

# Merewether Ocean Baths Revitalisation



City of  
Newcastle

## Summary community engagement report

June 2020

### Background

Community engagement activities were carried out to better understand the community's wants and needs for the future uses of Newcastle and Merewether Ocean Baths. The engagement activities were promoted across the local government area (LGA) to ensure the broadest number of people had the opportunity to comment.

The engagement program included online, telephone and face-to-face activities between late November 2019 and early March 2020.

The key purpose of the engagement was to learn more about how the community use and value the baths, and their feelings around future upgrades, as well as potential design or operational changes.

### Engagement program

The following activities were carried out between Friday 22 November 2019 and Sunday 1 March 2020:

- Online ideas wall to share ideas and comments about the ocean baths. A total of 254 comments were received for Merewether Ocean Baths.
- 89 intercept (face-to-face) surveys for Merewether Ocean Baths..
- 4,400+ visits to the Baths' dedicated 'Have Your Say' web page.

### Key findings:

- Importance on improving facilities including more shade, change facilities and toilets, seating and parking.
- Less support for inclusion of health and wellbeing facilities, gym and / or a hireable community space.

### Online ideas wall

The community were invited to provide ideas and comment around six key themes via our dedicated Have Your Say webpage:



Facilities &  
activities



Improved  
amenities



Improved  
access



Improved  
safety



Look and feel  
of pavilion



Potential  
pavilion uses

People could comment on the ideas, join a discussion around the ideas already posted and like or dislike the ideas. The comments were public and could be viewed by other users. A total of 92 people commented on the ideas wall for Merewether Ocean Baths, resulting in 254 comments.

Analysis of responses revealed support for **more shade or shelter, change facilities, seating and parking**. While some commented to **keep the pavilion as it is**, others supported **upgrades to the pavilion**. There was limited support for a gym, restaurant or bar at the site

## Face-to-face survey

A total of 89 surveys were completed about Merewether Ocean Baths with residents and visitors to Newcastle aged 16+ across five key locations across the LGA. A good cross section of the community was included in the survey, and most respondents had used of one or both ocean baths in the 12 months prior to the survey (86%).

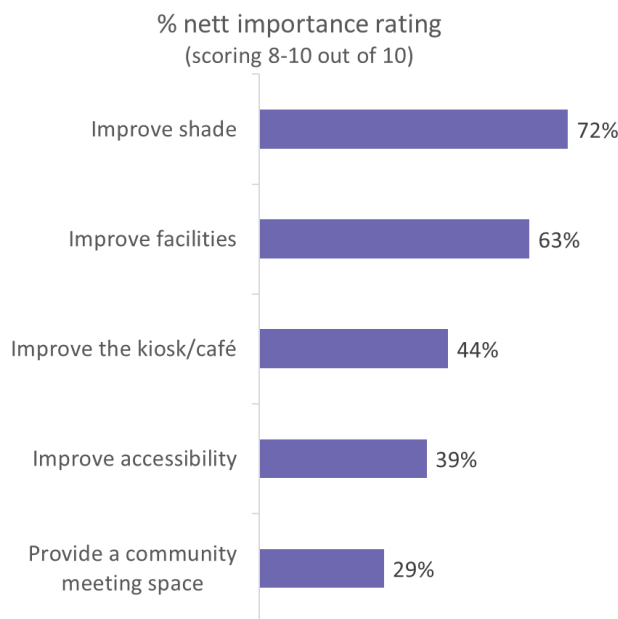
### Top uses at Merewether Ocean Baths

When asked what activities they normally do Merewether Ocean Baths, respondents said:

1. Swimming (88%)
2. Family or social outing (35%)
3. Walking (28%)
4. Getting something to eat (23%)

### Perceived potential importance

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several potential upgrades to the Merewether Ocean Baths. The pattern of results was similar to those obtained in the telephone survey



### Priority ranking

Respondents were asked to choose up to five potential changes from a provided list. The highest score for Merewether was **car parking**, followed by **more shade**, then **upgraded toilets** and **improved vehicle access**.

**For more detailed community engagement findings, visit [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay)**

We will use community feedback on Merewether Ocean Baths to help shape concept designs for future upgrades at the site.

There will be further opportunities for the community to have their say on revitalisation of Merewether Ocean Baths.

To stay up to date as the project progresses, visit [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay)