

Concept for Foreshore Park

What is included in the concept for Foreshore Park?

The preliminary concept for Foreshore Park features a number of event spaces, picnic and BBQ lawns, landscaping, trees and shade, cultural heritage walk and an inclusive playspace and integrated waterplay area.

What are the features of the inclusive playspace?

City of Newcastle and Variety, The Children's Charity have been working on the design of Newcastle's first Livvi's Place inclusive playspace which spans over 4,000m². The playspace will cater for a variety of ages and abilities. It will feature shaded play areas, and favourites such as swings and a flying fox, along with water play area, quiet spaces, boardwalk and cultural heritage walk.

Like most inclusive playspaces, the facility will be fully enclosed to reduce the risk of children wandering out of the site, away from parents and guardians.

Why is the proposed location of the inclusive playspace different to the existing playspace?

The location of the playspace was selected for several reasons including its proximity to the original shoreline of Newcastle's harbour. This feature has allowed the project team to capitalise on the rich history of the site and explore several Awabakal themes within the waterplay area where kids can learn through play. The site is easily accessible from Bond St and Wharf Rd car parks. It will be able to remain open during major events and maximises the use of the park by activating a currently underutilised section. The neighbouring picnic areas will provide views to both the playspace and the harbour.

What's happening with Wharf Road and Foreshore Reserve?

Wharf Road and Foreshore Park are important links from the city centre to the coast.

Future designs will aim to integrate improved cycling infrastructure, improved landscaping to key nodes and celebrate the harbour, transforming the harbour into a world class foreshore.

The foreshore will be designed in accordance with the Draft Cycling Plan - On our bikes, and Draft Parking Plan plans - On the street, due for adoption by Council in February 2021. The project team will develop the concepts with input from key stakeholders and community groups. The concept will be able to inform the draft masterplan and will be on exhibition as a single Harbour Foreshore Masterplan.

What changes will there be to the event spaces?

Foreshore Park is Newcastle's premier event space and currently hosts a range of large and small scale events. The concept looks to create highly versatile spaces that are easily linked to one another through generous shaded paths. The concept proposes to place all major event spaces on the northern side of the park which will allow an easy bump in and out from Wharf Road. While limitations on tree planting within Shortland Lawn have been defined within the Foreshore Plan of Management (PoM), this space will retain its unique character. The desire for a shaded events lawn is realised in the proposed "Commons". This generous open lawn is proposed to be tree lined with uninterrupted access to the historic rail shed and views to the harbour. The two event spaces will be linked through a formal tree grove. Each space, including the grove, has capacity to host a unique event or be linked to together showcase the harbour during a major event.

Why has the frog pond been removed?

The PoM required investigation into the retention, reduction or removal of the Frog Pond. During Phase 1 engagement, City of Newcastle asked for feedback about the future use of the frog pond. Community feedback was mixed between keeping the frog pond and removing it or repurposing it for other uses. Throughout community consultation, the desire for shaded lawn area and increased tree canopy exceeded the desire to retain the Frog Pond. While it is a significant feature within the foreshore representing the original fresh water source of the harbour, the opportunity to explore the stories surrounding the original foreshore line and the lives of the Awabakal people is an important one for Newcastle and provides a suitable alternative to the story of the Frog Pond. This story will be told through the cultural heritage walk and water play space along the southern edge of the park. The removal of the Frog Pond will greatly increase connectivity throughout the park. The recent adaption into an informal skate rink has identified a need of the community for a 'junior' skating space which has been included in the current concept.

How has accessibility been considered in the development of the concept?

The project has worked with key stakeholders and accessibility advisory groups in preparation of the concept plan. Connectivity and wayfinding from public transport and carparks have been a key consideration in the placement of different elements. Variety, the Children's Charity has partnered with City of Newcastle to deliver the designs for the playspace. Their unique perspective on accessible and inclusive playspaces is invaluable in developing the concepts. The park and playspace will be designed for people of all ages and abilities, and adequacy cater for parents and carers alike.

Will there be changes to the existing buildings?

The concept proposes several changes to buildings within the park. The western amenities will be upgraded or replaced and include plant for the waterplay space. The amenities next to the Railway Shed has been scheduled for removal, opening access to the Railway Shed and views from the southern lawn area. These facilities are proposed to be relocated near the Telford Street steps and will include a café/ kiosk to service the park and playspace.

There are no changes scheduled for the Railway Shed.

What is happening with Tug Berth Lane?

The concept has proposed Tug Berth Lane to become an extension of the Foreshore parkland with a shared pathway dissecting the space, retaining connections to Nobbys Beach and Bathers Way. The new parkland will provide unique opportunities to picnic on shaded lawn or terraces with uninterrupted views of the harbour while pedestrians and cyclists pass behind.

Is a kiosk being considered for Foreshore Park?

Phase 1 consultation identified the desire for a kiosk or café within the park. The concept has proposes a café/kiosk near the playground, railway shed and proposed productive garden. This central location will become a pivotal hub of the park, be able to service many different sections of the park and remain accessible during major events.

Will carparking around Foreshore Park change?

The concept aims to retain parking in and around Foreshore Park. The project team will work with stakeholders to establish how to best use the available spaces ensuring the provision for accessible and E-charging spots and alike meets future demands.

Why do earlier concept designs differ from what has been released in Phase 2 engagement?

The evolving nature of the design and consultation process has allowed the project team to modify the draft concept as pertinent information is provided by the community and stakeholders. While the concept is still high level, it aims to provide a realistic expectation of the changes proposed for the park and clarifies areas and uses that has been too ambiguous with the community groups and stakeholders.

What is a masterplan and why do we need one?

What is a masterplan

A masterplan is a document that guides the management and future development of an area. It is a process that defines what is important about a place and how its character and quality can be conserved, improved and enhanced. In the case of the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore, the masterplan will include key information such as historical context, background information, values, principles and objectives, and concept designs that will be used as a blueprint to progress the revitalisation of the site.

Why is the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore Masterplan being developed?

City of Newcastle adopted the Foreshore Plan of Management (PoM) in October 2015. The PoM provided guidance on key management objectives for the space, including maintaining visual amenity and views, providing appropriate facilities and services and creating flexible spaces to meet community needs. It also identified improvements to pedestrian and cycleway access and better activation of dormant spaces. The PoM identified the need to develop a masterplan to guide the future development of the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore including the development of a regional-level inclusive playspace. Recognition of the establishment of the parkland and historical uses will form a crucial part of the plan.

Why is it important to revitalise Newcastle Harbour Foreshore?

The Harbour Foreshore is an important recreation and cultural space for the inner city and the wider Newcastle community. Given its soaring popularity, consideration must be given as to how it can be enhanced to help complement the City's ongoing revitalisation and meet the growing needs of the community. There are significant opportunities to improve the use and functionality of the Foreshore through;

- the provision of an inclusive playscape with potential of a water-themed playspace at Foreshore Park.
- providing better cycleway and pedestrian linkages between the Bathers Way to the Honeysuckle and Civic precincts;
- improving the layout and integration of event spaces throughout the foreshore
- greater recognition to the historical influences and cultural elements celebrated along the foreshore;
- exploring opportunities to increase night-time activation;
- exploring opportunities to provide an integrated community building to host minor functions; and

- investigating opportunities to conserve and protect significant trees, which contribute to the foreshore's significant visual amenity.
- improving the pedestrian and cycle amenity.
- Revitalising the streetscape and public domain along Wharf Road and Argyle St.

What is the scope of the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan?

Newcastle Harbour Foreshore was identified as a priority project within the 2015 PoM. The site includes the area east of Merewether Street, along Wharf Road and the Joy Cummings Promenade, to Foreshore Park. City of Newcastle will run community engagement throughout the key phases of the project and the feedback received will help inform development of the masterplan.

The masterplan seeks to retain the natural aspects of the Foreshore and preserve its uniqueness while advancing short, medium and long-term improvements within the area. The scope includes opportunities for an inclusive playground and options for a water-themed play space.

Consideration will also be given to a range of recreational, accessibility and landscaping improvements as well as opportunities for future events spaces. This could include, but is limited to, pathways, playspaces, fitness stations, picnic tables, barbecues, park benches, public art, or structures to improve dining and entertainment options such as a café, restaurant or infrastructure for festivals and events.

Who is designing the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan?

The City of Newcastle has partnered with Variety – the Children Charity to deliver the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan. Together we have engaged Landscape Architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean Pty Ltd (TCL) who have partnered with local firm Bosque Studio Landscape Architects. TCL are a multi award winning firm responsible for several iconic landscape and playspaces throughout Australia and around the world including Geelong Waterfront, Auckland Waterfront and Cairns Waterfront. TCL has set the standard other firms benchmark themselves against and they provide a tailored design approach to each project. TCL and Bosque Studio will work with the community to provide high quality and unique landscape design for Newcastle foreshore.

How will the community be involved?

How will the community be involved in masterplan planning?

Through all major stages of the design process, City of Newcastle will be seeking community feedback to ensure the masterplan meets the needs of the community.

City of Newcastle will provide multiple options for the community to provide feedback including online tools, information sessions and workshops and will form a Community Reference Group and Inclusive Playspace Design Reference Group.

The creation of the masterplan is the first phase in the planning process for the Harbour Foreshore. It will continue to develop and evolve as the City sets out to achieve an agreed vision that involves a high level of community and stakeholder involvement and support.

Phase 1 – Initial consultation open from 9 June to 12 July 2020

Phase 2 – Concepts presented to the community from 16 to 5 March 2021

Phase 3 – The Draft Masterplan will be placed on public exhibition.

The project team will continue to update the community as the project progresses.

What is the Harbour Foreshore Community Reference Group?

The Community Reference Group (CRG) was formed to facilitate community and stakeholder input into the development of the masterplan. It consists of a mix of community members and stakeholders.

The purpose of the CRG is to enable two-way communication and engagement between City of Newcastle and representatives of the Newcastle community as we develop a masterplan for the Harbour Foreshore. Members have contributed to the masterplan planning process by providing valuable input on the current and future needs and expectations of the community.

Members were selected by a panel consisting of project members from City of Newcastle tasked with developing the masterplan. Throughout the development of the Masterplan, the CRG will meet a minimum of three times as agreed to in the [CRG Terms of Reference](#).

Inclusive play

What is an inclusive playspace?

An inclusive playspace invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures to come together to socialise and play. Inclusive playspaces are easy to access, navigate, provide a range of play types and challenges, and are equipped with appropriate facilities in a comfortable environment – allowing people to stay and play as long as they choose.

More information on inclusive playspaces can be found at

<https://everyonecanplay.nsw.gov.au/>

What is a Variety's Livvi's Place?

The Touched by Olivia Foundation (TBO) was founded by Justine and John Perkins in 2007 after the death of their daughter Olivia. Since then, TBO has built over 30 inclusive playspaces across Australia. In 2018 Touched By Olivia Foundation partnered with Variety – the Children's Charity to ensure more inclusive playspaces will continue to be built nationally. Variety Livvi's Place at Foreshore Park is a collaborative project of Variety – the Children's Charity NSW/ACT, City of Newcastle and the Newcastle community.

A [Variety Livvi's Place](#) is an inclusive playspace for kids of all ages and all abilities to play side by side. Variety believes all kids deserve a fair go, including the ability to play. Kids of all abilities should be able to experience the joy and benefits of playing together and Variety are proud to partner with communities on these very important projects.

Will Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage be considered?

Will the Aboriginal community be consulted on the proposal?

Yes, the traditional owners of the land have been consulted as part of the preliminary investigations and will continue to have input into the City's plans for the area.

Will any historical or traditional heritage elements be considered in the masterplan process?

Newcastle's Heritas Architecture form part of the design consultant team. They have carried out a comprehensive assessment of the site's heritage that has helped inform the direction of the design. The designers will look for every opportunity to enhance the heritage of the site and incorporate it into the masterplan.

How has Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage been reflected in the concept?

Foreshore Park has is a complex site with many historic layers that contribute to the unique cultural of Newcastle.

The concept has looked for opportunities to explore indigenous and non-indigenous themes throughout the park. Several preliminary ideas have been identified including the cultural heritage walk that will be symbolic of the original coastline. This path allows us to explore the indigenous connection with harbour and highlights how much has changed since European settlement.

This walk dissects the playspace providing the opportunity for people to learn through play. The waterplay space aims to explore Awabakal and Worimi life on the water through three significant items:

- 1) A sea fern maze and splash zone - designed to reflect the indigenous sea ferns that the area is known for, Mulubinba, place of the sea ferns. The maze provides the opportunity to embed other important items that would have been gathered in close proximity to the ferns as well.
- 2) Awabakal canoes and waterplay provides multiple canoes on the water hunting fish. The fish would spray water and interact with boats. Kids would be able to re-enact the hunt.
- 3) Incidental play creates the opportunity to show other aspect of life on the Foreshore in the little nodes created along the path. These will be quieter, intimate places for people to retreat to away from the larger playspaces.

The project team has received preliminary support for the concepts from Newcastle's Guraki Committee and will continue to work closely with the group to develop ideas further.

Other non-indigenous themes within the playspace are iconically Novocastrian:

- 1) The tugboat flying fox and nautical themed swings acknowledges the city as a working harbour.
- 2) The major climbing structure is representative of Newcastle's history in industry through a series of gigantic cogs, screws and slides.

The project team will look for other opportunities to explore the heritage of the site as we work through the development of the draft masterplan.

What else is in scope?

Why isn't Camp Shortland included in the design?

The design of Camp Shortland is currently under contract with Local Firm Terras Landscape Architects. The design of the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan will be coordinated with the those works to ensure a harmonious landscape between the two spaces.

Is Joy Cumming's Promenade included in the work?

Yes. A review of Joy Cummings Promenade will be carried out as a part of masterplan. The Promenade will be retained and enhanced to meet the needs of the community.

How will cycling be incorporated within the Masterplan?

Cycling infrastructure will be a key element to improve connectivity throughout the Harbour Foreshore. City of Newcastle has committed to improving cycleways throughout the city centre. The masterplan will look for opportunities to strengthen connections to Bathers Way, and Honeysuckle and the Civic precincts. The resolution of conflicts between cyclists and Queens Wharf patrons will be addressed as a part of this masterplan. Concepts will be developed with input by the Newcastle Cycling Committee.

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