

# **Newcastle Ocean Baths**

## **Community Reference Group**

**Meeting 4 MINUTES**  
**March 2021**



**City of  
Newcastle**

## Meeting MINUTES

<b>Date:</b> 24 March 2021	<b>Time:</b> 6pm-7.30pm	<b>Venue:</b> Newcastle City Hall
<b>Meeting:</b> Newcastle Ocean Baths (NOB) - Community Reference Group (CRG), Meeting 4		

### IN ATTENDANCE

(CRG Total: 15)

#### Community members

Paul Scott

Peter Shields

Jeremy Landers

David Henderson

Roderick See

Simon Francis

Amber Moncrieff

#### Stakeholder representative members

Peter Sherlock

Hunter Living Histories

Peter Wickham

Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths

Karen Read

Newcastle East Residents Group

Mark Metrikas

Hunter Regional Committee of National Trust

Luke Marshall for Robert Faraday

Representative of local businesses

#### City of Newcastle's Committee representatives

Joseph Popov

Access Advisory Committee

Cr Nuatali Nelmes

Lord Mayor

Cr Carol Duncan

for Cr Declan Clausen

#### City of Newcastle attendees

Matthew Blandford

Senior Project Planner – Project Team

Emily Dowswell

Acting Manager Media and Stakeholder Relations

Donna McGovern

Aquatics Services Manager

Nick Kaiser	Acting Manager Major Events & Corporate Affairs
Joanne Rigby	Manager Assets and Projects
Lynn Duffy	Manager Parks and Recreation
Meaghan Bennett	Project Planning Coordinator
Racquel James-Wright	City of Newcastle
Kirk Rowe	GHD – Project Team
Lester Gellatly	GHD – Project Team
Mahafuj Ali	Terras Landscape Architects - Project Team
Steve Rushworth	Terras Landscape Architects - Project Team

### **Meeting Facilitators**

Brenda Madden	The Creative Ingredient
Ruth McLeod	The Creative Ingredient

### **APOLOGIES**

Paula Thistleton	Community member
Simon Francis	Community member
Jennifer Ciba	Community member
David Compton	Community member
Ross Taggart	Pirates Swimming Club
Robert Russell	Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee & Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council

**Meeting Commenced:** 6.02pm

### **WELCOME**

Member Introductions

Apologies

Member Changes

- Farewell to Tiahna Goldberd (community member) and Caitlin Brookes (City of Newcastle Coastal Engagement Manager)
- Welcome to Jennifer Ciba (new community member) – an apology for tonight

## **Agenda**

**Terms of Reference** – the Terms of Reference were updated following feedback received during NOB CRG Meeting 3. An updated link will be circulated via email to all CRG members.

### **Why are we here?**

#### **Goals of the meeting:**

- Receive a project update for Stages 1 & 2
- View Stage 1: Pools & Promenade Preliminary Designs
- CRG to provide feedback on Stage 1 Preliminary Designs for Newcastle Ocean Baths with particular reference to access, ramps, shade, stairs, seating and general look and feel of the site.

### **Meeting Protocols**

One person speaking at any one time; provide clear and concise responses; respectful language to be used at all times.

NOTE: The Stage 1 Site Renders, full meeting Agenda and Powerpoint Presentation Slides are provided in Attachment B, C and D.

## **Presentation – Update Stage 1 and Stage 2**

***Stage 1 and Stage 2 update delivered by Matthew Blandford.***

### Stage 1: Poolside

Stage 1 has been prioritised as a result of structural inspections performed 12 months ago. Degrading retaining walls and other instabilities were noted. Poolside could become a future safety concern of the City of Newcastle (CN). It also makes sense spacially to complete Stage 1 before Stage 2.

Stage 1 Timeline - currently within the concept design stage. Tonight CN will present preliminary designs only (not a concept design). Feedback received tonight on the preliminary designs will assist in creating the concept designs as we move towards construction.

GHD has been appointed to undertake site investigation, provide concept designs and conduct environmental assessment of the site.

### Stage 2: Pavillions

Stage 2: Initial site investigation shows the built form is structurally sound, however further work will be carried out within the next 18-24 months. A needs analysis will be carried out for the upper promenade area to inform the upgrade project.

## **Presentation – Stage 1 Preliminary Designs**

The facilitator prepares the CRG members for detailed explanation of Stage 1 Preliminary Designs.

***A set of plans/renders handed out to each table. Images/renders were also circulated via email to CRG members prior to the meeting.***

### Discussion Questions

What to think about during presentation of Stage 1 Preliminary Designs:

- What do you like or support about the designs?
- What needs to change or be reconsidered?

**Focus areas:** access, shade, stairs, ramps, seating, general look and feel

This pre-presentation explanation was provided to CRG members so that they were able to listen to the detailed presentation of site renders with clear intent.

***Presentation of Stage 1 Preliminary Designs delivered by Matthew Blandford.***

### Key features:

- Maintain existing access into the pool ie. existing stairs and identification of options for locations.
- Provide an access ramp at the southern end – safe access for maintenance crews, keeps trucks away from the ocean, doesn't have a handrail but it can be added.
- Lifeguard post– observation post only, not replacing existing lifeguard tower, bring lifeguards to pool level for easy access.
- Shade structure – for discussion but needed on site for shade and shelter.
- Maintaining Art Deco look & feel across the site.
- Links to the public promenade.
- Changes need to be fit for public use and maintainable by CN staff.
- No certainty on timing for Stage 2 so need to make sure Stage 1 can open and operate and function separately to Stage 2.
- Addresses the undulating rock bottom, while retaining the sand floor to facilitate cleaning of the pools and increase user safety when sand levels are low, with sand continuing to accumulate in the pools via natural ocean processes as it does currently. This will assist in minimising the downtime of the pools during cleaning. The amount of sand coming into the pools cannot be modelled due to the highly exposed nature of the site which is subject to a number of natural fluctuations and highly variable storm activity.

- Needs for two ramps identified - southern end ramp is for vehicles/disability access and the second ramp is an existing ramp to remain (but not constructed to Australian Standards for disability access).

## Round Table Discussions

It is noted that a few of the CRG participants have spoken to their organisation members and have drafted a list of features they would like to remain or elements that need to be reconsidered. These lists will be accepted and forwarded to The Creative Ingredient for inclusion into the meeting minutes. Reminder to the group that it is important to raise the **main** issues from organisation level discussions in tonight's discussion for formal inclusion into the design review process.

Participants were asked to discuss in small groups (Tables 1, 2, 3 & 4) the Stage 1 Preliminary Designs and report back to the meeting with three (3) ideas they support and three (3) ideas suggested for reconsideration.

## Feedback

Overall, CRG members supported the treatment of site challenges in the Stage 1 Preliminary Designs. More detailed responses are provided in the table below:

Group	Supports	More consideration needs to be given to...
Table 2	<p>Ramp access</p> <p>Retention of heritage items eg. Bleachers and Boardwalk</p> <p>Improved sight lines (lifeguard surveillance)</p>	<p>Maintain Art Deco look – don't add to this with modern additions, just maintain what are existing heritage features.</p> <p>Built form of lifeguard structure – needs to be more like Newcastle Beach lifeguard structure. Don't replicate the Art Deco features.</p> <p>Shade design – acrylic (not rain shelter) would rather the use of organic materials (flow).</p> <p>Northern end / ramp - connectivity to Bathers Way (instead of a dead end), providing southern and northern access.</p> <p>Loss of central Art Deco stairs.</p>
Table 4	<p>Southern ramp, inclusive access</p> <p>Free, open to the public</p> <p>Large open concrete deck; access and circulation have improved</p>	<p>Southern ramp impacts on the length of laps, reducing distance.</p> <p>Not supportive of the shade structures.</p> <p>Maintain Art Deco look – don't add to this with modern additions, just maintain what are existing heritage features.</p> <p>Loss of central Art Deco stairs / but acknowledge need safe access to pool.</p> <p>Lifeguard passive surveillance – need to have sight lines to entire site eg. changerooms, toilets access areas etc. (needs to be 360 degrees). No surveillance currently behind the</p>

Group	Supports	More consideration needs to be given to...
		<p>proposed hut.</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Keep the site de-cluttered, blend observation deck; would it be possible to bring any additional (new) building structures into the existing footprint for the site where possible (eg. new pumphouse roof as observation deck but set back into the existing footprint)? <i>Response: Yes</i></p> <p><u>Question</u></p> <p>Would there be possible for a beach egress at the southern end for dignified access to the water for the elderly – children would also use this area? <i>Response: Something similar exists but this can be revisited.</i></p>
Table 3	Seating and cover – a good mix	<p>Seating on southern side –parents need to safely watch their children, need to be close to pool edge. Extending seating – grandstand style (but mindful of views).</p> <p>More safe access – eastern side mainly steps back onto promenade.</p> <p>Easier access to the canoe pool from the main pool.</p> <p>No access ramp into dedicated lap pool – preferred option.</p>
Table 1	<p>Structural finishes – seems structurally sound</p> <p>Ideas for the relocation of the pumphouse</p> <p>Access ramp connecting to Newcastle Beach</p>	<p>Brail, sensory symbols, wayfinding esp. at southern end.</p> <p>Shade structures may be an intrusion but would need to look at Stage 2 design to reassess.</p> <p>Needs shade cover over southern end walkway (access from car park to pool).</p> <p>Grandstand seating needs to be extended in southern end but be mindful of views.</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Is it possible to tentatively endorse Stage 1 before looking at Stage 2 – there are many linked elements?... <i>for consideration.</i></p>

### WRAP UP – Next Steps

- Newcastle Ocean Baths CRG Meeting 4 feedback on the Preliminary Designs will be provided to the Project Team.
- Meeting Minutes and Key Findings Summary will be made available on the CN website.
- Concept Designs will be developed and presented to Councillors.
- Final Concept Designs and other supporting information will be emailed to members of the CRG.

- Principal Design Consultant (GHD/Terras) will work through detailed design to produce a tender document.
- Construction contractors will be engaged mid-2021.
- Construction works scheduled for completion by Dec 2022; start date and overall duration to be determined.
- Next meeting: consultation around Stage 2 of works to be advised.

**Meeting closed:** 7.34pm

## Attachment A

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### **CRG member communication shared with CN post meeting**

Five submissions were received following the fourth Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group meeting:

- Newcastle East Residents Group (NERG) – submissions I, II & III
- Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust – submission IV
- Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths Inc. – submission V

#### **1. Newcastle East Residents Group (NERG) – submission I**

NERG submission for Stage 1 Ocean Baths Concept Plans

NERG thanks the City of Newcastle (CoN) for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion about improvements to the ocean baths as part of the Stage 1 program.

We are pleased to see that access has been improved considerably under this proposal. NERG members are supportive of the retention of the tiered northern seating and the preservation of most sightlines from the deck and the pool itself. The concept plans as presented are at a pre-detail stage, so we take this opportunity to offer suggestions and concerns that might inform the detailed design stage.

The majority of NERG members use the baths on a daily or weekly basis. Their main activities are lap swimming, recreational swimming, hydrotherapy, pool walking and family activities involving children. The needs of the various pool users are diverse. Some of the features they value are different, but many concerns and suggestions overlap.

Pool walkers are supportive of retaining the sandy bottom. There have been concerns raised about how the proposed concrete floor will interact with the sand, and whether constancy will be affected. At present, the rock bottom, covered with sand, provides a stable walking surface. Questions have been raised about how the impervious concrete will perform in this location. Would the cost of constructing and maintaining the base be greater than the cost of occasional maintenance as is the current procedure?

Could there be provision for a zero grade entry (sometimes called a beach entry) to provide equitable and dignified access to the pool? A gradual slope could take a swimmer halfway into the water, then under water steps could assist further entry. There are several design

options that would result in a similar outcome. An existing step/ledge that partially provides this function, will be removed in the upgrade.

Whilst we applaud the gentle grade of the southern ramp, we note that it will affect the perimeter boundary of the pool and water flow. A great number of swimmers and walkers use the 'long lap' facility that the ocean baths provides. This is a unique feature not often found in pools. Some have expressed concern that the location of the ramp here will limit the space that can be used for 'long laps' and will have potential to be crowded where the ramp and pool users intersect.

Some members have questioned the width of the southern ramp. Does it need to be this wide? What sized vehicles would it need to cater for? Can it be reduced in order to preserve more pool space?

We are pleased to hear that the steps on the pool ocean side are to be retained. They provide both a rest point and a point of egress. As young children become more confident, they often progress to swimming from one side of the steps to the other in the 'deep' end. They also provide a place to sit, semi-submerged. They are often utilised by non-swimming adults or elderly patrons for this purpose. NERG believes there should be multiple rest/egress points for swimmers in case of critical circumstances.

The southern ramp from Bathers Way provides good access to the baths. It is essential that access to the car park and the walkway to Newcastle Beach is not blocked by gates and remains open to the public for unimpeded walking/disabled access. The few hours per week that it is needed for truck access should not restrict it from public access for all the other times. (Perhaps a hydraulic bollard system could be used to prevent unauthorised vehicle access on both the southern and northern heritage ramp.)

Entering the pool from Bathers Way via a ramp will only be possible at the southern end of the pool. This will necessitate the provision of parking spaces designated for disability access at the Canoe Pool end of the carpark. There is potential for crowding by multiple facility users – families accessing the Canoe Pool, picnic shelter users, Bathers Way walkers and pedestrians accessing the baths from Newcastle Beach. This may be an issue requiring a design solution.

There is potential for the southern ramp to create wave surges to the upper deck and into the carpark during wild weather events. This could pose a danger to 'spectators' and may need some form of mitigation during weather events.

Many people enter (and will continue to enter) the pool from the existing heritage ramp at the northern end. It is especially convenient for those who want to use the tiered seating, the lap pool and the Cowrie Hole Beach. From the heritage ramp the rest of the pool is accessible. It is unclear whether the curved 'art deco' wall on the northern end blocks access from the upper deck to the heritage ramp. Could you please clarify? It would be our preference to keep that transition open.

The proposed plant room is located on the northern side of this ramp, where a concrete pad exists. Our preference is to consolidate all building structures into a discrete area, rather than having small 'outbuildings' on the site. We believe the plant room would be better located if it was attached to the northern pavilion. The footprint of the northern pavilion is well inside the colourbond fence, so could easily accommodate a plant room. Vehicle access would be via the existing heritage ramp. Moving the plant room would free up the 'observation deck' area looking out to the Cowrie Hole and Nobbys. It has the potential to become a larger, more useable, public domain space. Views of surfers and the rock platform would be uninterrupted. Children playing on the beach could be supervised from here. As another public space, it could be enhanced with picnic shelters and seating.

NERG is pleased to see that the boardwalk will be retained. It is a unique feature much loved by locals and visitors. We are interested to discuss the new materials mentioned on the concept plan.

Our preference has always been to retain sight lines to and from the upper and lower levels. The central stairs/seating pergola inhibits those views. It is likely that the slender nature of the infrastructure shown in the render would, in reality, become much more robust and heavy duty. The pergola appears to be out of scale with the more delicately ornate structure behind it. Rather than be a feature of the pool, we believe it should sit more lightly in its surroundings. Given the weather events that occur regularly on this coast, the likelihood of an acrylic structure surviving for long, is questionable. From the pool the structure dominates views of the heritage pavilions behind it. The structure as shown would only provide shelter from rain if there was no prevailing wind and the rain was gentle.

NERG members have asked if the shade area needs to be over the steps here, or situated further back towards the kiosk. Can the shade provision be lighter/less obtrusive? The existing sails, whilst not particularly aesthetic, are functional and relatively robust. The current shade sails offer adequate shade for families and their 'removability' makes them more flexible. There is an opportunity to provide removable shade on the upper deck. The baths are used all year round, and for several months of the year, shade is not required by pool users. Could the design team look at alternative options for a less dominating shade structure? On the lower deck, swimmers tend to lay on towels to dry off after their swim. There could be provision here for beach umbrella holes in the concrete. NERG would prefer that the current shade structures stay in place until a better design option (perhaps in Stage 2) is developed.

Is there provision for shallow water sections on the western/pavilion side of the pool? Traditionally, this side is used by families teaching young children to swim, and for less confident adults to participate in pool activities. Families with children tend to congregate here because children feel more confident in the shallower water. There could be provision for non-permanent shade structures (like shade sails/holes for beach umbrellas) in this area.

NERG does not support the changed stair arrangement from the upper deck to the lower deck. We are disappointed that the original heritage art deco steps have been removed in favour of rectangular seating. We believe they should be retained and seating/steps be incorporated either side of the original steps. Through careful design, the new steps could be a 'sitting feature' and patrons could be steered towards using the new steps on either side of the rounded originals.

It is our belief that the removal of original features and the installation of fake features is in direct opposition to the Burra Charter. Therefore, we object to the construction of the fake art deco features and Lifeguard 'hut'. We are pleased to see that the original concrete seating on the lower deck has been retained.

Some members have requested additional seating in the form of solid concrete blocks near the southern bleachers whilst still leaving room for truck access. Space to leave towels etc. becomes limited at times, even with the existing full length bleachers beneath the wall.

There is an opportunity for greater inclusive access for swimmers of varying abilities. This can be achieved through small considerations; a recess in the bleachers to leave a

wheelchair, tactile indicators for navigating around and into the pool, perch benches and bag hooks adjacent to open showers etc.

The lifeguard 'hut' is another example of replica construction. The Burra Charter sets out specific guidelines for building on a heritage site. Any new construction should be easily 'read' as new. Fake features are discouraged. The lifeguard observation room has some disadvantages.

It will be closer to the inundation zone during weather events, and therefore more prone to damage over time. It blocks views from the existing southern pavilion. It is bulky in character and adds another built element to the open upper deck area. The sight lines across the site and behind the structure are not optimal. A largely transparent box sited further to the southern end would have been preferable and would provide nearly 360 degree views. Again, our position is to consolidate built structures, avoiding the open baths area whenever possible. One of the aims of the restoration, was to unclutter the existing spaces. We prefer that the lifeguard amenity and first aid room is attached to or incorporated into the existing building in the Stage 2 phase.

NERG supports the lengthening of the existing ramp into the lap pool. This would allow a gentler gradient than the current one. How wide does this ramp need to be? What sized maintenance vehicles will it cater for? Rather than widening the entry ramp for vehicle access, we suggest that a section of the boardwalk be operable, enabling it to be opened, draw-bridge style, to enable vehicle access from the main pool. All vehicle access into the pools would then be from the southern ramp.

NERG does not support a ramp along the lap pool on the northern side (as in the alternative option). This would reduce lane width considerably. Some members expressed that it would be highly desirable to extend the pool to eight lanes, as this is a 1 in 100 year opportunity.

Can the system of rails (surrounding the inflow pools) on the ocean side be consolidated?

NERG has always maintained that the baths should have no commercial component such as a function centre or restaurant. There are many reasons for this stance – environmental, social and economic. The female change rooms (northern pavilion) is depicted in the render as a two-storey building. This Stage 2 decision has not been determined. We urge the design team to eliminate this two-storey component from all future concept plans in the

interests of focusing on Stage 1 features. The fate of the pavilion buildings will be a whole other story!

Karen Read

NERG

## **2. Newcastle East Residents Group (NERG) – submission II**

Ocean Baths Concept Plans - further considerations from NERG

NERG members believe that the proposed shade structure over the 'bleacher seats' should not be locked in until the co-design on the upper promenade (including seating, shading, sightlines, etc.) has been determined. At previous CRG meetings, there was no mention of a shade structure to be included in the scope for Stage 1. Nor was a lifeguard hut included in the Stage 1 scope. NERG believes there is a need to consider other feasible lifeguard observation sites such as SE or NE corner, incorporated in the northern enclosure, a central but elevated site, etc.

NERG's suggestion to reduce detached building forms and relocate the plant room/pumphouse and attach it to the northern end of the northern pavilion (on the former Energy Australia substation site) met with open resistance by CoN representatives at the meeting. This negative reception combined with the disturbing inclusion of a two-storey northern box shown in Stage 1 renders, leads to a perception that CoN has a pre-determined plan to maximise the potential development envelope of the women's change room pavilion. There appears to be an agenda to keep the northern pavilion for facilities other than baths-related. CoN's reluctant suggestion to consider an observation deck on top of the plant room (located next to the fence overlooking the Cowrie Hole) demonstrates how keen Council is to keep the northern pavilion as large and empty as possible. CoN's suggestion of a deck on top of the plant room would deny access to anyone with mobility issues and parents with prams because it would need to be entered via a set of stairs. Our preference is to preserve this flat viewing area as public domain space that can easily be accessed by all. There is an opportunity to incorporate picnic tables and seats. It makes no sense to deprive all users of the extraordinary views to the north from the two level platforms against the northern boundary fence.

The rounded heritage central stairs should be retained as a heritage element. They are an integral heritage feature that lead the eye up to the pavilions. A stepped wall such as the one

pictured overpage, would clearly separate the central stairs from adjoining bleachers and new stairs. We would be pleased if you could add this addendum to our previous submission. NERG is happy to have these considerations shared with other CRG members and published on the CRG webpage.



Regards

Karen Read

NERG

### **3. Newcastle East Residents Group (NERG) – submission III**

The Boardwalk

Having just one vehicle ramp to service both pools would be a better outcome for the baths. The ramps reduce the swimming area of the pools considerably. A local engineer offered these suggestions for designing the boardwalk so that it can be opened to allow maintenance vehicles into the lap pool. a) A 'drawbridge' section that opens in two short sections (like a pair of double doors). b) A 'removable' section that can be lifted off by a digger and placed either on top of the fixed boardwalk, or on the ground.

NERG

#### 4. Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust – submission IV



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nationaltrust.org.au/nsw

Hunter Regional Committee  
PO Box 791  
HAMILTON NSW 2303  
[metrikas1@gmail.com](mailto:metrikas1@gmail.com)  
26 March 2021  
12/21

City of Newcastle

Attention: Matt Blandford, Ocean Baths project team

#### 1 OCEAN BATHS CRG#4, 24 MARCH 2021 – SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDBACK

Shown below are some captioned images which might help explain issues raised in our submission HRCNT 11/21 lodged 25 March 2021:

#### 2 'OBSERVATION DECKS'



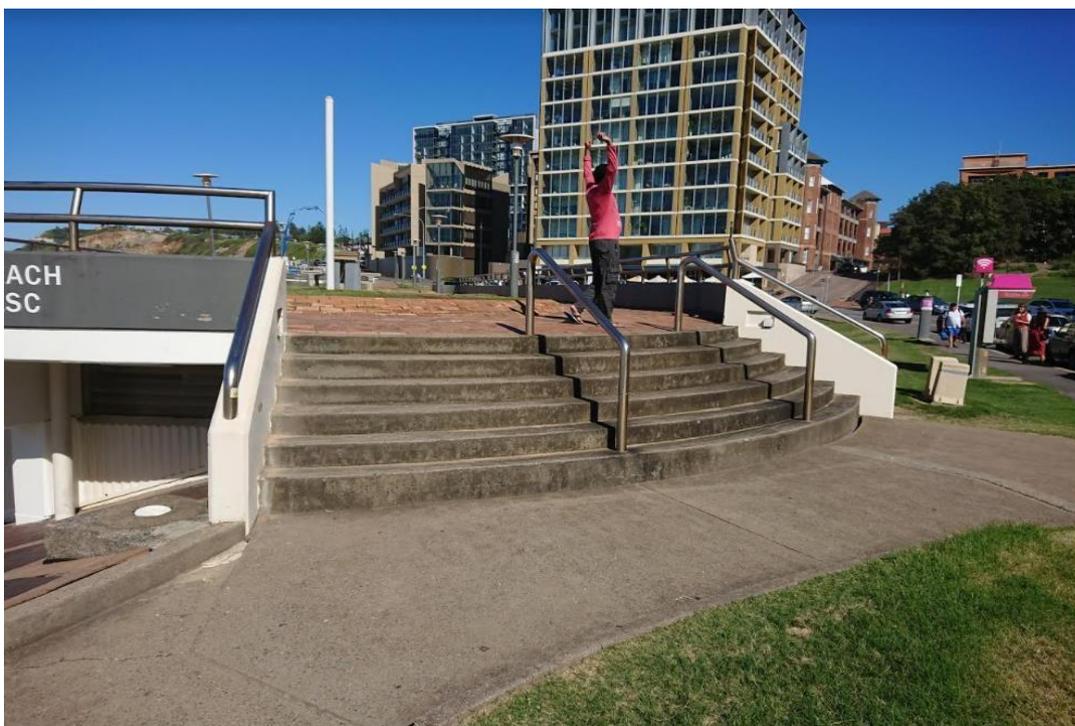
Upper two (of three) tiered platforms with views to Tomaree peninsula. Premier opportunity for picnic tables, seating, whale watching telescope, wedding/surfing photos and interpretation. Additional ambulant access by pedestrians & cyclists off Bathers Way direct to upper and lower concourses reduces congestion at southern ramp and central access.

### 3 CANOE POOL ACCESS



Need for more legible & direct access from Canoe Pool to pool concourse (Stage 1 scope of works). Note existing timber stairs further to the west. Recommend consultation with indigenous artist to relocate totemic poles.

### 4 RETAIN ART DECO CENTRAL STAIRS



Consistent pattern at city coastal infrastructure. Similar arrangement at Parnell Place park. Note balustrades provide additional handrails to the flanks. Could still accommodate flanking bleachers.

#### 4.1 SOUTH-EASTERN DETAIL



Shotcrete rubble retaining wall can't be described as art deco. Note Canoe Pool pumphouse 'wedge', possibly 1962, if not earlier. Probably extends 2m below concourse. Interpretive totemic poles may need relocation in Stage 1. Inlaid indigenous public art damaged & would need relocation. This retaining wall should not be painted to avoid association with 1946 bleachers, a highly valued heritage element.

#### 4.2 SHADE STRUCTURES



Example of a weather shelter harmonised for a harsh coastal location. Soffit, fascia and natural timber frame are better proportioned and less visually intrusive than Stage 1 preliminary concept. Timber weathers well. Structure easier to repair. Overall shade requirement will not be known until Stage 2 co-design, including picnic tables and seating scheme.

#### 4.3 LIFE GUARD TOWER – some modern examples





We welcome the circulation of our supplementary submission to CRG members, and/or posting to the CRG webpage.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Metrikas

*BA, Grad Dip Heritage Studies*

Co-chair, Hunter Regional Committee

National Trust of Australia (NSW)

0415 144 355

## 5 Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths Inc. - submission V



To Ocean Baths Team

The Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths Incorporated (FONOB) make the following comments about the pre-detail stage of the Stage 1 of the redevelopment presented at meeting 4 of the Newcastle Ocean Baths Upgrade CRG

- Shade structures have been included in the stage 1 designs. FONOB recommend that this is unnecessary and should be delayed to stage 2 when the details of the design of the upper promenade will be determined. The shade structures could then be in harmony with the upper promenade.

The CRG provided feedback last year that they wanted the pool concourse with clean lines, free of shade shelters, seating that obscured sight lines.

- We are supportive of the commitment to retain the sand floor of the pool. However, we raise concerns if the sand floor can be maintained and function as it does now if the bottom of the pool is covered with concrete. There was minimal detail provided at the CRG. There was no scientific evidence provided at the CRG meeting on last Wednesday that a concrete floor could work as efficiently as it does now. Nor was there any detail provided on the current status of the rock flooring. Matthew Blandford justified the proposal on the grounds that it would be more cost effective compared than the current method.

Could you please provide examples where a concrete floor provides an effective base for a sand covering?

What type of concrete do you intend to use?

Do you have studies available to justify the type of concrete you intend to use?

Will the concrete be laid directly onto the rock flooring?

What quantity of concrete have you calculated will be needed?

What variations are there in the depth of the current pool when all sand is removed? Will the concrete floor result in a constant depth of the pool or will the natural deposition of the sand still result in variations of depth? (currently the walkers tend to generally use the western side of the pool while the swimmers use the eastern side).

- FONOB support zero grade access into the pool. Your design correctly identifies a 1:14 gradient for ramps into the pool. However, we recommend that zero grade access should not only be a ramp access to the pool. We support the addition of access points that are a combination of a partial ramp and under water steps.

Your design indicates that an existing point of entry that is similar to a ramp/steps will not be replaced. Our observation is that it is used not only by people with disabilities but by parents encouraging their children gradually into the pool.

FONOB would like to see finer detail of entry points proposed.



*Maintaining access/egress points are essential. The southern ramp cannot be the only exit point. If swimmers become exhausted to either walk or swim down to the southern ramp issues with their safety will arise.*

- The designs did not show details of access/egress points on the seaward side of the pool. However, a comment was made by? GHD representative that there would be steps on the seaward side. FONOB highly supports the inclusion of these. The current steps on the seaward side provide not only access/egress points they provide essential rest points.

FONOB would like a commitment that at least two access/egress points will be included in the final design. We would recommend the points on the seaward side be increased to possibly three.

We recommend that access/egress points of the whole pool sides be maximised for safety of users. (elderly, disabled, children and for those who suddenly become fatigued)

- The width of the southern ramp causes us concern as it will impact on the long lap swimmers and walkers. NOB appears unique in this feature. In rough southerly weather swimmers often take refuge along the southern wall and swim the width of the pool. The southern pool sides and the small concrete “wall” along the southern lower promenade

(that doubles for seating and sun bathing) protects swimmers from the rough water that is generated by the wind. A wide ramp would negate this protection.

Could you please advise FONOB of the exact proposed width?

Is this width based on the type of vehicle that will require access to the pool?

Is it possible to keep the width of the ramp to a minimum that will still provide safe access for vehicles and meet the requirement of disabled access and thus reduce the impact on long lap swimmers and walkers?

Is it possible to replicate a small "wall" the same height of the current southerly structure on the edge of the southern side of the pool?

Is it possible to lengthen the pool on the southern end into the current walk way to negate the loss of length due to the inclusion of the ramp? NOB is unique in length of the pool, currently about 75 meters.

- The proposed southern ramp also may be a safety hazard for long lap swimmers. Hitting hands, scrapping knees etc will occur if swimmers run into the ramp. Currently the southern wall of the pool acts as a firm stop.

Consider an elevated wall edge above water line on the left side of the ramp so that long lap swimmers know where the boundary is. This wall will also act as a jumping point for younger swimmers.

- FONOB praise the retention of the Boardwalk.

We would like more details on what materials will be used in its reconstruction.

- FONOB believes that access entry to the Baths from Bathers Way not be confined. We recommend that 3 entry points be maintained. (southern, central and northern ends). Design needs to be considered so that there is no overcrowding of entry points. Events such as school carnivals and big events could exacerbate overcrowding of entry points. Easy access by ambulance needs to be maintained at all times.

FONOB looks forward to more detail on the entry points to both the lower and upper promenades.

- The plant room proposed location should be reconsidered. FONOB recommend it be tacked onto the outside of the northern wall (not the colourbond boundary). This will enable people to step from the upper promenade onto the old northern vehicle ramp and out onto Bathers Way. Our concern is the proposed location will hinder views of the Cowrie Hole and Nobbys. It will prevent observation of children on the northern stretch of beach and hinder photographers. (the value of photographers both local and tourists cannot be underestimated for the promotion of the area from the Baths to Nobbys).
- FONOB believes the original art deco central steps must remain. We believe clever design will enable their retention as well as adding more steps on either side of the art deco steps.

- FONOB support the principles of the Burra Charter and we do not support designing new features to imitate the original art deco features of the Baths.

FONOB would like to see a commitment to any concept designs supporting the principles of the Burra Charter regarding building on sites of heritage significance.

- FONOB has been informed by the NERG representative, Karen Read, that NERG have suggested that the Boardwalk incorporate a “draw bridge” concept to allow vehicle access to the lap pool to negate the effect of a larger ramp decreasing the space of the lap pool.

FONOB support this concept.

- FONOB would also like to make comments on last Wednesday’s CRG. (meeting 4 of the Newcastle Ocean Baths Upgrade)
  1. We thank all Council employees, Councillors and the Creative Ingredient for the respect shown to our Incorporated group and all other participants on the night.
  2. We were restrained in communicating with our members by the tight schedule of receiving the preliminary designs at 6.02pm on Monday 22/03/21.
  3. The release of the designs to media the next day made it difficult for us to answer enquiries and questions from our members and members of the public. We hope that the time frame between us receiving information and the date of the next CRG is longer.
  4. Lastly and of great concern is that the northern structure (formerly the women’s change rooms) appears to be depicted on the render as a two-story structure. We ask that this two-story structure impression be removed from any renders concerning stage 1. We have previously been assured that no decisions have been made concerning stage 2 designs. It has caused alarm to our members and the public that decisions have already been made regarding stage 2.

Peter Wickham

Representative for CRG

FONOB Inc.

## Attachment B

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### Renders





# PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Newcastle Ocean Baths, Preliminary design  
Stage 1 – Pools and promenades



## Attachment C

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### Agenda

#### Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group



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### Agenda – Meeting 4

<b>Date:</b> 24 March 2021	<b>Time:</b> 6:00pm to 7:30pm	<b>Venue:</b> Hunter Room Newcastle City Hall
<b>Meeting Objective:</b> Meeting to provide an update on Newcastle Ocean Baths Upgrade Project and discuss design option considerations		

#### Invited Attendees

Matt Blandford	CN Senior Project Planner (Chairperson)
Brenda Madden	Creative Ingredient (Facilitator)
Ruth McLeod	Creative Ingredient
Cr Nuatali Nelmes	Lord Mayor
Cr Declan Clausen	Deputy Lord Mayor
Cr Emma White	CN Infrastructure Advisory Committee
Cr John MacKenzie	CN Liveable Cities Advisory Committee
Robert Russell	CN Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee & Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council
Peter Sherlock	Hunter Living Histories (Coal River Working Party)
Peter Wickham	Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths
Karen Read	Newcastle East Residents Group
Mark Metrikas	National Trust
Robert Faraday	Representative of local businesses
Amber Moncrieff	Community member
Jennifer Ciba	Community member
Paula Thistleton	Community member
Paul Scott	Community member
Jeremy Landers	Community member
David Compton	Community member
Paula Thistleton	Community member
Peter Shields	Community member
David Henderson	Community member
Roderick See	Community member

#### City of Newcastle Project Representatives

Joanne Rigby	CN Manager Assets and Projects
Lynn Duffy	CN Manager Parks and Recreation
Donna McGovern	CN Aquatics Services Manager
Glenn Mahood	CN Manager of Property and Facilities
Nick Kaiser	CN Acting Manager Major Events & Corporate Affairs
Meaghan Bennett	CN Project Planning Coordinator
Natalie D'Arcy	CN Community Engagement Coordinator
Emily Dowswell	CN Acting Media & Stakeholder Relations Manager

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### Agenda – Meeting 4

Item	Topic	Responsibility	Time
1	<b>Welcome</b>	Facilitator	5 mins
2	<b>Agenda</b>	Facilitator	1 min
3	<b>Apologies</b>	Facilitator	1 min
4	<b>CRG Update</b> Member and staff changes Terms of Reference	Matthew Blandford Nick Kaiser	8 mins
5	<b>Project Update</b> Stage 1 Stage 2	Matt Blandford GHD / Glenn Mahood	15 mins
6	<b>Stage 1 Indicative Design Options Feedback</b> Group discussion	Facilitator	30 mins
7	<b>Additional Questions and Discussion</b>	Facilitator	15 mins
8	<b>Next Steps</b> Site tours	Facilitator	5 mins

**Meeting Close**

**Next Meeting:** to be confirmed

Presentation Slides



# Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group Meeting 4

24 March 2021



## Welcome

- Acknowledgement of Country
- Introductions: who's in the room
- Farewell Tiahna and Caitlin
- Welcome Jennifer



## Agenda

- CRG Updates
  - Member changes
  - Terms of reference finalised
- Project Update
  - Stage 1
  - Stage 2
- Stage 1 Pools and Promenades Preliminary Designs
- Additional questions and discussion
- Next Steps



## Meeting Goals

### Why are we here?

Receive project update

Provide feedback on Stage 1  
Preliminary Designs:

Ramps, shade, stairs, seating  
General look and feel



## Meeting Protocols

- One person speaking at any one time
- Be clear and concise with your responses (1 minute)
- Keep language respectful
- Does everyone agree?



Project Update

## Stage 1



# Project Stages

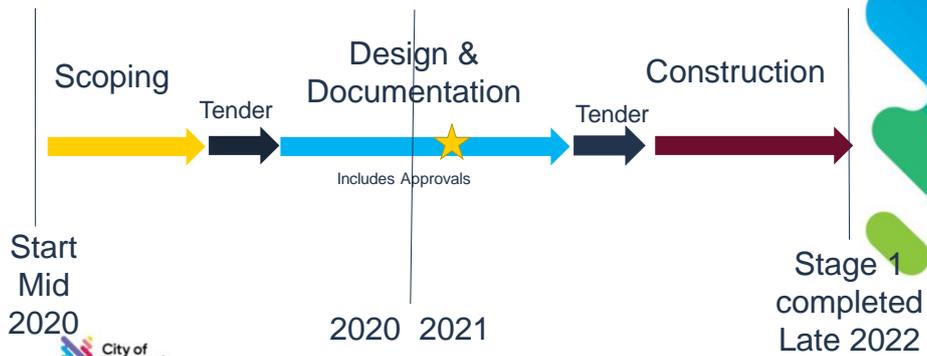
**Stage 1**  
Pools side of works

**Stage 2**  
Pavilions side of works



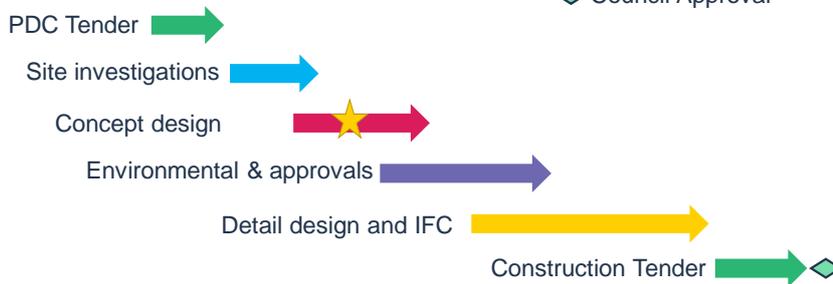
## Stage 1: Pools Timeline (approx.)

★ We are here



## Stage 1: Design Tender

★ We are here  
◇ Council Approval



## Stage 1: Design Tender

CN engaged a Principle Design Consultant (PDC) in GHD to complete the Stage 1 design, including:

- Site investigations
- Concept design
- Environmental investigations and approvals
- Detail design
- For Tender and Construction documentation



Project Update

## Stage 2



## Western Facade Site Investigations

- Preliminary results received indicate that the facade is not in imminent danger of collapse
- Repair/significant maintenance is strongly recommended in the coming 18-24 months regardless of final Stage 2 outcome
- Further work required to determine what repair methods are feasible



## Stage 2: Next Steps

- Commence works on a Needs Analysis for the pavilion and surrounding public domain in the coming months
  - Will utilise feedback from broad engagement and CRG meetings/workshops
- Resume consultation with CRG based on outcomes of Needs Analysis to develop scope of works for Stage 2
- Engage a PDC to complete Stage 2 design and approvals



## Group Discussion

# Stage 1 Pools and Promenades Preliminary Designs



## Stage 1: Preliminary Design

The Preliminary Designs aim to:

- Improve access to the pools
- Improve structural stability of the site
- Improve site features to allow for more consistent water quality
- Maintain key features of the site, such as boardwalk and bleachers around the north end of the site
- Maintain the heritage-nature and art deco look and feel of the site





## Round Table Discussions

- Preliminary design images
- Please discuss and provide your feedback
- Take a few minutes to look at the proposed designs
- Discuss around the table what you like and what might be missing
- Make notes, sketches, comments on the images



*Access*

*Shade*

*Stairs*

*Ramps*

*Seating*

*General look and feel*



## Round Table Discussions

### REPORT BACK

- Three (3) things the group liked most
- Three (3) suggestions for change



*Access*

*Shade*

*Stairs*

*Ramps*

*Seating*

*General look and feel*



# Questions



# Next Steps



## Stage 1: Next Steps

- CRG feedback to Preliminary designs provided to Project Team
- Concept design to be developed and presented to Councillors
- Final Concept design and other supporting information emailed to CRG
- PDC work through Detail design to produce Tender Documentation
- Engage construction contractor mid-2021
- Construction works scheduled to be completed by December 2022; start date and overall duration to be determined.



# Thank you



30 March 2021  
Meeting facilitated and minutes prepared by:



**[newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au)**