City of Newcastle

Community Engagement Strategy
2023-2026

An Easy Read guide

Easy Read

How to use this guide

City of Newcastle wrote this guide.

When you see the word 'we', it means
City of Newcastle.

We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold
Bold

We wrote some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 26.

This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.

You can find the other document on our website at **www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au**

You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of Australia.
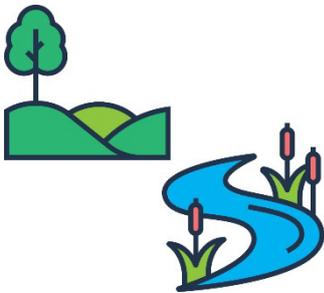
They were the first people to live on and care for the:

- land

- waters.

We recognise that we live and work on the land of the:

- Awabakal peoples

- Worimi peoples.

What's in this guide?

What is this strategy about?
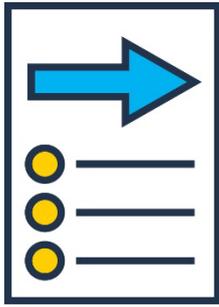
The Community Engagement Strategy is a plan for how we will do things in the future.

In this guide we call it the strategy.

This strategy explains how we will work with the community to improve our:

- plans

- **policies**.

Policies are:

- government plans for how to do things

- where rules come from.

It also explains how we will work with the community to make better:

- programs

- activities

- services.

How did we make this strategy?

We asked the community to share their ideas about:

- what we should work on

- how they want to work with us

- what stops them from working with us.

We also asked the community to share what we need to focus on.

And how this will best support them in the future.
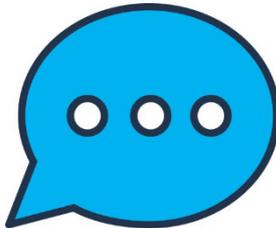
The community shared their ideas with us in different ways.

This included:

- an online survey

- a community workshop.

We heard from close to **80 people** who live in Newcastle at this workshop.

We also ran a workshop for our staff.

And talked to different **advisory groups**.

An advisory group is a group of people who work with us to share what:

- is working well

- needs to work better.

What the community shared

The community shared that **feedback** should be an important part of this strategy.

When you give feedback, you tell someone what they:

- are doing well

- can do better.

The community told us that we should share how we use their feedback.

The community told us that when we share information, we should make it **accessible** to everyone.

When information is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use

- understand.

The community shared that this strategy should include ways to connect with groups that can be hard to reach.

For example:

- First Nations peoples

- people with disability

- older people

- young people.

This strategy should also include ways to connect with **culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)** people.

CALD people:

- come from different cultures and backgrounds

- speak languages other than English.

And it should also include ways to connect with **LGBTQIA+** people.

LGBTQIA stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, intersex, and asexual.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.

We used this information to create the goals for the strategy.

These goals will help us to work well with our community.

We want to thank everyone in our community who shared their ideas.

Why do we need this strategy?

This strategy will help us work with the community to make important decisions.

We know our community includes many different people.

And it's important to share information with people in a way that works for them.

This strategy will help us plan different ways to work with the community.

For example, advisory groups will help us connect with communities that can be hard to reach.
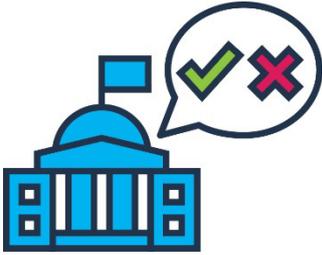
This strategy also helps us meet important rules from the New South Wales Government.

For example, the *Local Government Act 1993*.

And this Strategy will help support other plans we've made.

For example, our Community Strategic Plan.

This plan is about how we will work with the community to improve our city.

Who is our community?

Many different people live in Newcastle.

This includes people with different:

- ages

- abilities

- backgrounds

- beliefs.

In 2021, there were **169,317** people living in our community.

And by 2041, **202,049** people will live in our community.

4.4% of people in our community are First Nations peoples.

11% of people in our community speak a language other than English.

And **15%** of people in our community were born overseas.

What are our principles for this strategy?
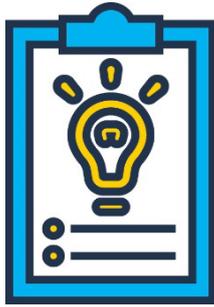
This strategy has 5 **principles**.

Principles are important ideas we should always think about.

Our principles will guide how we work with our community.

1. We will share information that helps the community to work with us.

2. We will listen to ideas from everyone in the community who wants to work with us.

3. We will listen to ideas from the community before we make decisions.

   And we will use their ideas when we can.

4. We will make plans that support us to work well with the community.

5. We will tell the community how we have used their ideas to make decisions.

What are our goals for this strategy?

This strategy has 4 goals.

We will use our goals to:

- support our principles

- guide how we work with the community.

We explain each goal on the following pages.

1. Sharing information

We want to make sure that we keep sharing information with the community.

This includes information about when we plan to make new decisions.

This will give the community more chances to work with us to make decisions.

Our actions

We will get more people to take part in our community **panel**.

A panel is when a group of people talk about a topic.

We call this panel Newcastle Voice.

We will share information about our plans through:

- our social media

- our website

- emails.

2. Building trust

We want to keep building trust with the community.

This includes their trust in the way we work with them.

Our actions

We will ask the community to tell us what they think.

We will share what the community tells us.

And we will also share how we use ideas from the community to make decisions.

3. Working with the community

We want the community to keep being an important part of how we:

- work

- measure how well we are doing.

Our actions

We will ask the community for feedback about how we work with them.

4. Being inclusive

We want to work with the community in a way that is **inclusive** of everyone.

When something is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part.

- feels like they belong.

We also want the way we work with the community to be accessible for everyone.

Our actions

We will make sure we include communities that can be hard to reach.

We will provide information in more accessible ways.

For example, we will share documents in languages other than English for people who need them.

How will we make sure this strategy works?

We will work with the community through:

- our Newcastle Voice panel

- workshops and focus groups

- listening to what people have to say

- surveys.

We will keep track of how many people take part when we work with the community.

We will also ask the community if they think we are working well together.

This will help us to understand:

- what we need to do better

- how we can improve.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.

Advisory groups

An advisory group is a group of people who work with us to share what:

- is working well

- needs to work better.

Accessible

When information is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use

- understand.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

CALD people:

- come from different cultures and backgrounds

- speak languages other than English.

Feedback

When you give feedback, you tell someone what they:

- are doing well

- can do better.

Inclusive

When something is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part.

- feels like they belong.

LGBTQIA+

LGBTQIA stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, intersex, and asexual.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.

Panel

A panel is when a group of people talk about a topic.

Policies

Policies are:

- government plans for how to do things

- where rules come from.

Principles

Principles are important ideas we should always think about.

Contact us

For more information you can contact our team at City of Newcastle.

You can call us.

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You can send us an email.

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You can write to us.

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You can visit our website.

www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

You can also visit our website to have your say.

www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay

Facebook

www.facebook.com/CityNewcastle.au