



Newcastle voice

The City of Newcastle:

**Newcastle Ocean Baths
Expressions of interest survey**

Executive summary

Following Council's resolution to seek expressions of interest (EOI) for a development / commercial venture at the Newcastle Ocean Baths, the purpose of the Newcastle Ocean Baths survey was to gather information from the community regarding visitation and usage of the Baths, recommended improvements, and preferred commercial or development opportunities at the site. In total, there were 550 responses to the survey of which 506 were from the Newcastle Voice community reference panel and 44 were members of the broad community who completed the survey in person at the Baths or via a survey link on Council's website.

General observations:

While the broad community survey respondents used the Baths more frequently than Newcastle Voice respondents, overall there was a large degree of similarity in responses on key questions between the two groups.

Key findings:

- *Activities-* swimming, walking and family or social outings constituted the top three uses of the baths among both Newcastle Voice and broad community respondents.
- *Recommended improvements-* the top five recommended improvements for the Baths were similar across Newcastle Voice and broad community respondents. Both groups suggested more shade or shelter, improved amenities (including toilets and showers), and improvements to seating would be welcome.
- *Preferred commercial opportunities-* amongst both groups, a café and kiosk were the most preferred commercial options, followed by a restaurant and a small bar.
- *Additional comments-* the key issue raised by respondents in open-ended comments related to ensuring the Baths precinct remain freely accessible for community use, respondents do not want to see any proposed development or commercialisation impinge on accessibility to the public space. Parking was also raised as a concern.

Recommendations:

- EOI proposals should aim to improve shade/shelter and seating for community use, as well as improved amenities such as toilets and showers.
- The community appear receptive to having a café, kiosk or restaurant in this location.
- Ensure the community are informed and consulted throughout the development process.

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Introduction

Newcastle Ocean Baths are a unique part of Newcastle's coastline. In March 2014, an unsolicited proposal was received for a restaurant/takeaway area at Merewether Baths. Given a similar opportunity may also exist at Newcastle Ocean Baths ("the Baths") for a commercial/development venture, on 22 July 2014 Council resolved that an expression of interest ("EOI") process be conducted for the site.

The expression of interest specification will outline detailed requirements in regard to maintaining the heritage façade of the pavilion, as well as requirements for ensuring adequate facilities and amenities for lifeguards and members of the community. The area to be included in the expressions of interest process consists of the current pavilion, structures and the car park- the actual ocean baths are not included (see figure 1 below).

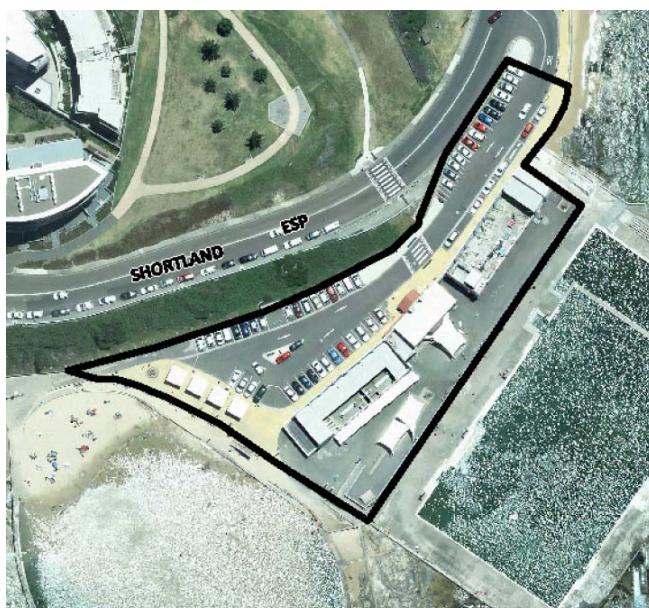


Figure 1: Newcastle Ocean Baths, EOI area in scope

Survey purpose

The aim of the survey was to gather information from the community regarding visitation to and usage of the Baths, recommended improvements, and preferred commercial or development opportunities at the site.

Where to from here?

The survey results will be made available to prospective developers as part of the EOI process. The results will also be provided to the Asset Planning Coordinator and Business and Projects Coordinator to help inform future planning for the Baths. The high level results will be made available to Newcastle Voice members in the September 2014 MyVoice newsletter, and the full report will be made available to the community on The City of Newcastle's website.

Methodology

Questionnaire

A short questionnaire was compiled with closed and open questions exploring current usage of the site, recommended improvements and preferred commercial or development opportunities at the site (see Appendix I).

Sampling

To gather opinions from the community, an online survey was sent to a random subset¹ of Council's community reference panel, Newcastle Voice (n= 1,316). Offline Newcastle Voice members were not sent the survey given time constraints on conducting the survey.

The broader community also had the opportunity to participate via a survey link on Council's website. The survey was promoted via Facebook and received press coverage (NBN and ABC online). In-person surveys were conducted onsite with visitors to the Baths.

Data collection

The online survey was open to Newcastle Voice members and the broad community from 29 August 2014 to 7 September 2014.

Onsite surveys with visitors to the Baths were conducted on Tuesday 2 September 2014 and Thursday 4 September 2014, including early morning and mid morning visits. Please note, additional onsite visits were cancelled due to adverse weather conditions (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Newcastle Ocean Baths, closed Thursday 4 September 2014

¹ 300 online Newcastle Voice members were randomly selected from each of Wards 1, 2 and 3. All online Newcastle Voice members in Ward 4 (n= 266) were invited to participate. n= 150 Newcastle Voice members residing in surrounding local government areas were also invited to participate in the survey.

Response rate

In total, 550 responses to the survey were received, 506 from Newcastle Voice and 44 from the broad community via intercept surveys and completions via Council's website. The response rate for Newcastle Voice was 38.4% overall, but differed by location:

Sample	Location	# invited to survey	# completed survey	Response Rate
Newcastle Voice	Ward 1	300	149	49.7%
	Ward 2	300	134	44.7%
	Ward 3	300	118	39.3%
	Ward 4	266	80	30.1%
	Out of area	150	25	16.7%
Broad community	n/a	n/a	44	n/a

Table 1: Response rates

Survey findings

Frequency of visiting

Among Newcastle Voice respondents, 38% reported visiting the Baths monthly or more often. Broad community respondents visited the Baths more regularly, with 54% visiting monthly or more often. This result was not unexpected given a number of the broad community respondents were surveyed onsite at the Baths, with this group representing 'loyal' Bath users.

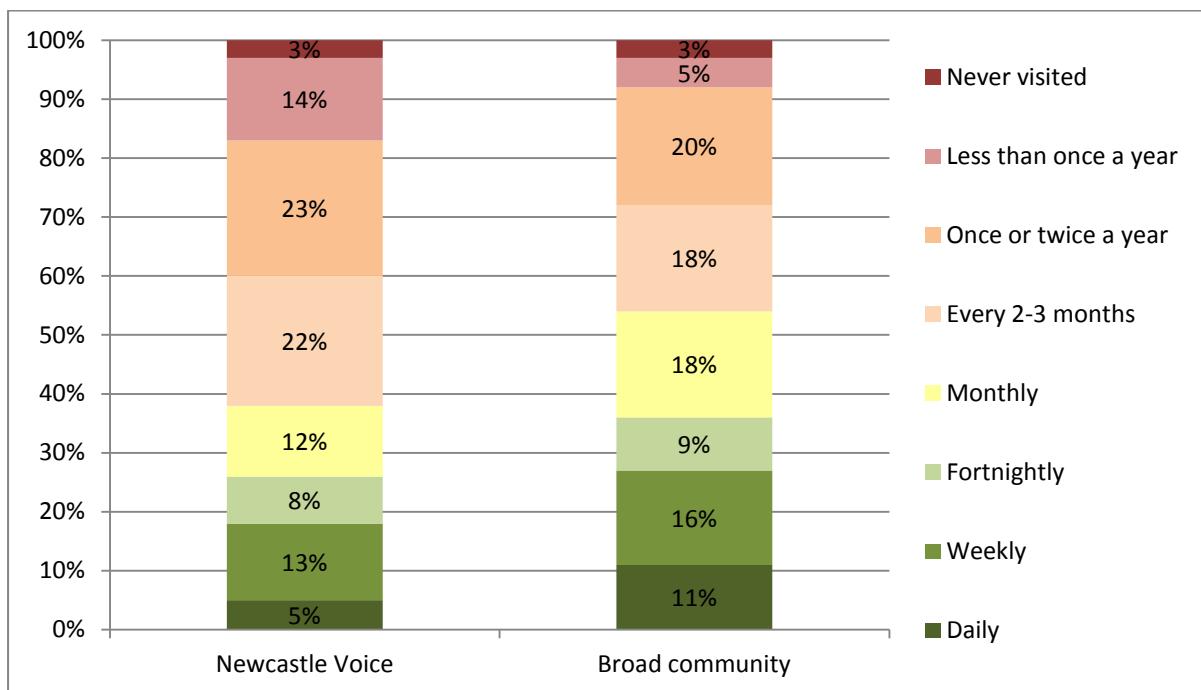


Figure 3: Newcastle Ocean Baths, frequency of visiting (Q1)

Activities at the Baths

The activities undertaken at the Baths was similar for Newcastle Voice and broad community respondents. Swimming, walking and family or social outings constituted the top three uses of the Baths among both groups, with picnics or getting something to eat, fitness and photography being the next most popular uses.

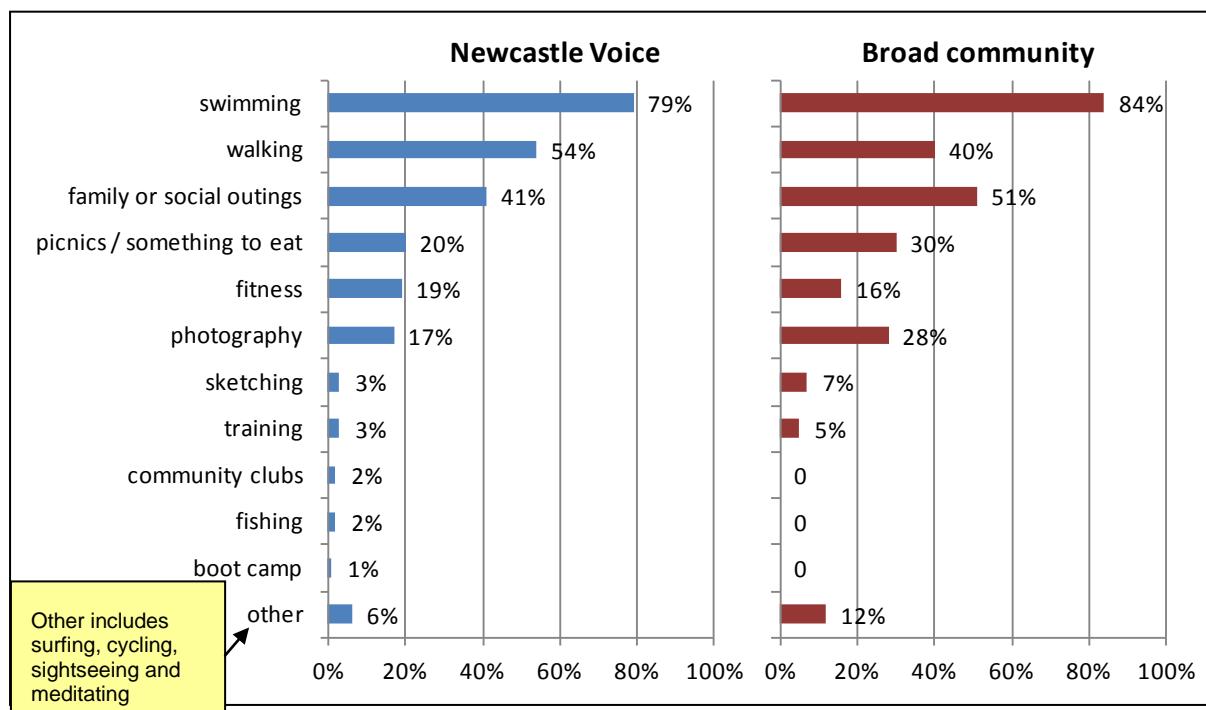


Figure 4: Activities at the Baths (Q2)

Recommended improvements

The top five recommended improvements for the Baths were similar across Newcastle Voice and broad community respondents. Both groups suggested more shade or shelter, improved amenities (including toilets and showers), and improvements to seating would be welcome. Newcastle Voice respondents would like to see some bubblers, improved vehicle movement and access were also important to both groups.

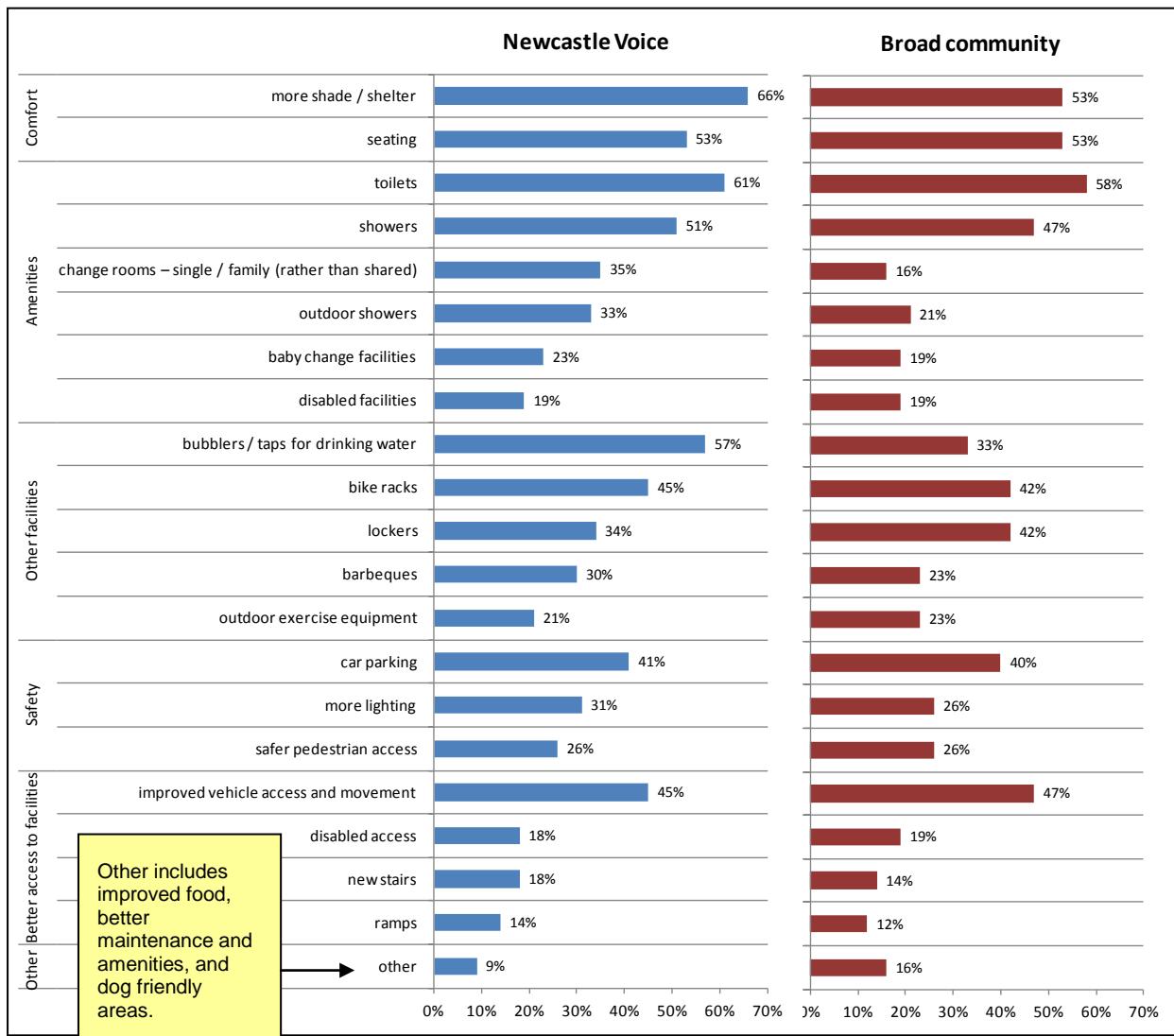


Figure 5: Recommended improvements to current facilities at the Baths (Q3)

Preferred commercial operations

The overall pattern of results between Newcastle Voice and broad community respondents was very similar. Amongst both groups, a café and kiosk were the most preferred commercial options, followed by a restaurant and a small bar.

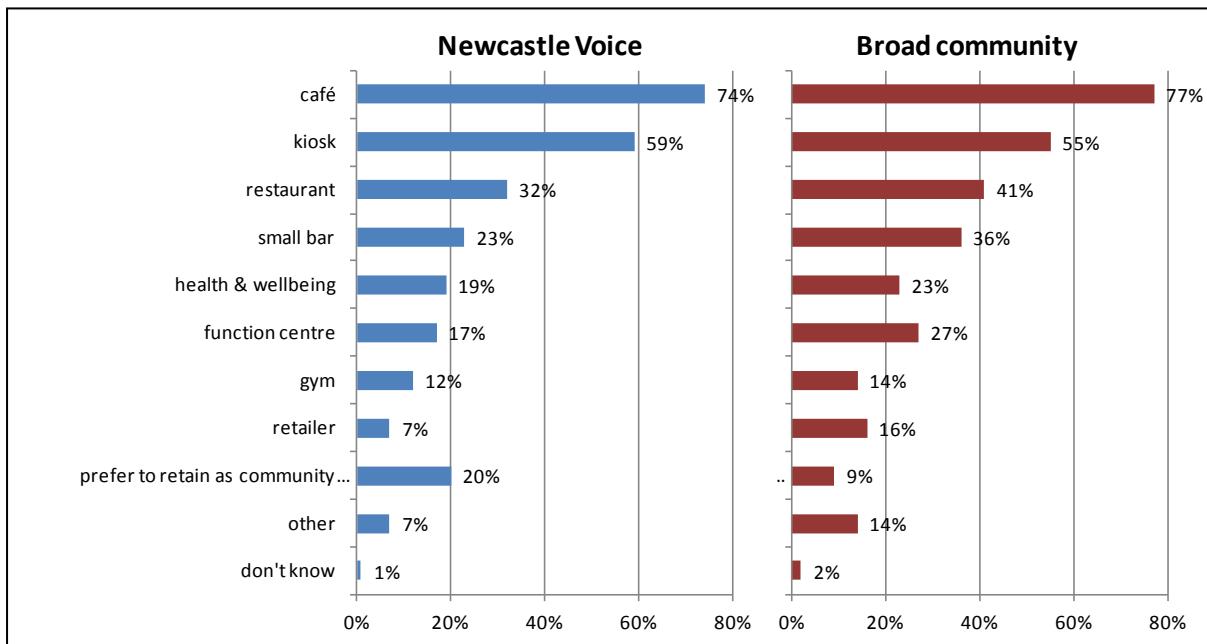


Figure 6: Preferred commercial operations at Newcastle Ocean Baths (Q4)

Respondents were also asked whether they would hire a space available to the community for events, meetings or functions. Overall, approximately one-third of Newcastle Voice respondents indicated interest in hiring the space. Interest was high amongst broad community respondents, which is not unexpected given they are more frequent users of the Baths.

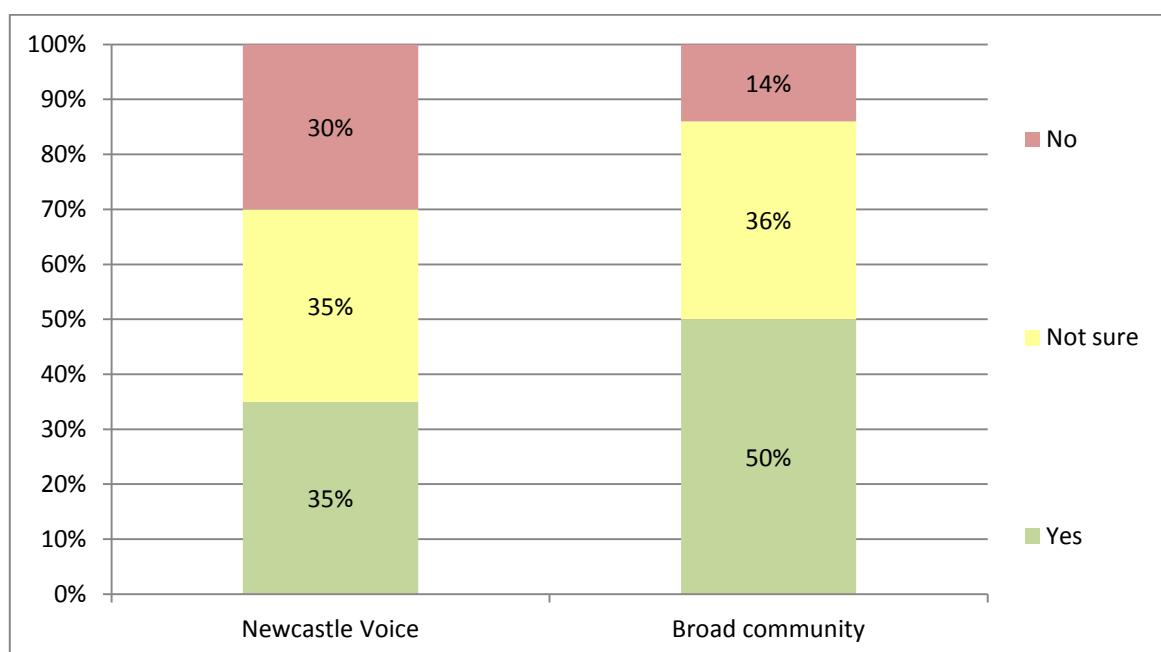


Figure 7: Propensity to hire community space (Q5)

Those interested in hiring a community space were also asked to indicate what facilities they would like in this space. The pattern of results was very similar across the two groups (see figure 8 below)

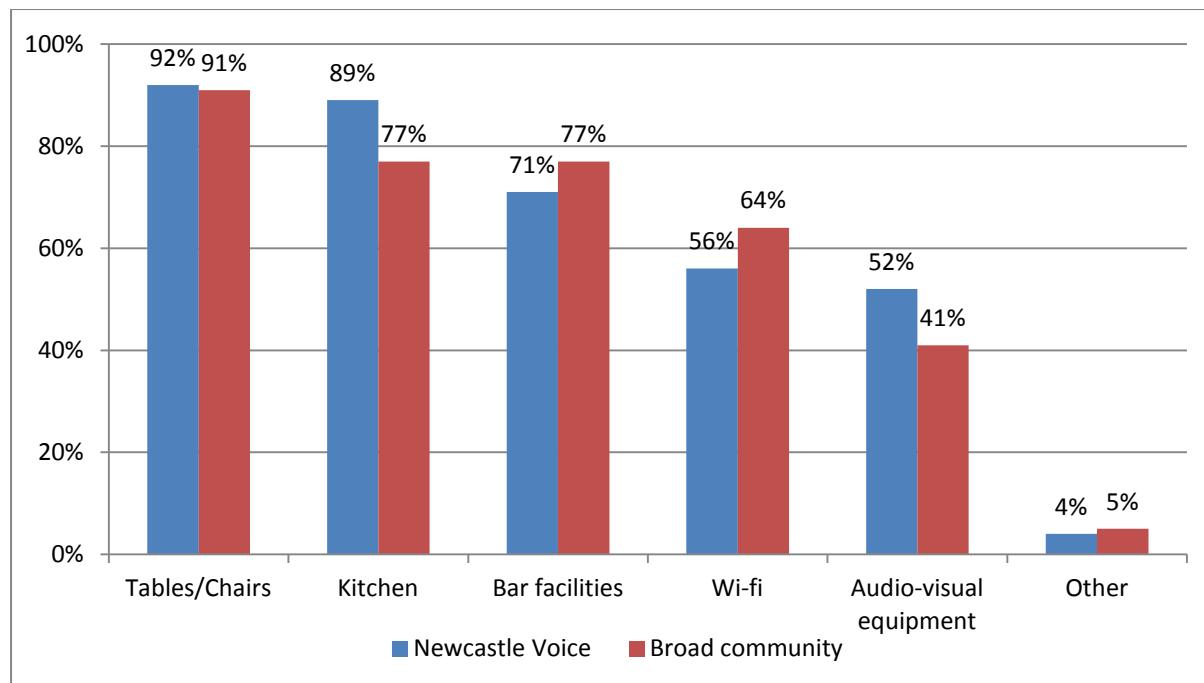


Figure 8: Facilities in community space (Q6, based on those interested in hiring a community space)

Additional comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other comments they had regarding the EOI for the Baths. In total, 208 respondents left a comment. The key themes in responses are summarised in Table 2. Full verbatim responses can be found in Appendix II.

The key concern, raised by 32.2% of respondents who left a comment, was in regard to the Baths precinct remaining freely accessible for community use. Respondents do not want to see any proposed development or commercialisation impinge on accessibility to the public space:

"Above all public access should not be denied. The main goal should be adding facilities that increase the quality of life of Newcastle residents. Also if you want to encourage increased patronage increased car parking facilities need to be addressed."

"Any proposed use of the buildings should not restrict access to the baths. I think it is a sensible idea to seek to gain commercially from council assets."

"I like this as a community area. Only things which would enhance everyday functionality would be of interest to me. NOT function centres etc. It is a lovely site which doesn't really need any thing else."

"Focus of the development needs to be general public accessibility, friendliness and openness."

"Community access to the baths itself should not be compromised by commercial ventures."

The next most common theme in the open ended responses related to parking, expressed by 17.9% of respondents who left a comment:

"It is imperative that the parking provides access primarily for users of the baths, not for people attending an event in the pavilion. If this proposal for tenders is with the intention that the car park ceases to provide free public access, then I am opposed to it. It would be most inappropriate the car parking falls into the hands of a private concern. This is a public amenity, and must have free access parking."

"More car spaces are needed."

"The problem with developing commercial space is that car parking for swimmers is gobbled up by non-swimming patrons. Main purpose of a pool is to swim - not to eat."

"The lack of car parking is a real deterrent. Public transport to access this area is not an option if you are a family with children and carrying personal items. If you want to include a function space then you MUST have parking, otherwise people will hire elsewhere."

"Parking is not adequate for existing use during warmer months. Use of the site for commercial functions will add significantly to parking issues."

Respondents (13.9% of those who left a comment) also noted their desire for a café and/or kiosk in their open ended responses:

"A good cafe where friends can socialise after swimming. I like the open air change room"

"A decent cafe that can serve take away as well as suitable light meals in a sit down space is all that is needed. NCC should be undertaking the project, it would be a revenue stream for the pool upkeep."

"A cafe or food outlet would be an asset on that site. Decent toilets and facilities would make it much better for families with young children. This site is not used to its full potential."

An equal proportion of respondents (10.6%) left comments for and against the concept of developing the ocean baths:

"Improvement projects are what Newcastle requires."

"I have experienced the Merewether Baths and the Bathers Way and am glad to see that they have had and / or is in the process of having a grand face lift and over due revitalization. I strongly agree with all these current and future works. I also strongly agree with completing these works in a programmed timely manner ..."

"I think it would be great. Take a look at Merewether/Bar Beach. We have to make our assets pay the city for having them. Rent it out."

"Get rid of the horrible facilities currently there. Newcastle is finally starting to look fantastic. Keep up the great work!"

"If you were to accommodate something as to what Merewether has done, you could be onto a good thing..."

"I do not support any commercial use or redevelopment of the facilities. It's a community swimming baths and that needs to remain as the focus for any use of the infrastructure and broader site. It's particularly concerning that the whole site including the carpark is included in the EOI. The carpark is also used by people visiting the general area including the beach and canoe pool, not just the ocean baths."

"I really don't think commercial premises are needed, especially when there are so many cafes and restaurants nearby. It's nice to have a few places without commercial venues attached to them."

"Enough has been spent on this end of Newcastle. We do not need any additional development."

"Keep the developers greedy hands off it and don't turn it into a commercial space."

"If it ain't busted, don't fix it. The baths are a wonderful bit of Newcastle; they do not need modernisation or commercialisation. Keep them free to the public but improve facilities for disabled patrons. They are used by people of all age ranges and all physical capabilities. Do not turn them into a plastic entertainment centre. As they are, they are a very special tourist attraction and local amenity."

Table 2: Additional comments- key themes

The expression of interest allows for commercial operations at the Newcastle Ocean Baths, what would you like to see?		%	
<i>Based on those who left a comment (n= 208)</i>			
Operations			
Café / Kiosk		13.9	
Restaurant/Bar - positive		4.8	
Function centre- negative		3.8	
Restaurant/Bar - negative		3.4	
Gym/Outdoor fitness		2.4	
Function centre- positive		1.9	
Sauna/Steam room/Turkish bath		1.0	
Retailer of Newcastle/Hunter products		0.5	
Facilities and amenities			
Needs adequate parking / More parking / Parking concerns		17.3	
Toilets/change room facilities		5.8	
Needs more shade / shelter		5.8	
Tables		2.4	
Lockers		1.9	
Hot showers		1.4	
Childrens play area		1.4	
Needs trees		1.4	
Rented beach shacks		1.4	
Baby change		1.0	
Lighting / flood lighting		0.5	
Development			
Development / revitalisation needed / In support		10.6	
Don't develop or commercialise / No development or commercialisation needed		10.6	
Develop needs to be in scale with or sympathetic to surrounds / Not too large		7.2	
Maintain/protect heritage		6.3	
Get rid of whats there/Start over		2.4	
Other topics			
Maintain free public access / Public access or use not to be compromised		32.2	
Maintain relaxed / laid back vibe		4.3	
Ensure the pools are maintained		3.4	
Family friendly		3.4	
Currently under utilised		2.4	
Don't want an audience over the pool		1.9	
Don't make it like Bondi Icebergs		1.4	
Alcohol free		1.4	
Affordable for all		1.4	
Consult with community throughout the process		1.0	
Fee for swimming / parking		1.0	
Other		15.4	

Appendix I- Questionnaire

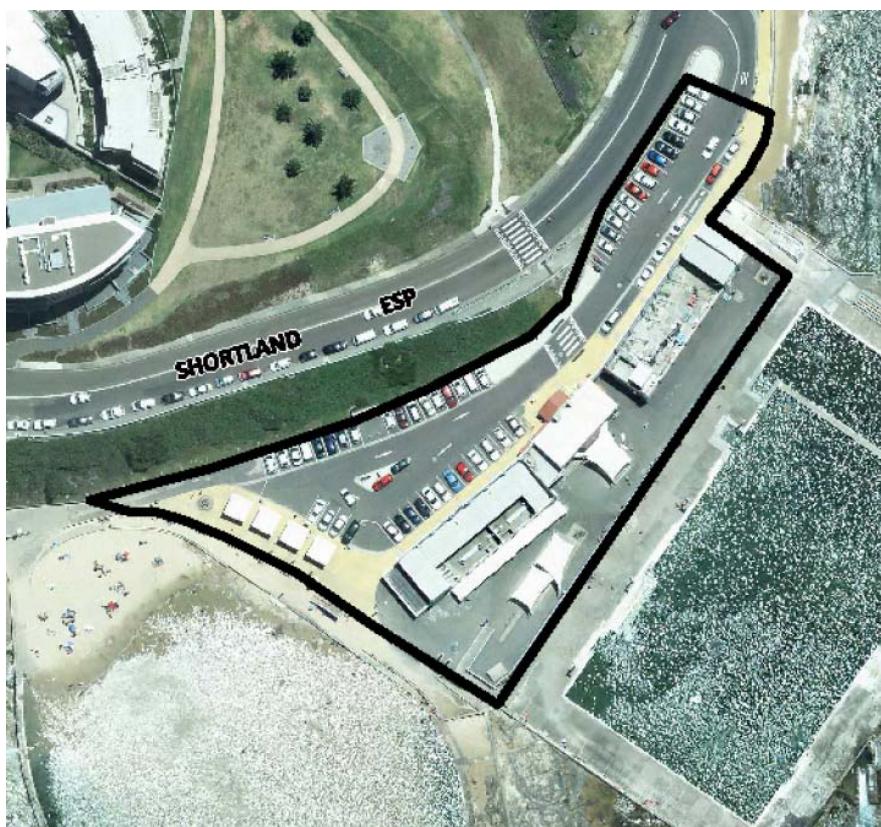
Newcastle Ocean Baths

Newcastle Ocean Baths are a unique part of Newcastle's coastline. Council [will soon be/ is currently] seeking expressions of interest for a commercial/development venture to enhance the pavilion site at the Newcastle Ocean Baths.

We would greatly appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete this survey. Your feedback will be provided to interested parties during the expressions of interest process to help inform their proposals for Newcastle Ocean Baths.

Please note, the expression of interest specification will outline detailed requirements in regard to maintaining the heritage façade of the pavilion, as well as requirements for ensuring adequate facilities and amenities for lifeguards and members of the community. The area to be included in the expressions of interest process consists of the current pavilion, structures and the car park- the actual ocean baths are not included (see map below).

Your answers are strictly confidential. This survey will take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.



Demographics:

What is your suburb?	
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Gender: Please select one response only	
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<input type="radio"/> Male
<input type="radio"/> Female

Which age category do you belong to: Please select one response only	
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<input type="radio"/> 16-24yrs
<input type="radio"/> 25-39yrs
<input type="radio"/> 40-54yrs
<input type="radio"/> 55-59yrs
<input type="radio"/> 60-69yrs
<input type="radio"/> 70+yrs
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to disclose

Utilisation

1.	Which of the following best describes how often do you visit the baths? Please select one response only
<input type="radio"/> Yearly	
<input type="radio"/> 6 monthly	
<input type="radio"/> Monthly	
<input type="radio"/> Fortnightly	
<input type="radio"/> Weekly	
<input type="radio"/> Daily	

2.	What do you utilise the baths for? Please select all answers that apply
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation:
	<input type="checkbox"/> swimming
	<input type="checkbox"/> boot camp
	<input type="checkbox"/> walking
	<input type="checkbox"/> fitness
	<input type="checkbox"/> fishing
	<input type="checkbox"/> training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure:
	<input type="checkbox"/> picnics / getting something to eat
	<input type="checkbox"/> family or social outings
	<input type="checkbox"/> community clubs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arts:
	<input type="checkbox"/> sketching
	<input type="checkbox"/> photography
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
	<input type="checkbox"/>

Improvements

3.	What improvements would you recommend for the current facilities? Please select all answers that apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Better access to facilities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> improved vehicle access and movement	
	<input type="checkbox"/> new stairs	
	<input type="checkbox"/> ramps	
	<input type="checkbox"/> disabled access	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comfort	
	<input type="checkbox"/> more shade / shelter	
	<input type="checkbox"/> seating	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved amenities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> toilets	
	<input type="checkbox"/> showers	
	<input type="checkbox"/> outdoor showers	
	<input type="checkbox"/> change rooms – single / family (rather than shared)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> baby change facilities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> disabled facilities	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved safety	
	<input type="checkbox"/> more lighting	
	<input type="checkbox"/> safer pedestrian access	
	<input type="checkbox"/> car parking	
<input type="checkbox"/>	General facilities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> bike racks	
	<input type="checkbox"/> outdoor exercise equipment	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bubblers / taps for drinking water	
	<input type="checkbox"/> barbeques	
	<input type="checkbox"/> lockers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Future use

4.	The expression of interest allows for commercial operations at the Newcastle Ocean Baths, what would you like to see? Please select all answers that apply
<input type="checkbox"/>	restaurant
<input type="checkbox"/>	small bar
<input type="checkbox"/>	café
<input type="checkbox"/>	gym
<input type="checkbox"/>	function centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	kiosk
<input type="checkbox"/>	retailer
<input type="checkbox"/>	health & wellbeing
<input type="checkbox"/>	other (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	prefer to retain community space only

5.	If the pavilion had a space available for either catered or self-catered functions/ events etc, would you be interested in hiring the room? Please select one response only
<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	Not sure

Ask only if “yes” at Q5

6.	What would you like to see in this space? Please select all answers that apply
<input type="checkbox"/>	kitchen
<input type="checkbox"/>	tables / chairs
<input type="checkbox"/>	wi-fi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bar facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audio visual equipment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

Additional comments

7.	Do you have any additional comments about the expression of interest for Newcastle Ocean Baths? Please be as detailed as possible

Thank you for taking part in the Newcastle Ocean Baths Survey.

Appendix II- Additional comments- Verbatim responses

Q7: Do you have any additional comments about the expression of interest for Newcastle Ocean Baths?

A cafe or food outlet would be an asset on that site.

Decent toilets and facilities would make it much better for families with young children. This site is not used to its full potential.

A complete glass structure to the rear of the historic facade would capitalise on the breathtaking vista whilst providing the opportunity for local architects to develop an award-worthy design.

A decent cafe that can serve take away as well as suitable light meals in a sit down space is all that is needed.

NCC should be undertaking the project, it would be a revenue stream for the pool upkeep.

A good cafe where friends can socialise after swimming. I like the open air change room

A retail outlet selling locally produced items made by Hunter Valley primary producers would be brilliant.

A unique selling point, there is nowhere in Newcastle that is selling wholly Australian made/Hunter made products.

A wonderful community asset that is under utilised, but a refurbishment would certainly increase community participation.

Above all public access should not be denied. The main goal should be adding facilities that increase the quality of life of Newcastle residents. Also if you want to encourage increased patronage increased car parking facilities need to be addressed.

Adequate parking for whatever development is proposed. Maintain heritage and ambience of building

All areas must be available to the public at all times (unless after hours hire of function apace)

All I really want is a little more shade

All in all this proposal needs to give to the community and not take away from the community. After all it was created as a community accessible facility and should remain as such.

All the money spent previously on so called restoration should have been spent on replacing the structure in a Art Deco style, typical of money wasting by NCC

Am concerned that development will mean charges for use of facilities. As an aged pensioner free facilities are of major importance to me. I enjoy the comfort of a hot shower rinse off after a cold winters swim. Thankyou!

Another project half finished by NCC and handed to private enterprise. These are public assets and should remain open to the public.

Just look at the parking mess that is surf house.

any commercial development should ensure free access to well cleaned & maintained swimming pools no smaller than is currently there

Any developments must be small scale and available to a wide range of people. Developments must be in harmony with the existing. Large expensive restaurants out a no no, as are large out of scale facilities.

Any proposed use of the buildings should not restrict access to the baths. I think it is a sensible idea to seek to gain commercially from council assets.

Any use in the public foreshore area must not alienate the facility from the general public. Improving the amenity of the site and the protection of the heritage of the foreshore public facility should be the overarching aim

As long as the general public feel comfortable with any commercial development, if does not take over the area and public access remains the same

As long as there is still a focus on it remaining as largely a community facility and retained the essential character of the facility, I think some sensitive, small scale commercial development would help lift the profile of the baths and encourage more patronage. Direct (not token) community consultation on the nature of such a development should be a given requirement.

As the NCC is predicting population increases I see it as imperative to keep facilities available for the general public ...not for the elite few who can buy/rent the spaces and lock others out. Car parking should remain free and not included in the expressions of interest.

As with the rest of our coastline the baths need shade and greenery around them before anything else. Presently they add a bleak look to our already bleak, concrete filled esplanades. A classy café and children's play area would help.

Baby change rooms and family/children friendly café or playspace would be great. Meeting space for mothers groups.

Be nice if the laid back vibe was maintained.

Beautiful area should be available to a wide variety of people and activities

Believe it is a community not a commercial space - other than need for continued kiosk/cafe facility for users

Cafe, restaurant, bar, gym and gym swim gear retail would be great. Must have excellent burgers- chain like Grill'd would be good.

car parking car parking and car parking

community access to the baths itself should not be compromised by commercial ventures.

Do not commercialize the baths. I as a user do not want audiences behind glass walls watching in approaching voyeuristic stage.

Do NOT make this like Bondi baths which are now only available for the wealthy. Ocean baths need to be accessible to all.

Dont change much newer is not always better. Just keep up and running

Don't close it improve it .

Don't feel able to comment without knowing what is being proposed but as we already have a function centre at Fort Scratchley it would seem superfluous to have another so close and in such a location. Whatever is built there bear in mind it will need to be maintained over time and from an environmental point of view is wise to be adding buildings so near the coastline?

Easy parking. easy access and a pavilion that can be used. a commercial involvement helps with the cost

Enough has been spent on this end of Newcastle. We do not need any additional development.

ensure premises are non-licensed ie no alcohol

Ensure the proposed commercial area isn't exclusively 'privatised' i.e. cutting off the space from community / public access unless you are a patron of the business. This is a public space that can be enhanced for families and general public use. enhancement should not be at the expense of public access. Access to parking, use of pathways, change rooms etc should not be contingent on being a customer of the private operator. Similarly this access should not be made logically more difficult.

Even as a private venture whatever is created needs to readily accessible rather than exclusive. e.g. not like the bondi icebergs venture.

Expression of interest for Newcastle Ocean Baths is privatising the Baths. Across Australia the Liberal Party and Labor Party obsession with privatisation has left the public sector with few assets, and a lot of financial liabilities. The baths, and any associated businesses should be in public ownership.

Fix the car park up

Focus of the development needs to be general public accessibility, friendliness and openness.
Get rid of the horrible facilities currently there. Newcastle is finally starting to look fantastic. Keep up the great work!
Great use of site multi storey carpark and 4 star hotel and café for swimmers. Include modern updated change facilities. Can be done sympathetically within the existing structure. The current façade is considered by some heritage experts to have no heritage significance.
Have In addition to any development. Between the baths and Newcastle beach. Put in bathing sheds above walkway to allow for secure storage etc
Heated pool suitable for hydrotherapy.
Hopefully there is no proposal to charge any entrance fee to any member of the public for use of the facilities of this gem in Newcastle 's crown. If McCloy enterprises are involved is there any hint of a request for council land ?
Hot showers
I am now mainly involved with caring for my invalid wife, so do not visit the beaches/baths often. Remembering all those years with children, then grandchildren, the Ocean baths was always a calling spot on the walk from Newcastle beach around to Nobbys beach/breakwater and back. Ice creams all round from the baths kiosk was usual. I would think this is still the practice with beachy types these days. More car park space would help young families and old folk. I was previously active in various associations in our City. Venues to hold functions with 80-100 people were always scarce and needed advance bookings. For business seminars, professional societies, the baths would make an excellent location for a venue for daytime with lunch/drinks/coffee. Considering today's costs self catering is a good option for the annual meeting of smaller associations such as school and church groups. But providing a venue a little upmarket to the local hall.
I am so disappointed to see the Ocean Baths close. So what if you keep the facade of the pavilion it is the baths that is heritage.
I am totally against this decision as I feel in will destroy what is very much a public space. People go to the baths of all sizes, expose their body and have a swim, . Having a function centre there gawking at people in the bikinis and speedos, is just plain wrong (Has anyone actually considered this, when going forward with this proposal?) What you will essentially be doing is having a formal centre for a wedding or a functions overlooking a public swimming pool,.isn't that an invasion of privacy of some sort.
I do not support any commercial use or redevelopment of the facilities. It's a community swimming baths and that needs to remain as the focus for any use of the infrastructure and broader site. It's particularly concerning that the whole site including the carpark is included in the EOI. The carpark is also used by people visiting the general area including the beach and canoe pool, not just the ocean baths.
I don't know how we can increase the amount of parking available if we were to increase/improve facilities and therefore draw more patrons.
I doubt that there is a lack of space for the funtions to run at the same time but if at different times from busy recreational use no problem. I think the baths would need to be floodlit at night to an extent. Also dangerous if alcohol is involved.

I feel that the Ocean Baths are primarily for providing an ocean bathing experience for people from all works of life and do not feel it is necessary to add restaurants, bars, gyms to the complex. It is not a large area and as other areas such as Merewether have created eating venues in a much larger space this is totally unnecessary. A café does already exist but perhaps the areas for eating overlooking the water could be expanded on and improved.

I feel the baths should remain free to the public and not fenced off or under private management in any manner. That said I am not opposed to having a private cafe or gym etc so long as the grounds and pool are open to all at no cost

I find it hard to imagine any 'fancy' development that would be suitable/sustainable in the climatic conditions of the baths without such an amount of engineering that the ambience would be wrecked. Just basic improvements - tables/shade area in the closed off area, more & later lighting on hot summer evenings would be good. Lane markings to help lap swimmers stop colliding with each other and causing pool rage. Maybe more frequent flushing in summer - it gets pretty murky sometimes, (especially if the Merewether people come over!). Could the draining/pumping be done at night and/or quicker, it is stupid losing all day on Thursday.

I have experienced the Merewether Baths and the Bathers Way and am glad to see that they have had and / or is in the process of having a grand face lift and over due revitalization.

I strongly agree with all these current and future works.

I also strongly agree with completing these works in a programmed timely manner.

This leads me to my point of why some stages are completed on time and others are taking far too long.

It seems through my vigilant and keen observation that the council has used different contractors to do different areas and without hesitation I would highly recommend the most professional company that I have witnessed. This company being MICHILIS.

MICHILIS have demonstrated themselves to carry out the works with minimal disturbance to the public.

MICHILIS have worked in with the community.

MICHILIS deliver what the community need.

If you ask me, get those guys in definitely.

Thank you

I like this as a community area. Only things which would enhance everyday functionality would be of interest to me. NOT function centres etc. It is a lovely site which doesn't really need any thing else.

I live in the western suburbs and I would love to see a nominal charge paid by patrons to help offset our pools in the outer suburbs. It's too costly to drive into Newcastle frequently but a \$2 charge or so for patrons could help self find this project without taking funds from our pools which were meant to be upgraded but council doesn't ever seem to have enough money to follow through.

I love our Ocean Baths. They are unique and simply wonderful. I hope you can retain it's other world, peaceful beauty while offering other options. I would hate to hear gym classes blaring out their music and instructions, and I wouldn't like to have people's functions with loud music ruining the ambience.

However, a cafe or restaurant I think would add class to this fantastic facility.

I love the facility as is. Its old school, has minimal environmental impact and allows direct and unencumbered connection with the ocean. Parlinkg is fine, half of the fun is walking to the baths with the kids

I love the wold world feel of the place - it's a great attraction for tourists - Sydney-siders love it. DOn't lose this. Keep all facades and old stuff where possible - great heritage site.

I prefer the space to be alcohol free at all times.

I really don't think commercial premises are needed, especially when there are so many cafes and restaurants nearby. It's nice to have a few places without commercial venues attached to them.

I spent a lot of time at the Baths when I was at school, and over the summer after Year 12. At this time, it was a good 'old fashioned' baths complex. There were change rooms that were adequate, kiosk and parking. Now, the beautiful Art Deco facade is just that - a facade. The change rooms are gutted. I'm not supportive of yet another Newcastle icon being modernised and commercialised. I feel strongly that it should remain just with the basic amenities - change rooms, toilets, outdoor showers, picnic tables and a kiosk. Newcastle Baths have a certain charm, even in their dilapidated state; to see them modernised would be criminal.

I swim daily at the pool and am a member of the Dixon Park Coldies who occupy and maintain the southern store room near the changing area. we have maintained a club house at the baths for over 25 years.I would expect newcastle sporting culture, such as this arrangementthe council and the club for any venture.

I swim several times a week and love the heritage look if the baths so it is of the utmost importance to keep this unique look to the baths!!

I think it would be good to have some commercial activity as long as it does not exclude the community. Merewether surf house is a good model which provides for different needs. I would not want the more affluent members of the community to be advantaged over people who come by public transport for swimming and picnics - continued public access is very important to me and I would oppose any development which restricts it. It seems to me that there is space for both.

I would not want the traditional profile of the baths changed either - but some shade over the tiered seating would make it more usable.

I think it would be great. Take a look at Merewether/Bar Beach. We have to make our assets pay the city for having them. Rent it out.

I think it would be nice to have a restaurant/cafe downstairs and a bar area upstairs with a viewing platform that you could hire out for events. this being in behind the current facade and on the right hand side looking from the beach to the city. Also something really need to be done about the parking or lack of. In summer you queue whilst waiting for people to exist their parks blocking the whole carprk.

I think locals appreciate the baths for exactly what they are. I think any changes need to be about care of the current conditions rather than changing them. To move to a high-end commercial space would be to exclude the majority of community members who utilise this space more commonly.

I think the removal of a NCC employee on site was a negative step particularly regarding the security of the site on event days like New Years Eve.

I think the vacant pavilion needs something sympathetic done to utilise and improve its appearance. Maybe have one side of the entrance for men, the other for women OR set the area for swimming club house. Not exclusive, elitist or over commercialised.

I understand that the council will be leasing the space within the structure. I think that this is fine, especially if it generates revenue for the council. I think that a community use such as a sauna or spa bath would be great, and could attract people (especially Euro tourists) to the place as a 'cure centre'. Otherwise, more locally relevant uses would certainly be the service of alcohol and/or food in a social and scenic environment.

I used to swim in summer every day at Ocean Baths except when it was being cleaned, usually Thursday, when I went to Merewether Baths. I don't swim in Winter. I find it necessary to get to the baths on weekdays about 8.30am as otherwise you can't get a park. I stay and do laps and sometimes have a coffee. I take 2 or 3 people in my car usually we leave by 10am. Sometimes if I miss the morning I go in the afternoon by myself and do my laps. I also like to walk along the sandy bottom of the baths in laps. I would like to be able if possible to keep doing this routine. I am wondering how much it will cost to get into the baths once the privatisation takes place?

I was a regular user of Newcastle baths for swimming, sun baking and showering in the change room since retirement I have become sun wise I fully support and restoration work for the general public use of baths, also I used to use Merewether Baths daily also awaiting the completion of works program.

I was unable to go back to previous questions on this survey and want to add that my answer to the first question varies depending on the season. I would go 2-3 times per week in summer and a couple of times a month during winter (therefore my first answer entered in incorrect). Why is there no back button?

I would like some restrictions on parking to enable the parking to be used for those who actually use the baths. So many people use the parking area to leave their cars whilst they go walking. I suggest an annual but modest payment system for the elderly (with sticker) that would enable bathers to access the site or a restricted parking time. Most elderly use the facility very early - before 9am.

I would like to see it open 7 days a week.

I would like to see the area softened with green vegetation.

I would think it important that any new facility retain the down-to-earth character of Newcastle Beaches and is as inclusive as possible

I wouldn't agree with anything except fitness/well being related, or a cafe. I wouldn't agree with anything that creates a space that excludes the public. There must be additional no cost parking provided for any "extra" activity that is incorporated - otherwise residents will have lost out to commercial interests....as has been the case at Merewether

I'd like outdoor equipment and a bar. I use the facilities everyday and this would make my visits more enjoyable.

If any function rooms or bar is added I don't think it should overlook all the baths as swimmers may not want to be watched

If it ain't busted, don't fix it. The baths are a wonderful bit of Newcastle; they do not need modernisation or commercialisation. Keep them free to the public but improve facilities for disabled patrons. They are used by people of all age ranges and all physical capabilities. Do not turn them into a plastic entertainment centre. As they are, they are a very special tourist attraction and local amenity.

If there was a function area, I hope it doesn't limit the facilities and space available for the community.

If you expand the area to involve functions etc then you completely change the scope of the area. It means that use as a public space will be restricted.

at the moment there is a small kiosk and parking and this is fine. It allows enjoyment by all the public not just a few.

There definitely needs to be some upgrade.

If you were to accommodate something as to what Merewether has done , you could be onto a good thing...

I'm not a BANANA (build anything never anywhere near anything) but I really don't think this is a great spot to be developing. Perhaps if you want to improve amenities in the area the park next to tyrrell towers is a better location, it can be a pain to find a car park there, but a multi-level park would ruin the facade. Changing the road would be a shame as well, as it offers a beautiful vantage point. I don't see how any development here would be a positive thing. Why not develop somewhere a little bit around the corner instead.

I'm not opposed to commercial development on community land but I think there are much better places to explore it than the baths which are perfectly fine for swimming as they are.

Improvement projects is what Newcastle requires.

Inclusion of rented beach shacks, beach chairs

Is Council aware that significant research, business planning, concept planning, artist sketches and consultation has been done on this project by council? It is staggering that this has A) not been followed up b) existing work has not recognised as a platform for this work c) may not be known to staff or councillors d) could be reinvented. perhaps you should look for the dame work done on Merewether bathers Pavilion, Black Hill, Lambton Pool etc ect. Where is the organisations intellectual capital and corporate memory? Yes time passes and new work needs to be done but in an environment of cost saving perhaps looking at the work already done would be a good starting place. Just a thought

It is a beautiful facility that needs to be maintained for public recreation and any commercial venture should not impact on that.

It is imperative that the parking provides access primarily for users of the baths, not for people attending an event in the pavilion.

If this proposal for tenders is with the intention that the car park ceases to provide free public access, then I am opposed to it. It would be most inappropriate the car parking falls into the hands of a private concern. This is a public amenity, and must have free access parking.

It is really important for the space to reflect the openness of the area already. If it becomes too commercialised, it risks loosing its unique mid century simplicity. The whole foreshore area is special as it is NOT overdeveloped. It is a huge attraction to Newcastle - simplicity is valuable and should not be tampered with. Facilities should be open for all to use.

It is very important that whatever development takes place the historic façade of the baths is retained.

It looks like the refurbishment will enhance the area

Its a beautiful space and should be enjoyed but not over developed

it's a beautiful spot we need to make the most of our assets - look at merewether its now thriving :)

It's perfect as it is!! Maybe a few more muffins or snack options at the shop

It's vital that free and easy access is maintained to this facility and that the architecture and ocean views are not disturbed. However, the site could be enhanced by the provision of healthier and better quality food, via a cafe, and through the potential use by organisations/businesses that promote healthy living.

Just remember, it's a public facility so no commercial interest should get in that way.

just stop stuffing up newcastle, stop giving it to whatever shyster has 10000 bucks in a paper bag. If you want to privatisate something privise the town hall, not something that is already fine.

Keep it family friendly and don't overprice whatever café, restaurant or kiosk that is approved.

Keep the developers greedy hands off it and don't turn it into a commercial space.

Keep the heritage specs and just maintain the beautiful asset we have.

Keep them as natural as possible

Kiosk to be open longer hrs.
Leave it alone.
Light Rail stop would be wonderful.
Maintain free admission
Maintain only the façade. Start fresh for the rest of the precinct.
Maintain the current look make sure it doesn't lose its appeal and accessibility to the public, ie must be free to use. Don't build structures that obscure the ocean views (ie such as the way the Crowne Plaza totally obstructs the harbour view)
Make it accessible to the general community without adding cafes and restaurants. Keep it free.
more car spaces are needed
Most of what the baths has it good as is except parking. The disabled access is good which Merewether lacks as it is too steep to get down to & too many stairs. Must have an everyday kiosk as a lot of the beaches are putting in restaurant type facilities they are too expensive & you can't even get a salad sandwich & salad sandwiches go with summer & think about kids/teenagers they can't afford restaurant quality food & they are your main people that go to the beach baths
Must have FREE parking. Pretty disappointing to have to pay to take my kid to the beach. Why not simply have timed spaces. Would be good to have a carpark like merewether perhaps with a boom gate system like Westfield- you stay for longer than 2hrs you pay
Need more dog spaces and things for dogs and owners to do. Since there is rapid development in Newcastle regarding units, these people will need somewhere to take their dogs to.
Needs to integrate with the Bathers Way
Newcastle already has too many function centres! another one would be ridiculous. What Newcastle doesn't have is the beach front casual, club/pub like facilities such as you find in all the Surf Clubs up and down the Gold Coast which all do very well!!
Newcastle baths ate
Newcastle baths should remain a free public facility with any commercial development limited strictly limited to cater directly to persons visiting the baths for recreation. Development should not be allowed for major restaurant, function centre, any such development would make it less convenient for the normal baths user, e.g. parking, access, both normal and disabled.
No Smoking signs should be more prominent. There are often cigarette butts littered around the seating areas.
Not another Bar - there's enough alcohol options in the area. A decent (healthy) cafe and facilities that enc. use for families and the disabled. Swimming is so important for health and recovery from injury, surgery and illness, it should be easy to use for all.
Occasionally in the warmer months the Cleaning of the pools is beyond the capacity of the relevant council staff. Accumulated dirty sand and sometimes seaweed re after a clean and in parts of the pool this causes
Open air rooftop dining
open to all, regardless of their socio-economic background ie. not just the wealthy! perhaps some tourist info facilities. more undercover picnic or table facilities so you can sit and eat/watch swimmers and not get wet or sunburnt.
Outdoor covering in winter to see the view
parking and access would be an increased problem. If the new light rail ran past the baths in a loop this would allow easy access and not have the need to turn everything into a car parking space. We like the baths like it

is as a family place to swim, walk, sit and picnic. Just more seats and shade area.
Parking fees should remain minimal, but encourage turn over of car spaces.
Open areas must remain fully accessible to the general public.
Parking is not adequate for existing use during warmer months. Use of the site for commercial functions will add significantly to parking issues.
Pedestrian and cycle movement network was impeded (made narrow and indirect) when the car park was redeveloped. Please realign (straighten) and widen as part of EOI.
Please allow private enterprise to develop this and ensure council are not involved other than the approving authority. Council have continually shown an inability to manage projects
Please do not have new restaurant or event facility. Families and the disabled use this pool the kiosk is cost affordable for those who use the baths we don't want facilities where swimmers will be viewed by patrons of restaurants. Refurbish the caretaker residence so that a caretaker can be in residence at the pool at all times. An indoor gym on the northern side of the pavilion which has been left underutilised would be a good idea. A lot of families come by train or bus if there was a new cafe or restaurant there would be very little parking for patrons. Hopefully the users of the baths will have a say in this process not just the developers.
Please do not remove the current little pavilions/tables towards Newcastle beach side.
This is a very casual, low key swimming experience and delightfully so. Jump out of bed head to the pool, this atmosphere must be kept. Also please do not exclude public access during functions. Newcastle has weddings galore and it would constantly be 'functions only'.
This is one of the only free experiences for families with small children, a commercial operation really must show a profit, please not remove this from the public.
Please don't lose any public space to a commercial activity.
Please keep it locally owned to not push prices up to rates that locals can't pay
Please leave the heritage look about these baths.
I have been a swimmer here since I was going to school- I'm 78yrs olds
Please let the community have something - any commercial has financial aspects to visitors to the baths - especially young families and those with little spare income
Please maintain the heritage facade of the pavilion. It is one great thing to photograph and adds a sense of grandeur.
Please make sure whatever is chosen - that it remains accessible and affordable to ALL of Newcastle's residents. Not just the rich or exclusive :(
Please No development .
Please retain the historical architecture, but restore it if necessary
pretty good as it is.
Retain toddler pool area and family friendly space for kids
Revamp the current cafe to utilise space. Plus its a great place to eat and the coffee is great.
Family friendly especially for the kids, more tables to eat and enjoy the views
Roof over change rooms, new lockers
Safety for swimmers- glass was smashed into the baths
Safety, security are most important to me. The water must be clean, the change rooms with showers maintained throughout the day. A place to sit and relax and enjoy the ambience of the locale would be ideal.
Security for swimmers and lockers for personal items, car keys, wallet and clothes.

Should have a fee attached to use. People who swim at swimming pools have to pay
Since I've become somewhat disabled I've found that not many places have disabled access. It would be advisable that if changes are to be made, disabled people need to be considered
So many restaurants in the area are overpriced. What is needed is a nice café/restaurant with a decent dress code that provides a variety of prices for food and beverages so as to make it affordable for the majority of people in the area along with parking facilities. We need to draw more people in to Newcastle. The meter fees are utterly ridiculous in Newcastle CBD & beach.
Some of the questions were not designed to give accurate answers for eg Question 1 I had to tick less than 1 year as yes I have been in the baths previously but not for many years. I would love to see it utilised appropriately so Council could get decent rent as to keep up the maintainence of a fantastic Newcastle landmark, instead of previously allowing it to fall into disrepair.
Somewhere for kids to play - play equipment
Soujds like a good plan if managed correctly
Such a beautiful area but it's too sparse to spend time there. Needs shaded areas where you can spend time out of direct sunlight
Such an amazing space should be gully utilised.
suggest removing the exotic weeds / especially bitou in this area / detracts from the ambiance of the site / re vegetate with natives like Merewether
The area is a key community facility & must be retained with community access to useful multipurpose spaces. I am dead against turning part of it over to commercial operation/restaurant etc like surf house but kiosk & cafe space would be suitable. Any function rooms or hireable spaces need to be affordable unlike the the majority of council's hireable facilities which are over- priced effectively closing most community groups out of being able to afford to use them (even with the subsidies in place).
With the inland pools being turned over to private operators(& probably increases to the already ridiculous entry prices) , there will be a significant increase in patronage to the free entry ocean baths. The canoe pool area is a key family recreation space & should be upgraded with large functional shade structures similar to those found in north queensland.
The area is a magnificent free public space which I would hate to see disappear. The feeling of family, community and loving the space, the outdoors and the ocean should in my opinion provable.
The area needs to remain accessible by the community. A restaurant or café in part of the area makes commercial sense but the use of the bathes and the forecourt must remain open to the public. A bookable function centre that closes off access should not be permitted. A balance approach is required.
The Baths are a great asset for Newcastle but are not really 21 century people friendly the items listed will help create a better facility for people to access instead of a few with self interest only.
The baths are used by many older people for swimming. Over development will disadvantage them and cause the congestion already experienced since the development of Surf House. We critically need decent change rooms and to keep any retail development small and simple, to cater mainly for the swimmers. A small coffee outlet/cafe would be adequate. More parking is vital, as Surf House patrons take up all of the available parking, making it really difficult for swimmers, especially older ones.(Of whom there are many!)

The baths are well used as it is. Access is adequate, but could be improved; but access must be for all and it must be free to all. There is no case in my opinion for any part of the pavilion or adjacent areas to be hived off for function or restaurant style use. The baths belong to us all and should remain that way. Introduce function use and you will restrict parking and also family use. The Council would do well to keep in mind that it is a public and an elected body that answers to the community. It is not a private corporation and should stop acting like one. Not everything has to make a profit.

The baths area, is a public facility with a café. I would like to see what is there well maintained, and functional, without making it an overpowering commercial facility. The area provides the community with the facilities it is designed to do.

The Baths have been neglected for too long. The amount of money spent to preserve the facade did not provide facilities for users of the baths. The lack of good change facilities, surfaceing and general condition of the baths are not conducive to attracting citizens to this unique place. It is mainly due to position and the ocean that makes the place popular and attractive. Once Merewether Baths are restored then there will be a standard by which Newcastle baths will be judged. The facade to my thinking is not an attraction to make people use the baths. To place prohibitive requirements for upkeep of the facade will be a negative to any investment and add cost to running any business. To be attractive to any interested party the Council will have to make a commitment to improve and upgrade the Baths in my opinion.

The baths should be a fully self funded indoor outdoor swimming complex with absolutely no non swimming related activities. It should be open 24/7/365

The car park should be for baths patrons, not the commercial development your survey alludes to.

The car parking should not be for the use of the venue only but available for all pool and beach users and should not have a charge on it. In fact it would be better to remove the parking from the leased area.

While a cafe/restaurant would be good it should not be at the exclusion of others who simply want to swim, sit in the sun or get an ice cream. Whoever leases the shop should not have exclusive use of the building, it should still be open for public use, as at Nobby's.

It may be better to divide the pavilion into two and lease half for a shop while keeping the rest in council hands providing toilets, change rooms etc.

The current kiosk is poor. There is a lack of quality, healthy eating options in area overlooking water. Cafe/restaurant overlooking pool, not car park. Change rooms are in need of upgrade and family friendly facilities such as baby change facilities

The drive for the council to lower cost to NCC is positive but the NCC is required/expected to retain some overview role in the availability of services to the residents of Newcastle and keep prices at an acceptable level. Like the council people are getting larger bills and have less money to spend on all items but we can't take this option to duck our requirements.

The hot showers with open skies are great

The lack of car parking is a real deterrent. Public transport to access this area is not an option if you are a family with children and carrying personal items. If you want to include a function space then you MUST have parking, otherwise people will hire elsewhere.

The MPC at Fort Scratchley is sufficient for functions in that area. A more casual cafe style would not clash with bathers.

The ocean baths are a fantastic facility for Newcastle and need new amenities to keep people coming there and using them. Refurbishing the change rooms, toilets and improving the car park should be top priority. Also a higher quality cafe and increased shade shelters.

The pool needs to remain free to access.

JW

The previous renovation was a waste of rate payers money. The old buildings should have been bulldozed and re built honouring the previous heritage design but to the latest standard of weather proofing giving a more durable structure at half the cost.

The problem with developing commercial space is that car parking for swimmers is gobbled up by non-swimming patrons. Main purpose of a pool is to swim - not to eat.

The public baths should not have a significant change of use, I do not support a function centre or commercialisation above and beyond a small cafe.

The round concrete shallow pool to the south looks so bad. Is this part of the baths? Any thing would be better than that. What about a enclosed heated swimming pool and gym?

The whole area could be created into a knowledge centre for local and extended peoples to attend to understand the local area. Not only about the Local Aboriginal Peoples history but also for the European history. This is something we do have in Newcastle.

There is already a kiosk there, which is adequate if not upmarket. Everything is fine as it is. Probably more parking is needed, as many elderly & disabled need to arrive by car.

THERE IS NO NEED TO TRY AND KEEP THE OLD WORN OUT FACADE. sure IT LOOKS GREAT, BUT IT WAS NOT BUILT TO LAST FOREVER. maybe WE NEED TO START NEW INSTEAD OF TRYING TO prevent the inevitable,

there is no safe place to leave your keys etc while you swim

There is often too much silt built up in the pool itself, especially around south western corner.

There needs to be a work of public art and interpretation that celebrates the Map Of The World Pool. The work of public art Should be for locals and tourists. And be fun!!

This is a very special place, would love to see upgraded toilet & change facilities and a really kiosk/cafe and maybe restaurant and of course the pool well maintained

This public amenity and community asset should not be turned into an area for the privileged, at the expense of ordinary members of the community. It's major focus should be a public amenity for the health and well being of the whole community.

Too many buildings and too many outdoor facilities, is just inviting the wrong type of people to congregate there. Keep it simple so as not to detract from the beauty of the area, with a cafe and kiosk type area for people to get some refreshments if needed. I would NOT like to see a restaurant on the site and I would like to only see limited parking

Turkish baths or steam rooms would be amazing.

Update facilities for eating eg. cafe, comfort eg. toilets/showers/lockers.

Do not over develope site. Keep it as a baths

Upstairs function room may assist with payment for upkeep of historic facade. A decent cafe that caters for passersby as well as swimmers is a must. This is best taylored to the location i.e. seafood focus

Wedding function centre properly catered with waitstaff. They are fine well maintained. Beautiful love coming here. No where in England you can do this

We've privatised enough public spaces, please stop. I fear that a politician s probably getting a chunk of money out of this 'development' project. I cannot trust Newcastle Council any more. Not sure I ever will.

Whatever improvements are made to Newcastle Baths and Pavilion, please ensure that this area remains community friendly for the average family and does NOT finish up like Bondi.

Whatever is done to the complex is in the future is properly maintained and not permitted to decay and become a total eyesore as it currently stands.
When planning don't lose sight of the fact that its main function is that of a community facility and that no commercial operation should restrict access
while some additions would be nice, there really is no need to go overboard. It would be a great shame to see commercial interests overtake the area, as they are the baths are a great community space and they are very spacious and comfortable and accessible to the whole community.
Will showering facilities remain free of charge. I am not sure what proposals will be allowed and how this will impact on present usage. I regularly walk through the pavilion and use showers I would not want access to be limited due to a commercial venture
With the development of the old surf club at Merewether and other function rooms beside the water which are well patronised I can't see any need for replication. Redevelopment with additional COMMERCIAL enterprise is not necessarily in the public interest. It actually precludes public access. PLEASE retain the large change room areas as this is one old fashioned aspect that I really appreciate. DON'T make toilets act as change rooms!!! ERK!!!
Would be good to have facility for a life guard in the area
Would hope that the original appearance (facades) could be maintained but facilities modernised but still maintain original feel.
would like to see 2 hour time limited parking and or fees to help give more people access and an expanded shelter area near toddlers pool for picnics and better supervision with more bicycle access and rear to curb angle parking
Would need to think about this. It is not easy to come up with a specific idea.
Yes I do. Let's not waste good money like our council did in the laughable restoration last time , and build ridiculous shower rooms where people can look over wall

