

# Annual Report at a glance

## It has been a year of substantial achievement for City of Newcastle (CN) in 2018/19.

From strong financial performances to national and international acknowledgements, the past 12 months have delivered positive outcomes for both the City and the community we serve.

### Capital investment

This year we delivered a **record capital works program valued at \$91.6 million**, including \$65.6 million on new infrastructure. This surpassed our previous benchmark for capital investment, which was set just 12 months earlier, and continues four years of sustained growth in our works program.

Sound financial management also saw CN end the year in a strong position, recording a **\$9.4 million budget surplus** and receiving a perfect **six out of six scorecard from the Auditor-General** for NSW.

Sustained growth across the local government area drives higher community expectations, but our strong financial performance allowed us to invest heavily in improving our city through both infrastructure renewal and revitalisation projects.

Key projects during this time included:

- construction of the \$2 million **South Stockton active hub**, featuring a playground and skate park precinct;
- completion a new \$2 million **grandstand pavilion for Merewether sporting clubs** at Mitchell Park Oval;
- projects at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre, including progress towards increasing the **landfill capacity**, the tender to design and construct an **organics processing facility** and completion of the \$6 million **Resource Recovery Centre**, which will increase recycling by 5,700 tonnes a year;
- \$3 million revitalisation of **Carrington Local Centre**;
- additional progress on the restoration of the **City Hall façade**;
- design and implementation of a modern **City of Newcastle logo**, rebranding and uniting all of CN's facilities and services under the one banner.

# 2018/19

## by the numbers



**\$91.6 million**  
spent on capital works



**\$172 million**  
collected in rates



**\$185,400**  
for five arts and cultural organisations



**2 international and 1 national**  
award win for Smart City Strategy projects



**\$9.4 million**  
end-of-year operating surplus



**\$47 million**  
received in grants from State and Commonwealth governments



**30+**  
community engagement opportunities



**131,590**  
calls made to 4974 2000



**1,287**  
development applications approved, with a value of  
**\$1.02 billion**



**\$225,000**  
divided between 32 events under events sponsorship program



**7,330**  
over-the-counter customer transactions



**342,198**  
visitors to CN pools, up 4% on previous year



**\$295,200**  
allocated to sponsor major sporting events



**\$51,900**  
in make your place grants for 20 projects, with \$242,405 of value added by community



**133,291**  
ticketed attendees at Civic Theatre, up 11.9% on previous year



**74,566**  
ticketed attendees at Newcastle Art Gallery, up 9.6% on previous year



**\$69,500**  
given to 10 projects/events under economic development sponsorship



**\$6,500**  
for six events funded through Youth Week Grants program



**\$18.15 million**  
paid to CN for Roundhouse building (former Civic Administration building)



**162,000**  
people attended the 2018 Newcastle 500, boosting the economy by more than \$30 million

## Serving our community

CN celebrated and supported our community in 2018/19 with a range of initiatives designed to engage with and be inclusive of all members of our vibrant and growing region.

This included CN's involvement in activities held during Australia's largest annual youth participation event – **National Youth Week** – such as an all-ages music event, Live at the Library, and the Youth Mock Council workshops with high school students, councillors and the Lord Mayor.

CN showed its support for the older members of our community with initiatives including tech-savvy **senior programs** and a home library service that delivered 19,236 items and made 1,900 individual book bag drops. The Newcastle Art Gallery delivered 37 educational and public programs for people aged 65+, while 65% of the people who took part in CN's volunteer programs and opportunities were over the age of 60.

Achievements across CN's **Disability Inclusion Action Plan** continued to help reduce barriers faced by people living, working and visiting the Newcastle Local Government Area, such as improved street accessibility, provision of AUSLAN-interpreted shows and BeConnected workshops.

An innovative approach to this year's **NAIDOC Week** saw CN and community partners bring the Newcastle landscape prior to European settlement to life, via virtual reality. The project was designed to highlight and share important cultural knowledge and stories from the Awabakal and Worimi people.

CN also facilitated and partnered in activities to promote the wellbeing of our communities. Ongoing **partnerships** cover areas such as social housing, employment outcomes for people with a disability, homelessness, early intervention programs, men's health, indigenous issues, diversity and inclusion.

## Grants and Sponsorship Programs

CN funded 32 events under the banner of the **Events Sponsorship Program (ESP)**, to the total value of \$225,000. The events included everything from the Bikers for Kids Toy Run and Newcastle Pride Festival to the Celebration of Cricket and the Newcastle Music Festival.

**Additional Sponsorship** to the value of \$295,200 was provided to eight major sporting events including Surfest, the Waratahs v Sunwolves Super Rugby match and the Matildas v Chile international women's football game, which all helped drive increased visitation to the city.

At a grassroots level, CN funded 20 community projects as part of the **"make your place" grants scheme**.

The funds were spread across creative, environmental, safety, educational, cultural and cycling projects as well as community gardens and community events, with our contribution totalling \$51,900 while \$242,405 of value was provided by the community.

The **Economic Development Sponsorship Program** awarded \$69,500 to 10 projects and events including The Lock-Up Public Programs and Industry Education, Greater Hunter Makers and Technology Festival 2018 and the Tip Jar Song Competition, while six events funded through our **Youth Week Grants** program to the value of \$6,500 saw 140 young people involved in the planning and organising stage, with 500 young people attending these events across Newcastle's LGA.

CN also provided **support for arts and cultural organisations** in Newcastle, with a total of \$185,400 granted over five projects.

## Smart City

National and international acclaim was received this year for CN's ongoing smart city projects, taking out the Smart City of the Year Metropolitan category at the **Smart Cities 2019 Conference** ahead of fellow local government finalists Randwick, Townsville and Lake Macquarie City Councils. The Smart City Team also brought home a pair of titles from the **IDC Smart Cities Asia Pacific Awards** with wins in the 'Land Use and Planning' and the 'Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, Public Transit and Rideshare' categories.

## Engagement

CN actively works to ensure the community can have a say on numerous projects and subjects. In the past 12 months we offered more than 30 opportunities for the public to provide us with feedback, with engagement on issues including our Budget 2019/20, Museum satisfaction survey, Live Music Strategy, Interactive civil works map, Library Strategy, quarterly community and customer surveys and Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy.

## Customer Service

In the past 12 months our contact centre has fielded 131,590 calls with an impressive average wait time of just 152 seconds, while more than 91% of the 7,330 enquires we received over the counter were served within five minutes.

Providing a positive customer experience is a priority at CN and with results like 77% satisfaction with face-to-face contact, we know we are doing a good job.

## Diversity in leadership

With women increasingly featured among the executive ranks of companies, CN is making great strides in the realm of diversity in leadership, with females making up 50% of our leadership group, 42% of all supervisors/managers and 38% of our elected councillors, not to mention holding the position of Lord Mayor.