \$70,000.

Trees in Newcastle chairman and consulting arborist Ian McKenzie said he was pleased council resolved to hold a community workshop.

"I'm happy with this outcome and that the community can now work together to come up with a range of options for the figs," he said.

Mr McKenzie said the cost of removing the trees would far outweigh the cost council was spending on the workshop.

"Council will need to spend a lot of money to remove and replace the trees with a different species."

"The assets of these 14 trees will add up to the millions of dollars, you have to invest in them to get the value out of them," he said.

However, Newcastle City Councillor Brad Luke said it was unbelievable council was willing to spend \$70,000 on the consultation.

"Community consultation is important but that money should be spent on fixing our roads and footpaths."

"It is an incredibly large cost, and it is not going to be a one-off cost, everyone will expect the same amount of money to be spent in community consultation elsewhere," he said.

Cr Luke said it was a complete waste of money.

"We've had six arborists tell us that these trees need to be removed because of safety risks."

"We (council) have about \$130 million of infrastructure backlog because we put ridiculous amounts of money into things like this."

More information on the workshop will be available in the future.

— KYLIE ADORANTI

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THE STAR - February 10, 2010 3

## Consulting with our community



To join Newcastle Voice and take part in consultations with Council you must be a resident or ratepayer and be over 16 years of age.

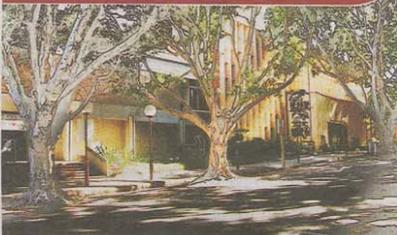
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### Laman Street - Civic Precinct Design Workshop



Council is developing a vision for the future of the Laman Street – Civic Precinct\* and we encourage you to get involved.

Interested community members are invited to attend a two day intensive design workshop with independent experts on Friday 19 March and Saturday 20 March 2010. **Nominations close 22 February 2010.**

Please call Council on 4974 2854 or email to [mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au) for a nomination pack.

If you can't be part of the workshop, you can still send us your vision for the precinct. Go to [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au) or pick up a leaflet from all branch libraries and Council's City Administration Centre (King St, Newcastle).

For more information on the Laman Street - Civic Precinct consultation process go to Council's website at: [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

\*Civic Precinct area is bounded by Hunter, Darby, Queen and Auckland Streets.

## Ward 4 Forum

Council is holding a community consultation meeting for **Ward 4** residents who are invited to talk about the opportunities and challenges facing their ward.

**6:30 - 8:30pm**

**Tuesday, 23 February**

Beresfield Bowling Club, Rainbow Room,  
Anderson Drive, Beresfield

**RSVP:** Please call 4974 2465 to register and nominate your main topic to speak about (maximum of three minutes).

**Ward 4** includes the suburbs of **Beresfield, Birmingham Gardens, Black Hill, Callaghan, Elermore Vale, Fletcher, Hexham, Lenaghan, Maryland, Minmi, Sandgate, Shortland, Tarro and Wallsend.**

**To register to speak** (Ward 4 residents and ratepayers will be given preference) please call 4974 2465 or email [ksullivan@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ksullivan@ncc.nsw.gov.au) (and include name, topic of interest and contact details).

**Registrations close Friday, 19 February 2010.**

## Newcastle by Night

The Newcastle community is invited to a workshop to talk about all issues related to alcohol consumption.

### Newcastle by Night Workshop

**6 - 8:30pm**

**Monday, 22 February**

Newcastle City Hall, Banquet Room  
**RSVP:** Phone 4974 2823 to register by 19 February, *limited numbers*

The workshop is an opportunity for interested community members to work side by side with government agencies and service providers including venue staff, the transport, enforcement and health industries, as well as local residents of all ages.

Discussions at the workshop will include communication and education, transport, safety, infrastructure, enforcement, entertainment, collaboration, alcohol supply and large events.

## Waste Services



The Newcastle community is invited to a workshop to talk about household waste collection and waste reduction as recently surveyed through Newcastle Voice.

Now all residents have the opportunity to discuss different bin sizes for weekly waste collection, a future recycling education program, and recommendations to improve waste collection and diverting waste from landfill.

### Household Waste Collection Workshop

**10am - 12noon or 6 - 8pm**

**Wednesday, 24 February**

Adamstown RSL, Brunker Road

**RSVP:** Phone 4974 2823 to register *limited numbers*

### Help shape Newcastle's future

Join us at Newcastle City Hall for

## Newcastle 2030 Community Forum

Friday 12 February 2010, 9am to 5pm

Newcastle 2030 is an opportunity for the whole community to participate in creating a shared vision for Newcastle. The Community Forum will be lead by Peter Kenyon, a social capitalist and community enthusiast.

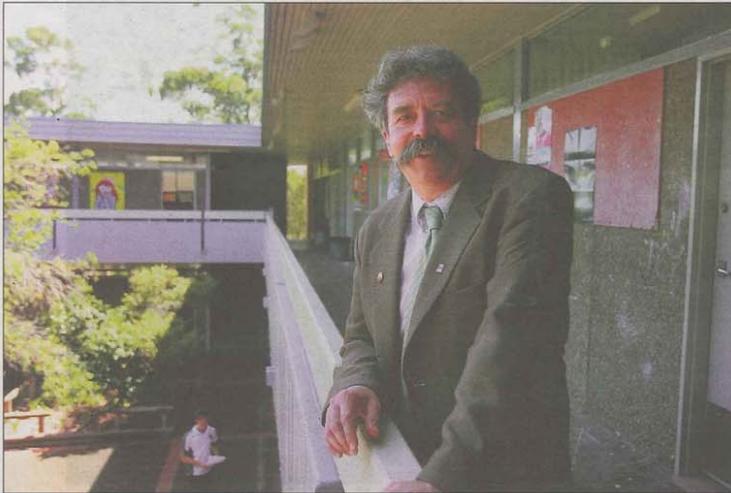
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H2

COVER STORY



CONCERNS: Kotara High School principal Peter Sheargold says talk of school "choice" is nonsense. — Picture by Peter Stoop

produce improvements in resourcing for disadvantaged schools does not sit well with Newcastle University education lecturer Dr Nicole Mockler.

"Those who argue that seem to forget that those who make decisions about school resourcing had access to data about student performance a long time before My School went live," she said.

"In my view, the most significant problem with My School is not that NAPLAN (National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy) results are a very narrow measure to use in creating public comparisons of schools, although they are. But rather the very big danger that as schools and teachers experience increased pressure to ensure that their students perform well on the tests for the sake of the schools' public profile, more teaching-to-the-test will occur to the detriment of real learning.

"A real education revolution would encourage teachers to increasingly teach in ways that help students develop the capacity to truly understand and navigate the world in which they live, rather than providing a compelling rationale for teaching to the test."

**K**OTARA High School principal and Secondary Principals Association Hunter chairman Peter Sheargold said the education revolution would occur when Julia Gillard stopped talking about "choice" while a region like the Hunter had 75 per cent of children in government schools, many disadvantaged. "The nonsense about choice is for

The nonsense about choice is for Sydney or Canberra, not places like the Hunter. Choice is about the politics of education and keeping a powerful and influential group happy."

— Peter Sheargold, Kotara High principal

Sydney or Canberra, not places like the Hunter. Choice is about the politics of education and keeping a powerful and influential group happy," he said.

But Sheargold conceded that the NAPLAN results last year, complemented by NSW Education Department data, identified the school had "dropped the ball on numeracy" with some students.

While Kotara High and the statistically similar St Pius X, Adamstown, had similar year 7 results in 2008, in 2009 Kotara had dropped below statistically similar schools including St Pius in a number of areas, including numeracy.

"We sat down in September to develop a whole-school approach on numeracy so that every subject has put together material to address it," he said.

The school also queried the marking of three numeracy questions where 90 per cent of Kotara year 9 students gave the right answer, but were marked as incorrect. The mistaken marking was rectified, but Sheargold doubts it was done in time to appear in the My School results.

The experience reinforced Sheargold's concerns about the NAPLAN test and Gillard's approach to the "education revolution".

The 2008 and 2009 data on My School related to different groups of children in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, but ability levels in classes could vary widely from year to year, he said.

"You can look at the results and people will think the bum's fallen out of your school, but all it is a different group of kids," he said.

He is also concerned about the lack of transparency in the NAPLAN test process.

"When you look at the HSC, there's no way schools can influence that test score because it's not done by the school. Teachers have nothing to do with the HSC exam itself."

"This one [NAPLAN] is a test they send you in a box and you send it back. With so

much emphasis placed on the results, of course we're concerned about the lack of transparency in the process."

There is also concern at Gillard's "occasional uncomfortable moment" statement.

"The message seemed to be to go and slap the school around. I'm very impressed by Julia Gillard as an intellect but she seems to be a born-again when it comes to the approach being taken here.

"They're not brave enough to say the funding arrangements that are in place at the moment are just unfair. So instead she seems to be saying blame the school if you're not happy. And in the end, how does that help students?"

Sheargold said people would get a shock when the funding inequities were publicised.

"That has the potential to make it look a bit better for us," he said.

The real question is whether the Government will act on it though. I'm sure every Labor education minister's got a picture of Mark Latham on the wall saying don't touch schools funding."

**M**ERRIWA Central School principal Darren Noonan did his schooling at Merriwa, worked as a teacher around the state, and returned to Merriwa last year. He loves the town and he loves the school.

If you look up the My School results for Merriwa they will show what governments have known for years — that 63 per cent of its students come from homes with low incomes and parents whose formal education finished early. Literacy and numeracy levels are lower than national and statistically similar school averages.

But there has been an education revolution at Merriwa Central, and it's done much more than boost the school.

This year the school received \$237,000 of federal National Partnerships funds to employ a specialist literacy and numeracy deputy principal. Students will receive individual assistance, teachers will receive more training and parents will receive support to help children at home.

That level of funding will continue for the next three years.

Last year Merriwa received \$104,000 in stimulus package funds for "desperately needed" maintenance work like painting and new carpets. There's \$1.2 million for a new primary administration building to replace a 20-year-old demountable.

Most significantly for the town itself, the school is about to start work on a \$2.2 million trade training centre, which will not only allow students to learn trades such as metalwork, engineering and hospitality at TAFE level, but will be available for community members to learn TAFE trades as well.

"The boost to the school in terms of this funding is a welcome relief for the whole community," Noonan said.

"The people of Merriwa want to see the children at our school successful and supported. It's restored confidence in the future of the town to see that just because children don't live in the bigger centres, doesn't mean that they don't get the best opportunities we can give them.

"It's certainly a time of renewal for us. To have that amount of money being spent after such a long time is a very good thing."

Laman Street - Civic Precinct  
Design Workshop



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YOUR LETTERS

Short takes

This is the forum for those who want to make a point fast. Brief opinions may be phoned to (02) 4979 5980 between 9.30am and 1pm Monday to Friday or emailed to letters@theherald.com.au

Professor Phillip O'Neill stated that NSW Premier Kristina Keneally and her ALP party have to claw back voter support ("A lot of governing left for Labor in this state" Herald 25/1). I don't know how this will happen. I have sent two letters to the Premier asking her if her party intends to right the terrible wrong it did to former Swansea electorate secretary Gillian Sneddon and have received no replies. No talk, no vote with me.

Allan Parrish, Figtree

In my view the external appearance of Newcastle police station, as far as cleanliness is concerned, is disgraceful. Surely such a prominent and important building could be cleaned. No doubt there would be some bureaucracy tied up in this somewhere.

Steve Fernie, Maryland

Maybe Fix Our City campaigners should consider deleting the closure of the railway back at Wickham from their list if they want the support of all politicians and residents of Newcastle and Hunter communities. Only a referendum on the rail debate at the next state or federal election would show a reliable outcome.

Elaine Street, Merewether

Media reports are confirming what pensioners have been saying for 10 years - grocery prices are increasing way above the CPI. Before the 2007 federal election we were convinced by Kevin Rudd that his proposed Grocery Watch scheme would control rising prices. Unfortunately, Mr Rudd could not control Woolies and Coles and Grocery Watch vanished along with his credibility. What other smoke and mirrors tricks has Mr Rudd for us this election year?

Les Elkins, West Wallsend

The Newcastle Knights shouldn't be signing Willie Mason under any circumstances. Ask former Bulldogs coach Steve Folkes or Sydney Roosters chairman Nick Politis.

Craig Hector, East Maitland

In reply to Lindsay Young (Short Takes 42), imagine Cross and Mason leading the talented Knights pack. No wonder you're worried, you old Dragon you.

Julie Bailey, Abermain

SMS your say

For the short, sweet and text-savvy, SMS your opinion to 0427 154 176. Please include your name, suburb and a landline.

Dear Phylcity Ward, grow up and stop trying to get your 15 minutes of fame. The world is full of rules.

Dom Kelly, Cameron Park

It's not just dead rats causing problems at our courthouses, lenient sentences handed down by judges leaves a stench in the air too.

Ray Peachman, Maryland

Serena Williams should not have won the Australian Open. The gutter language and poor sportsmanship that saw her concede match point in the US Open semi-final last year should have earned her at least a 12-month suspension, not a \$300,000 fine. That was just a drop in the ocean for Serena.

Beverly Page, Adamstown Heights

# Bitten on the bike track

CYCLING is a fantastic way to maintain health and the Fernleigh Track is a welcome piece of infrastructure.

The re-use of this rail line as a cycleway was pursued by cyclists and funded by various levels of government from money mainly set aside to get cyclists off roads and promote alternative methods of transport. This is a lane-marked bitumen track lined with galvanised steel fencing perfectly suited for the purpose.

Since its opening I have been bitten by a dog and have noticed that some consider the track a child's play area and a dog-off-leash park. These facilities are already supplied by councils.

Paul Smith ("The lycra juggernaut" Letters 1/2), I feel, represents a culture that exists mainly in NSW of either disregard (at best) or dislike (at worst) for cyclists. Parents and dog owners should use more suitable areas or just follow basic rules like staying to the left, using an acceptable leash or above all, common sense. A 10 kmh limit is as ridiculous as a person walking in front with a red flag.

Neal Hohnke  
Cooks Hill

## Preserve trees and streams

CLIMATE change? Yes, it changes every hour of the day, and has been doing so for millions of years.

Governments, both state and federal, should adopt policies to not only protect our forests and streams, but also to use them wisely and enhance them. At the moment governments are locking up large areas of trees on privately owned land and in forests. Trees are there for our use - good management is needed.

Our water courses have deteriorated over the years because of mismanagement. The titles act should be amended and a buffer zone put around the perimeter of every reasonable stream. This would be public land where trees can be replanted or fenced-off.

Water should also be conserved on farms. Water reticulation is encouraged by the planting of trees, as living trees give off water vapour from the foliage.

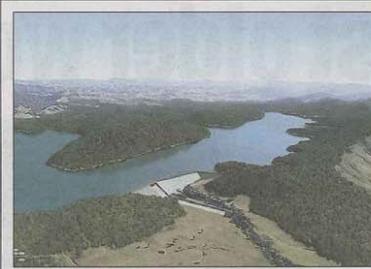
Mr Rudd's emissions trading scheme is a money grab. This Government has squandered \$120 billion for no major benefits and locked up 106 million hectares of trees without any management or compensation to owners. A wonderful opportunity has been lost to make our country even more beautiful and productive.

Frank Hawkins  
Argenton

## Message board

Your chance to say a brief "thanks" or contact people. Phone (02) 4979 5980 between 9.30am and 1pm Monday to Friday or email letters@theherald.com.au.

From Joan Lambert, of Lake Macquarie Ladies Choir: The choir has resumed rehearsals at 7.30pm on Wednesdays at the Uniting Church Hall, First Street, Booragul. New choristers very welcome. Feel free to phone me on 4963 2077.



## Spread water and costs

IN a dry country like Australia, why not build dams where rainfall assures a regular water supply and pipe the water to areas in great need?

For example, if the Tillegra Dam goes ahead, it would not be needed by the Hunter for most of the time and its water could be piped to areas like the drought-stricken north-west. It could even be piped to Sydney when its fabulous desalination plant is off-line.

The pipe network could be eventually extended throughout the state. Goulburn residents haven't had gardens for years. So let's not object to the building of Tillegra Dam, but let's make sure that those who will gain the greatest benefit will contribute to its cost. Make it a state-funded project and don't make Hunter residents pay for infrastructure they will rarely need. Stop milking the Hunter cash cow and spread the pain over a bigger area.

Richard Jackson  
Tanilba Bay

## Travellers should stop whingeing

IT was sad to hear Australians complain about not getting help from our Government after the mudslides and flash-flooding near Machu Picchu. Compared to Haiti their predicament was mild, so why the whingeing?

Bushfires aside, Australia rarely has the types of natural disasters that often plague other parts of the world. It's a land of plenty with a sound economy spunking us with material wealth and blinding us to the plight of others in the global village.

Our soft lifestyle has not prepared many of us for the rigours of overseas travel. With about 1 million Australians overseas at any one time, it is unrealistic to expect the Australian Government to come to their aid immediately. On the reverse side we saw Australian backpackers pitching in and helping build a levee in Peru in the true Australian way of mateship.

So get real Australia, if you travel overseas, inconveniences do occur and don't expect the

Australian Government to bail you out at the first signs of mishap. Simply get in there and help those in greater need.

David Uphill  
Shortland

## Compromise on the storeys

WHAT has happened to the word compromise when it comes to making plans to build public housing units at Swansea?

I was born in Belmont Street and lived in Josephson Street for many years. Three-storeyed buildings are wrong for the area.

Swansea is a small, low-lying town from the bridge to the lake. The proposed buildings would look totally out of place. There is plenty of land so why not compromise and build three lots of two-storeyed buildings?

And make sure garbage is catered for. I have 43 units next to me with no garbage room. It ends up in front of my home and in the street behind.

Sandra Houghton  
Fennell Bay

## No accounting for the cost

I WAS alarmed at the arrogant attitude of Zane Alcorn (Opinions 3/2) and his tenuous argument for "legitimate" graffiti artists to be provided with support via legal walls. Not once does he condemn the actions of the vandals who cost millions of dollars in public and private money to eradicate their senseless damage to property and to prosecute offenders.

It is not just "apparent", to use Mr Alcorn's own words, that graffiti is an "out-of-control plague, and such a despicable scourge upon our society", it is an outright fact. And our streets are not just "apparently" crawling with this vermin. Just ask any council or business owner in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie or the Upper Hunter who bear the cost of removing graffiti.

His support of the so-called "graffiti artists" is, in my opinion, misguided, and there is good reason why the support for these legal sites has diminished. A visit to South Newcastle Beach shows why the council and the public may be having second thoughts.

There are some talented artists who would benefit from support. But legal graffiti walls are not the answer. Only a privileged few would have access to them. The mindless vandals with no desire to use the walls and who repeatedly damage public and private property would continue to do so.

Gary Lawless  
Edgeworth

## Suburbs the real deal too

WE can find funds to consult with the community about the Laman Street figs, we can find funds to spend on a coastal management plan, we can find funds to support cultural programs in the city and we can find funds to open the city mall. We are even looking to find funds to buy the post office.

Why can't we find the funds to redevelop the Regal Cinema? Oops, I forgot, the Regal is in the suburbs.

Kathie Heyman  
Mayfield

## Letter of the week

This week the letter judged the best, most succinct and interesting will win a double pass to the Greater Union cinemas, courtesy of *The Herald*. The winner will be announced on Saturday on this page.

www.theherald.com.au

Online poll

Why is the Labor Party losing members in the Hunter?

Drunk and violent	63.5%
Too tall	7%
Vandalism and graffiti	11.8%
Robbery and theft	17.7%

Yesterday's result

What should the region's new police chief Carlene York's top priority be?

Letters to the Editor, PO Box 510, Newcastle 2300 Fax (02) 4979 5988 Email letters@theherald.com.au (Full address and phone number required)