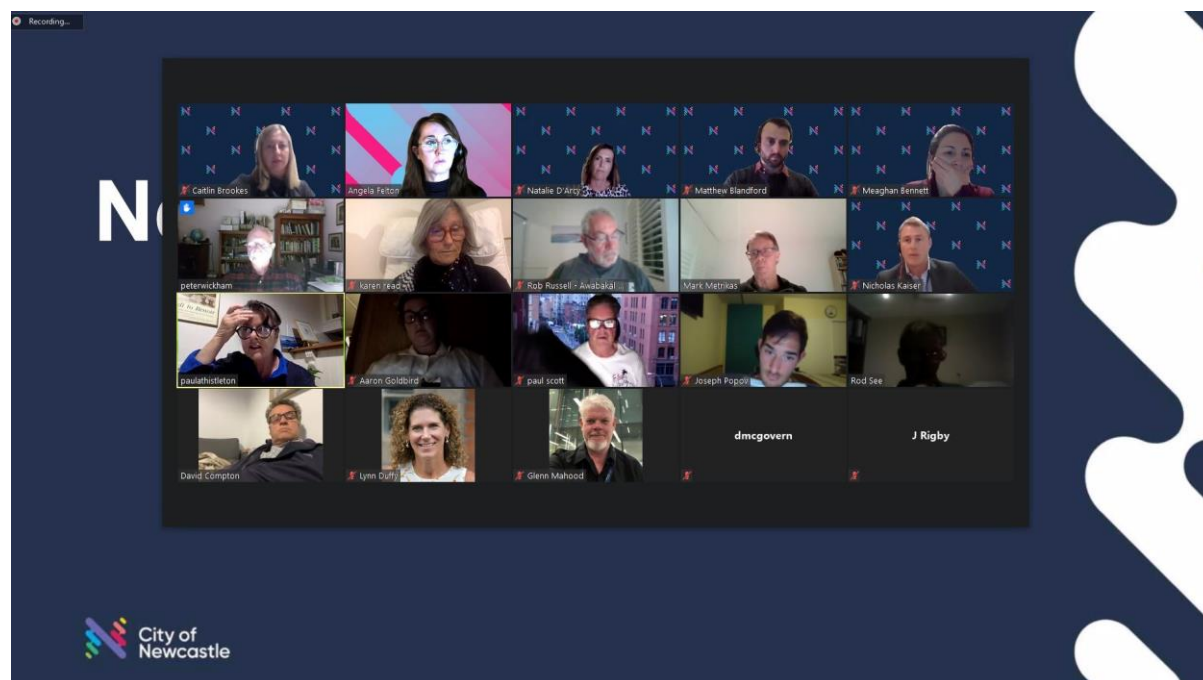


# **Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group August 2020**



City of  
Newcastle

## 1.0 Introduction and Objective



The third meeting of the Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group (CRG) was held on Wednesday 19 August 2020 from 4.30pm to 6.00pm. To align with COVID-19 social distancing protocols, the CRG meeting was held via an online meeting platform (*Zoom*).

The meeting was facilitated by Spectrum Comms. CRG members were encouraged to use the *Zoom* chat function throughout the meeting to compliment the discussions and ask any additional questions. Members of the CRG were joined by representatives from CN who also took part in the *Zoom* meeting. The attendee and apology list are included as **Table 1.0**.

This report has been prepared by Spectrum Comms on behalf of CN.

Name	Organisations/Representative Group	Attendance
Angela Felton	Spectrum Comms /Facilitator	√
Robert Russell	City of Newcastle's Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee & Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council	√
Joseph Popov	City of Newcastle's Access Advisory Committee Representative	√
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	√

Paul Scott	Community member	√
Tiahna Goldbird	Community member	√
Jeremy Landers	Community member	√
David Compton	Community member	√
Paula Thistleton	Community member	√
Roderick See	Community member	√
Matthew Blandford	Senior Project Planner, CN	√
Meaghan Bennett	Project Planning Coordinator, CN	√
Caitlin Brookes	Project Manager Engagement – Coastal Management, CN	√
Natalie D'Arcy	Community Engagement Coordinator, CN	√
Joanne Rigby	Manager of Assets and Projects, CN	√
Lynn Duffy	Manager City Wide Services, CN	√
Nick Kaiser	Media and Stakeholder Relations Manager, CN	√
Glenn Mahood	Manager of Property and Facilities, CN	√
Donna McGovern	Aquatic Services Manager, CN	√
Cr Declan Clausen	Deputy Lord Mayor, CN	√
Peter Shields	Community Member	√
Amber Moncrieff	Community Member	Apology
David Henderson	Community Member	Apology
Robert Faraday	Local business representative	Apology

*Table 1.0 – CRG attendees and apologies*

## 1.1 Meeting Objectives

The objective of the meeting was to bring the CRG and CN team together again to share an update on the Newcastle Ocean Baths project, including:

1. Sharing an overall update on project progress and where the CRG's feedback will be included in the development and refining of concept designs
2. Detailing how CN has progressed planning for Stage 1 (pool and promenade work) based on community feedback, and to check whether CN 'got it right'
3. Information on upcoming co-design workshops to develop two to three design concepts
4. Sharing an update on Stage 2 site investigations (western façade)
5. Sharing information on CN's city-wide revision of the CRG Terms of Reference (ToR)

The meeting agenda and presentation for the Workshop is provided as **Appendix A and B**.

## 2.0 Workshop Agenda and Activities

Members of the CRG were welcomed back and the logistics of the online meeting platform were checked - i.e. can everyone hear and be heard. The group was invited to use the *Zoom Chat* function to ask questions throughout the meeting as well as being advised that they will have an opportunity to ask questions and further discuss at certain points during a presentation.

### 2.1 – Since we last met

Community Engagement Coordinator Natalie D'Arcy presented **Figure 1.0** (below) to provide context for how the CRG is working towards the development and refinement of concept design(s). Natalie's presentation discussed outcomes from recent focus groups on change facilities and café and community spaces. [A link to a summary report from the focus group meetings](#) was provided to CRG members via the Chat function.

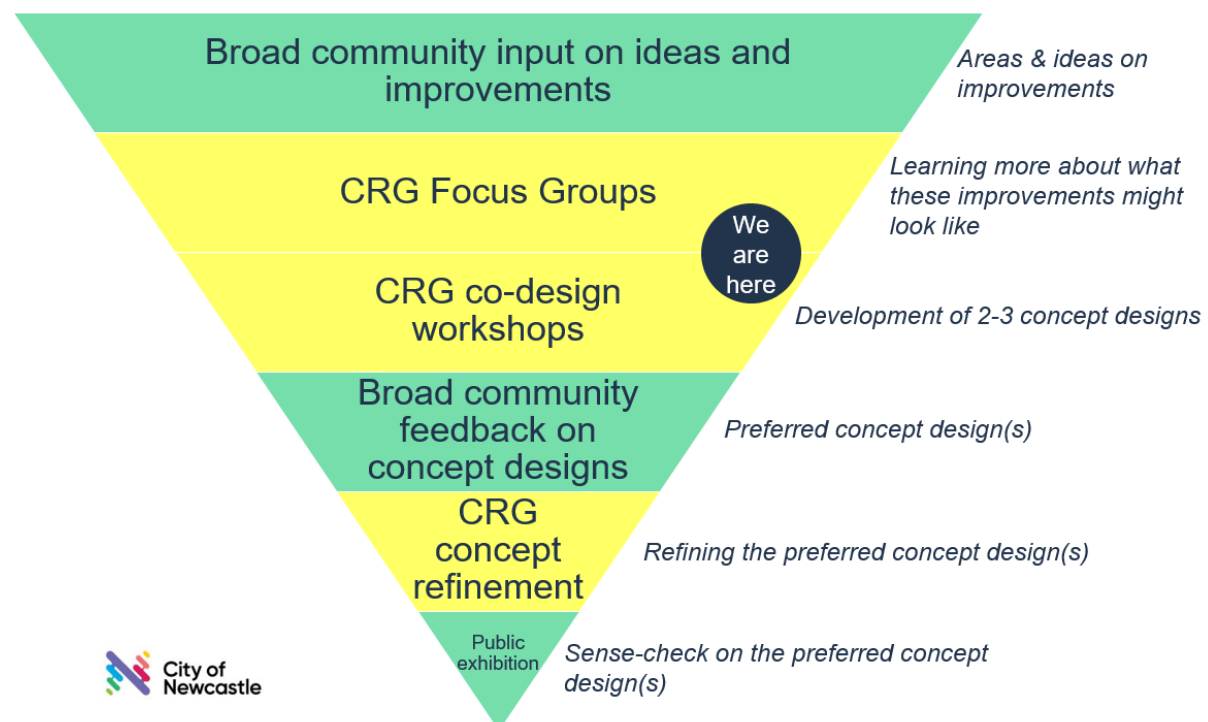
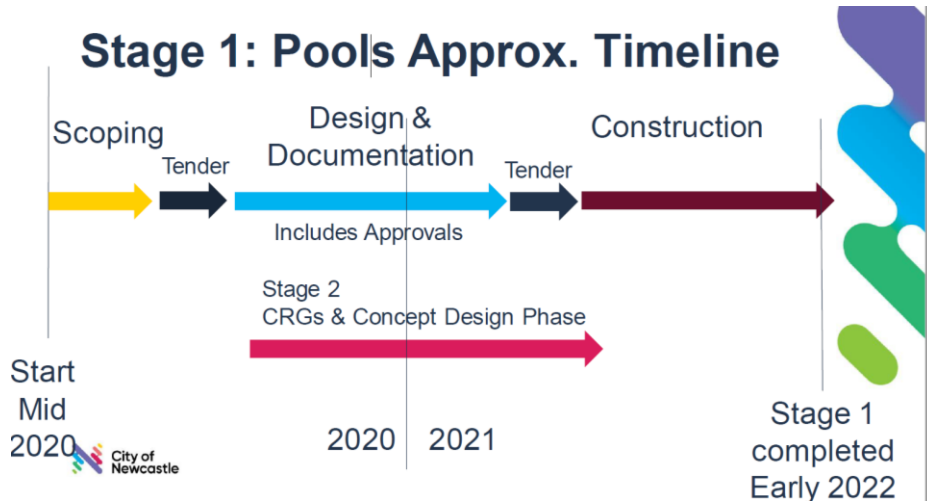


Figure 1.0 – Project Community Engagement 'context'

### 2.2 Project update – Stage 1

CN's Senior Project Planner Matthew Blandford then shared detail on timelines for Stage 1 work (from scoping through to construction).

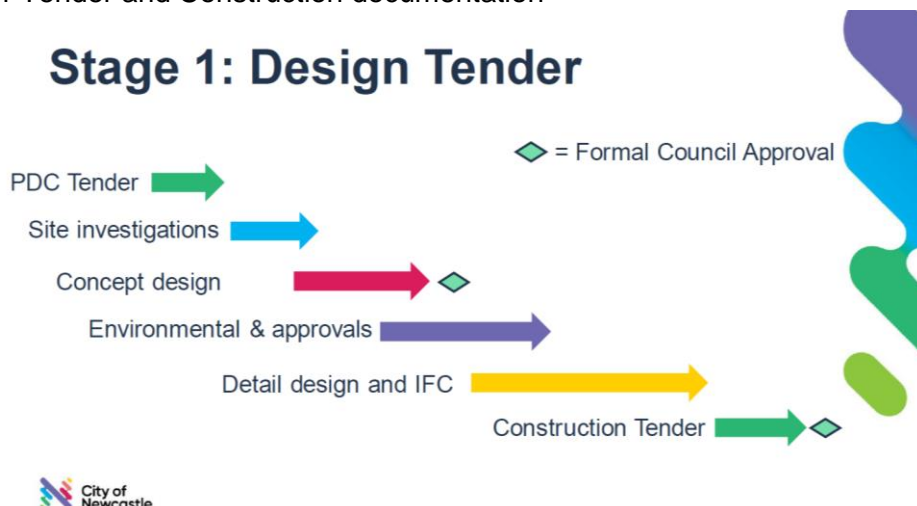
The approximate timeline for the pools side of works (Stage 1):



- We are currently in the scoping phase.
- The intent of today's discussion is to have a clear understanding of all the points that are important to the community and CN for inclusion within the scope for the brief for consultants, then the contract will go out to tender.
- We'll go through the design and documentation stages (including all the necessary environmental assessments and approvals)
- Then go to tender again and construction

Matthew explained that it is CN's intent is to engage a Principle Design Consultant to complete the Stage 1 design, including:

- Site investigations
- Concept design
- Environmental investigations and approvals
- Detail design and Issued for Construction (IFC)
- For Tender and Construction documentation



By engaging a Principle Design Consultant with necessary skills in house they can manage any sub-contracts and to get the best outcome and most efficient process for Stage 1 works.

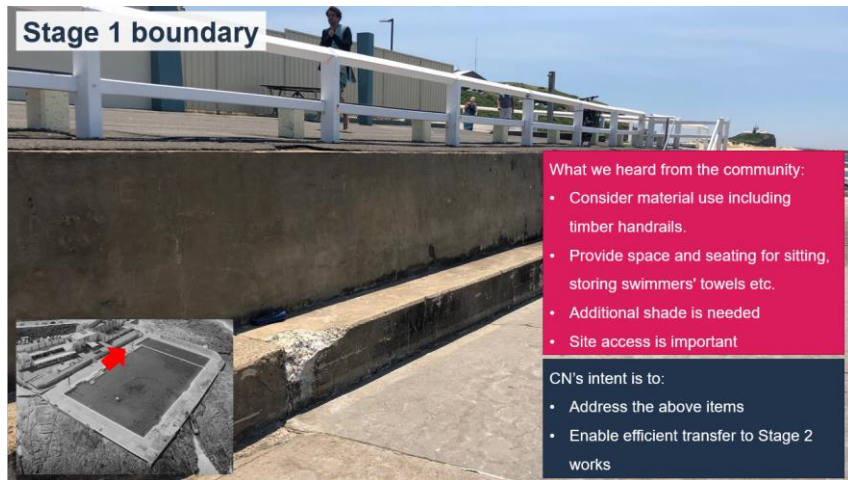
Matthew also shared how CN has progressed planning for Stage 1 work based on community feedback before a group discussion which posed the question – did we get it right?

The information shared by Matthew was broken down into an update on the following aspects of the project:

1. Boundary between stage 1 and stage 2 work
2. Promenade - General
3. Promenade - South
4. Promenade - Southeast
5. Pools and Lighting
6. Pools and Access
7. Boardwalk
8. Pump House

The aim of this activity was to allow CRG members to hear how their feedback and the feedback from broader community engagement activities has been used to define the scope of work for Stage 1. Using the *Miro* online feedback tool which captures feedback in real time via virtual 'post it' notes, the group discussion captured the following feedback.

## Overview of Participant Feedback – What we heard? (Stage 1 work) – Did we get it right?



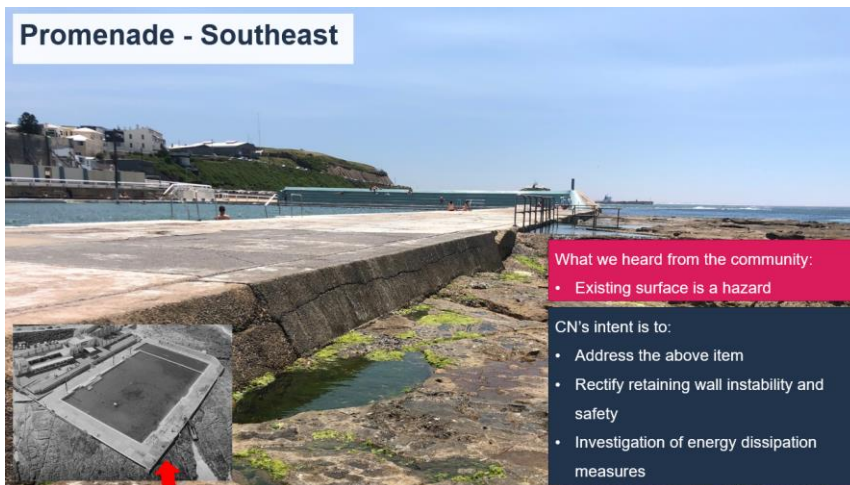
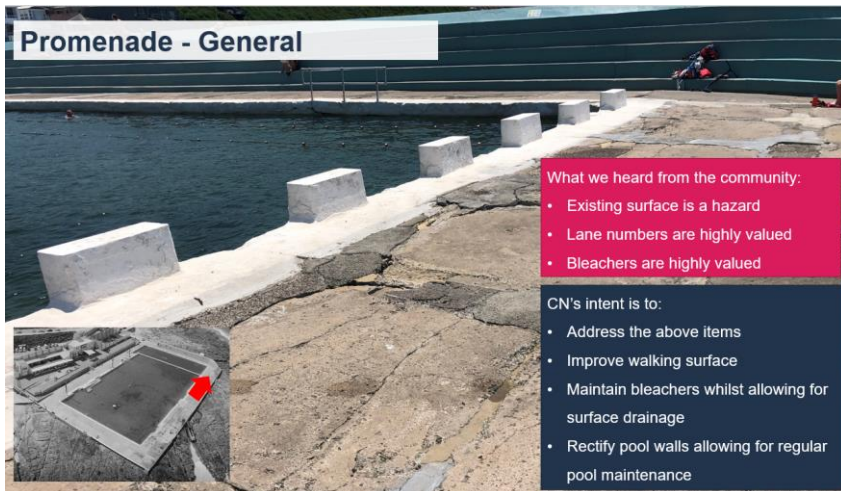
### Stage 1 boundary - General feedback

CRG members were generally in agreement that CN's intentions for Stage 1 boundary of Newcastle Ocean Baths covers most points.

#### Other items raised included:

- Handrails
- Site investigations
- Shade structures
- Construction timeframes







### **Promenade – General Feedback**

CRG members were generally in agreement that CN's intent was correct and aligns with the community's aspirations. The balance between the surface and safety of the surface is also correct.

#### **CRG members highly valued the following:**

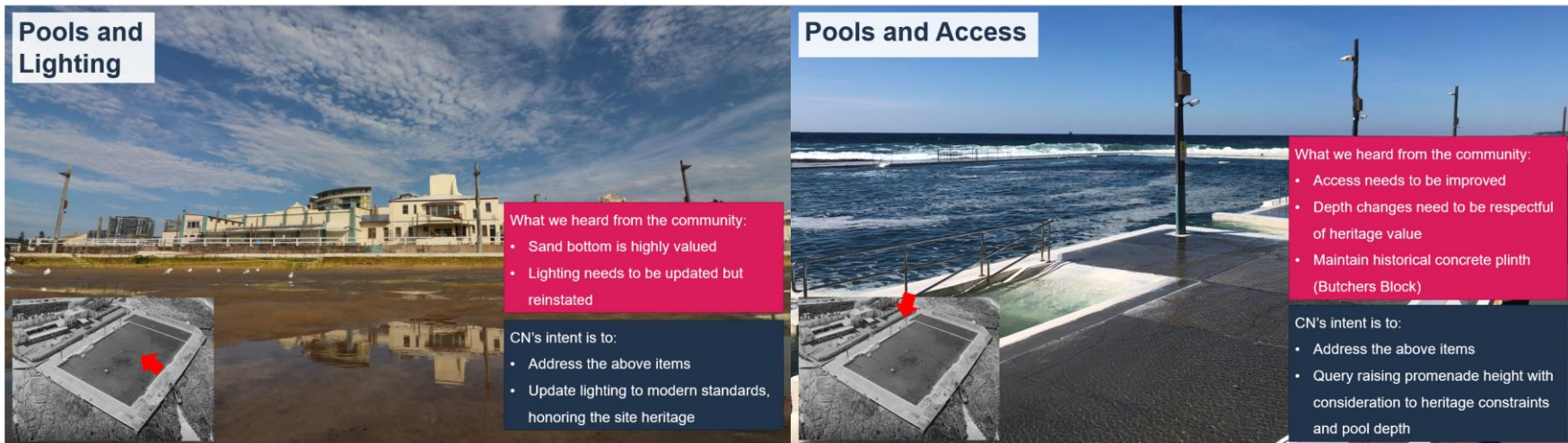
- The colour of the bleachers and acknowledged its art deco heritage
- Swimmers value the bleachers wall (on Cowrie hole side and ramp) and wherever the prevailing sun is so they can warm up after a swim.

#### **Suggested areas for improvement:**

- South eastern promenade area does get more slippery from the wash over of waves, so this safety aspect needs to be addressed in design.
- Consider repeating bleachers on the other side to capitalise on the view to Nobbys Beach.

#### **Other items raised included:**

- Requirement for repairs on the bleachers wall on Cowrie Hole side.
- How all the design elements get weighted as to what is most important, and is this provided to the consultant? For example the south eastern promenade (is a hazardous surface due to waves washing over).
- Will there be a reinforced boundary wall on the edge of the ocean, or will it be lifted higher and therefore create a change in the height of the pool?



### **Pools – Lighting & Access - General Feedback**

CRG members were generally in agreement that CN's intent for pools and lighting and access was correct and aligns with the community's aspirations.

### **Suggested areas for improvement:**

- The natural ocean influx can be used as a compliment to the pumps or a substitute for the pumps. Community members would see environmental benefits to this approach.



### **Boardwalk - General Feedback**

CRG members were generally in agreement that CN's intent for the boardwalk was correct and aligns with the community's aspirations.



### **Pump House - General Feedback**

CRG members were generally in agreement that CN's intent for the Pump House was correct and aligns with the community's aspirations.

#### **Suggested areas for improvement:**

- Consideration should be given to address the wall (shown above) or repeating the bleachers on the other side of existing bleachers to capitalise on the view toward Nobbys.

#### **Other overall general feedback from CRG members discussed:**

- A wall could detract from the heritage aspects of the pool. Consider an ocean through- flow without damaging infrastructure. Allow flow through of wave action.
- Consider a reinforced boundary wall on the edge of the ocean or lifted higher and a change in height of the pool?

## 2.2 - Stage 2 – planning for co-design

Matthew and CN's Project Manager Engagement Coastal Management, Caitlin Brookes, shared an update with the group on preliminary work underway and scheduled for Stage 2. The following items were discussed:

1. Site investigations and testing on western façade is underway
2. The team are continuing to obtain data from the existing electrical corrosion prevention device that has been in place on site since 2006
3. Further testing at the end of August for one week will occur looking at the structural facade to understand what is required to retain it
4. Co-design workshops and site tours to develop concept designs. Site tours will include engineers and consultants
5. Access challenges for stage 1 work.

## 3.0 Summary and next steps

The workshop and discussions via the *Zoom* tool continued to capture the group's ongoing passion and commitment to their involvement in the Ocean Baths consultation process and a genuine commitment to be engaged in an open and transparent manner.

During the group discussion on whether CN 'got it right' in responding to community feedback for Stage 1 design elements, CN were given confirmation that the design elements incorporated for the boardwalk, pools and pool access were in line with community feedback and the CRG's expectations.

CRG members highlighted the importance of any shade structures not obstructing the view of the pool from the buildings. They also highly valued the colour of the bleachers and bleachers wall where they can warm up after a swim.

Similarly, feedback from the CRG on the promenade and pump house was mostly in the form of questions and clarifications that did not indicate any disparity between what CN has heard and what it will build upon as part of upcoming co-design workshops with CRG members. A CRG member suggested that consideration should be given to remediating the concrete wall and ledge (Cowrie Hole side) or repeating the bleachers on the other side of existing bleachers to emphasise the view toward Nobbys Beach. They also suggested that the natural ocean influx can be used as a compliment to the pumps or a substitute for the pumps. Community members would see environmental benefits to this approach.

A preference for email updates to keep members up to date was agreed, as well as a request for agenda and minutes from the focus group meetings to be provided to the group earlier.

CRG members discussed a desire to have an ongoing chat or 'message board' available to them to record and discuss ideas, and to create a more open discourse between the group. CN committed to looking into this for the group. A request was also raised for communication and submissions that are sent to CN by CRG members to be shared with the whole group. Members agreed that they can include a small disclaimer in their correspondence with CN outlining whether they are happy to have this shared with the whole group. See **Appendix D** for comments provided to CN that have been requested for group distribution.



### **3.1 Draft Terms of Reference (ToR)**

An assurance was given to the CRG that while the intention of the group was not changing, CN was looking to create a more consistent approach to managing all its CRG ToR to ensure clear objectives, management of submissions and memberships.

CN's Media and Stakeholder Relations Manager, Nick Kaiser shared information with the CRG on a revised draft ToR including the new role of Community Chairperson that can act as a spokesperson for the group. A link to the draft ToR and a survey form was to be shared with the CRG members following the meeting with sufficient time for review. One comment from the CRG included whether there would be a formalised process to manage an alternate community member if one member is unavailable at the time of the meeting. It was confirmed there was a process detailed within the ToR.

### **3.2 Site tours and co-design workshops**

Natalie D'Arcy shared information about upcoming site tours at the Ocean Baths (mostly outdoor areas for safety and COVID-19 restrictions) and that expressions of interest for the site tours will be circulated along with the draft ToR and survey. Natalie detailed that the intent of the site tours is to look more closely at the Stage 1 items and the opportunities and constraints for Stage 2 works.

Co-design workshops planned for October were also discussed, with the intent to come up with more than one concept design. The varying opinions about bookable community spaces, and kiosk/ cafes arising in the focus group discussions will be worked through during these workshops.

CRG members were thanked for their ongoing patience as we continue to work together via online meetings platforms.



## Appendix A – Workshop Agenda

### Agenda – Meeting 3

<b>Date:</b> 19 August 2020	<b>Time:</b> 4:30pm to 6:00pm	<b>Venue:</b> Online via Zoom <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>
<b>Meeting Objective:</b> Meeting to provide an update on the Newcastle Ocean Baths revitalisation project and next steps		

#### Invited Attendees

Matt Blandford	CN Senior Project Planner (Chairperson)
Angela Felton	Director, Spectrum Consulting (Facilitator)
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
Joseph Popov	CN Access Advisory Committee
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
Tiahna Goldbird	Community member
Paula Thistleton	Community member
Paul Scott	Community member
Jeremy Landers	Community member
David Compton	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 Media & Stakeholder Relations Manager
Meaghan Bennett	CN Project Planning Coordinator
Natalie D'Arcy	CN Community Engagement Coordinator
Caitlin Brookes	CN Project Manager Engagement - Coastal Management

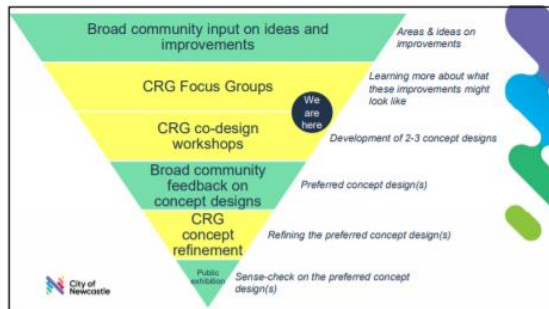
## Agenda – Meeting 3

Item	Topic	Responsibility	Time
The meeting will be online via Zoom <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>			
1.	<b>Welcome</b> 1. Technology checks	Facilitator	5 mins
2.	<b>Agenda</b>	Facilitator	4 mins
3.	<b>Apologies</b>	Facilitator	1 min
4.	<b>Since we last met</b>	Natalie D'Arcy	5 mins
5	<b>Project Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stage 1 Works</b> (<i>including group discussion</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Stage 2 – upcoming site investigations</b></li> </ul>	Facilitator/ Matt Blandford	45 mins
6	<b>Draft Terms of Reference</b>	Nick Kaiser	10 mins
7	<b>Questions</b>	Facilitator	10 mins
8	<b>Next Steps</b>	Facilitator	10 mins

**Meeting Close**

**Next Meeting:** October 2020

## Appendix B - CRG Presentation



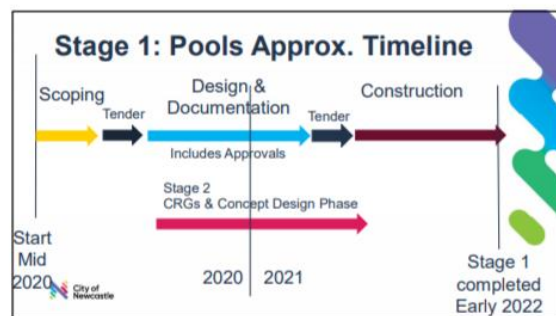
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## Stage 1: Design Tender

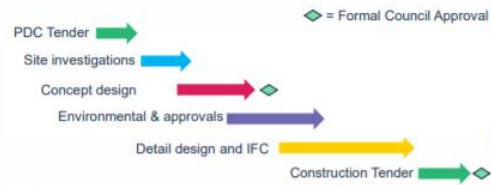
CN will engage a Principle Design Consultant (PDC) to complete the Stage 1 design, including:

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

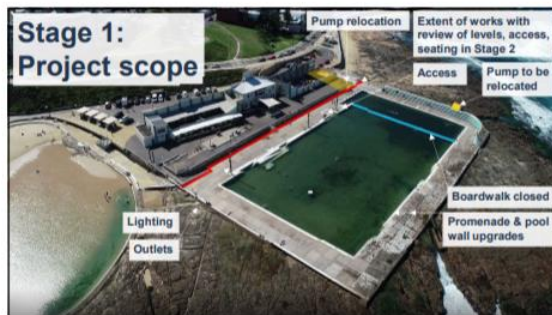


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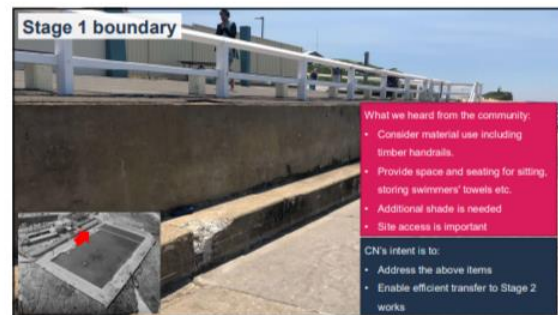
## Stage 1: Design Tender



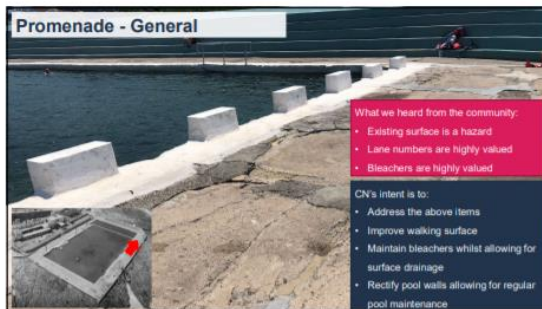
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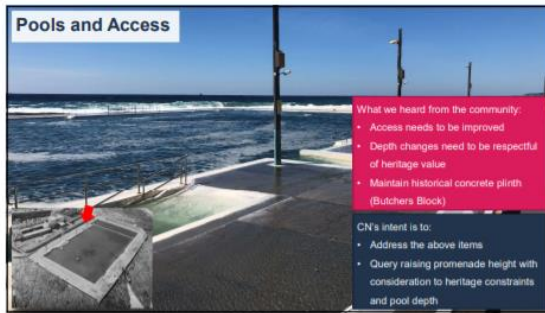


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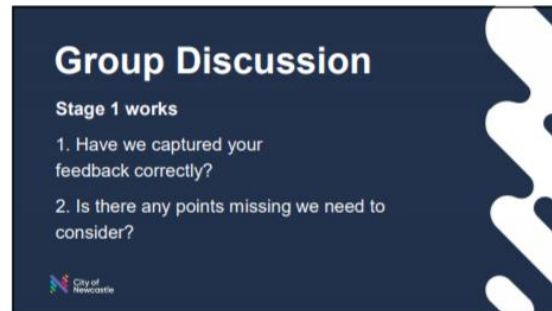
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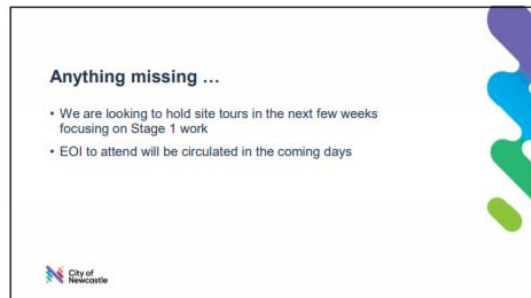
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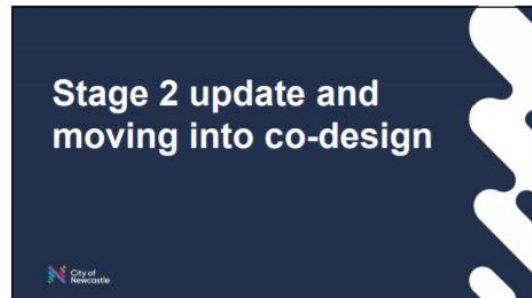
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## Co – design process



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## Since we last met

- Focus Group – Café/ Kiosk and Community Spaces
- Acceptance of CRG 2 workshop report [CRG](#)
- Any other matters?
- Any feedback or discussions with your community group?



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## Draft Terms of Reference



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## Questions



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## Next Steps



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## Thank you



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## Appendix C – Miro online feedback notes

*Note: CRG members predominantly provided comments on the Stage 1 boundary and the Promenade- General Miro deck slides only. All feedback is accurately captured against each of the presentation slides for Stage 1 in section 2 of this report.*



### Promenade - General

**Correct what the community wanted**

**South eastern promenade (hazardous surface due to waves washing over)**

**Bleachers wall (on cowrie hole side and ramp) wherever prevailing sun is to warm up.**

**Repeat bleachers on the other side.**

**Colour of the bleachers (maintain colour)**

**What we heard from the community:**

- Existing surface is a hazard
- Lane numbers are highly valued
- Bleachers are highly valued

**CN's intent is to:**

- Address the above items
- Improve walking surface
- Maintain bleachers whilst allowing for surface drainage
- Rectify pool walls allowing for regular pool maintenance

### Stage 1 boundary

**Covers most points.**

**Drainage.**

**Shade - will they obstruct the pool view (from the building)? Consider large swells and durability of the shade structure.**

**Consider how ocean can wash through without damaging infrastructure. Allow flow through of wave action.**

**Natural flushing - to maintain cleanliness of the pool.**

**Using natural ocean influx without having to utilise the pumps.**

**What we heard from the community:**

- Consider material use including timber handrails.
- Provide space and seating for sitting, storing swimmers' towels etc.
- Additional shade is needed
- Site access is important

**CN's intent is to:**

- Address the above items
- Enable efficient transfer to Stage 2 works



## Promenade - South



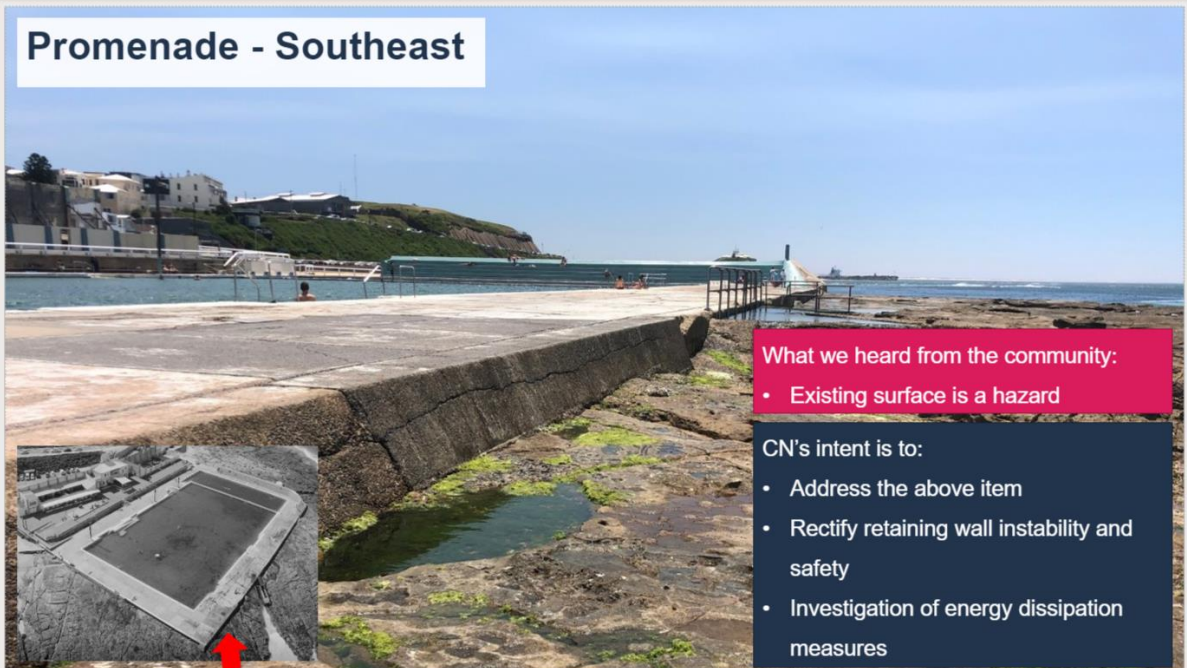
What we heard from the community:

- Existing surface is a hazard
- Space to lie in the sun is valued

CN's intent is to:

- Address the above items
- Rectify retaining wall instability and safety

## Promenade - Southeast



What we heard from the community:

- Existing surface is a hazard

CN's intent is to:

- Address the above item
- Rectify retaining wall instability and safety
- Investigation of energy dissipation measures

## Pools and Lighting



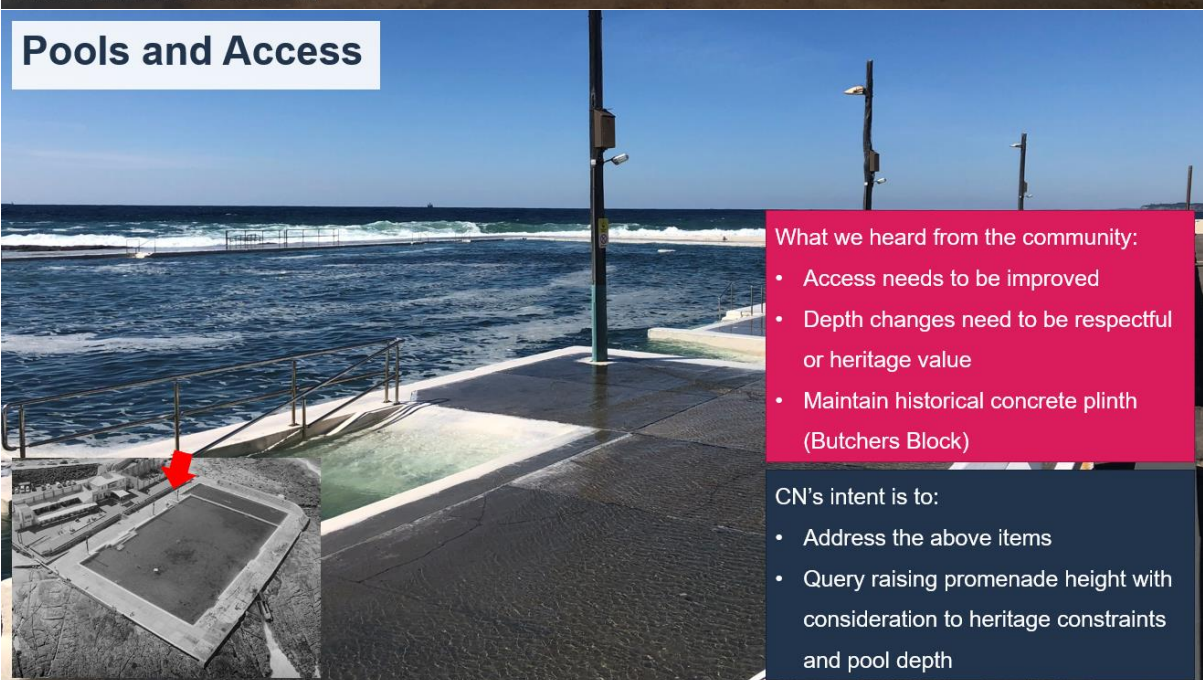
What we heard from the community:

- Sand bottom is highly valued
- Lighting needs to be updated but reinstated

CN's intent is to:

- Address the above items
- Update lighting to modern standards, honoring the site heritage

## Pools and Access



What we heard from the community:

- Access needs to be improved
- Depth changes need to be respectful or heritage value
- Maintain historical concrete plinth (Butchers Block)

CN's intent is to:

- Address the above items
- Query raising promenade height with consideration to heritage constraints and pool depth



## Pump House



What we heard from the community:

- Pump house is a significant site feature

CN's intent is to:

- Decommission the pump house and relocate pumps
- Keep the pump house as a feature

## Appendix D – CRG communication shared with CN

Email from Mark Metrikas (21/08/2020)

Hunter Regional Committee  
PO Box 791  
HAMILTON NSW 2303  
[metrikas1@gmail.com](mailto:metrikas1@gmail.com)  
20 August 2020

City of Newcastle

Attn: [oceanbaths@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:oceanbaths@ncc.nsw.gov.au)

### OCEAN BATHS CRG-3 MEETING (19/8/20) – FEEDBACK

Thank you for convening an amicable, informative and productive CRG meeting. Our Committee appreciates the detailed briefing on Stage 1 PDC arrangements, and a glimpse of the CRG process going forward. The site visits will be valuable, but ideally, should have held at the start of the CRG process.

We have no substantive issues, but make some comments below that might be of value:

- **Wave energy dissipation:** Some CRG members posited a wave-energy dissipation structure at the south-eastern end of the pool. The original 1910-1911 planning by the City Engineer L.B. Blackwell, sought to harness wave overtopping in this corner as a means of topping-up the baths, minimizing the need for pumping. This may also provide some benefit in refreshing water quality in summer.



*Southern end of rock shelf dips, and seawater rushes up natural gulf (drainage outlet) at right (Sixmaps)*

- **Stepped-seating.** The 'bleachers' were constructed c1946 as spectator seating for swimming carnivals. The sweeping tiered lines and wall curvature in the north-east corner are reminiscent of art deco *lidos* found in the northern hemisphere, but probably served an additional practical purpose. Waves hitting the north-east corner are partially deflected by the external wall towards the 'Cowrie Hole'.



*A protective wall - more than just seating! (Google Earth)*

- **Bleachers at southern-end.** One CRG member proposed the construction of bleachers at the southern end, perhaps to take advantage of northern solar orientation. Such a structure would impede key sightlines to the Tasman Sea and to the southern coastline. This would also alter the postcard view of the Ocean Baths from *Bathers Way*, Newcastle Beach and King Edward Park. A new structure, or a replica of the extant bleachers, would be detrimental to the cultural heritage of the Ocean Baths. The southern exposure would pose a significant maintenance challenge.
- **Central stairs.** The cascading central semi-circular stairs with unmistakable *art deco* style, appear to date from the 1920-30s and are common in European *lidos*. These stairs also complement the geometric curves of the bleachers. We did not address these stairs in our Stage 1 submission as we understand access to the promenade forms part of Stage 2 considerations. Replacement of these stairs with a ramp would be detrimental to heritage. The amenity of these stairs could be improved with a timber central handrail (thereby



improving on the grip of the current, discordant stainless-steel handrail), and by the use of non-slip surfaces on the treads.



Cascading *art deco* central stairs. Potential to replace unsympathetic handrailing (*Flickr*)

- **Promenade shading.** Our Committee is opposed to the suggestion of shade devices over the pool promenade. This could impact on sightlines to the pool from the upper concourse, thereby reducing safety and security. The introduction of new structures would impact the visual curtilage of the Ocean Baths. The southern exposure would wreak havoc on any shade 'sails'. The southern promenade is also appreciated by pool patrons warming up after a swim.
- **Façade.** While we learnt at the CRG that the cathodic electrolysis system was tested in the past week, the results were not advised. Some have suggested that the system has not been working or even switched on, for quite a while. Can the CRG be advised of the outcome of testing by email please.
- **Western façade precinct.** Earlier in the CRG process, members had been informed a separate CRG focus group would discuss the western façade, and the carpark area. It was stated that a heritage consultant would brief the CRG at this meeting. While no one has suggested any alterations to the iconic façade, we believe that the community and CRG members would be interested to learn of the condition of the façade and the efficacy of the electrical rust protection system.
- **Carparking.** We agree with Matt Blandford that there is limited scope to improve parking given restricted space. However, parking turnover could be improved by reducing the time limit from 4 to 3 hours, and through parking compliance measures. Bicycle stands would be useful for kiosk patrons using Bathers Way. We believe it would be useful to ensure the western precinct is included in the forthcoming site inspections.

**CRG facilitation and lessons identified.** We understand the reasonable sentiment that CRG members should not be constrained by time in discussing issues. However, virtual meetings come with limitations which reduce collaboration, creativity, and an ability to connect emotionally. Given limited discussion time at CRG meetings, and the large number of participants, we feel it is appropriate for the facilitator to

better manage the time available. Now that we are 6 months into the CRG learning curve, is there a process for capturing observations and recommendations ('sustains' & 'improves')?

Yours sincerely,

Mark Metrikas  
BA *UNSW*, Grad Dip Heritage Studies, *UNE*  
**Co-chair, Hunter Regional Committee**  
National Trust of Australia (NSW)  
0415 144 355

Email from Peter Wickham (31/08/2020)

## **FONOB Inc. Response to Draft Terms of Reference Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group**

### **1. Introduction**

**Paragraph 3:** *“CN has committed to funding the restoration of the Baths and is determined to see the facility become an asset that the broader community can be proud of, while also ensuring they remain a public asset with free entry to swim all year round.”* We believe this the heart of the matter and should open the introduction.

#### **We suggest the opening paragraph should be:**

*“This document outlines the objectives and structure of the Newcastle Ocean Baths Community Reference Group (CRG), which will help City of Newcastle (CN) achieve its commitment to funding the restoration of the Baths. CN is determined to see the facility become an asset that the broader community can be proud of, while also ensuring they remain a public asset with free entry to swim all year round.”*

**We recommend the use of the word “restoration” as this reflects more accurately the commitment of the Lord Mayor.**

#### **Nuatali Nelmes - Lord Mayor of Newcastle**

2 February ·

**BREAKING: CITY TO FUND OCEAN BATHS RESTORATIONS**

City of Newcastle has committed to funding the restoration of both Newcastle and Merewether Ocean Baths following an unsuccessful expressions of interest (EOI) process.

### **2. Purpose and Objectives**

Agreed.

### **3. Facilitator**

Agreed.

### **4. Membership**

**Paragraph 3:** *“CRG membership is aimed to provide coverage of community organisations, user groups, the business community, interest areas, gender, ages and abilities from across the local government area. Membership is voluntary. The CRG is comprised of approximately 50% interested stakeholder or community groups (directly invited) and 50% individual community members (EOI selected).”*

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**We recommend CN further analyse your statement:** *“The CRG is comprised of approximately 50% interested stakeholder or community groups (directly invited) and 50% individual community members (EOI selected).”*

**CN website lists 10 community members and 7 stakeholder members. How do you weigh the representation of these members? The individual community members might only represent themselves whereas stakeholders such as NERG, FONOB Inc. and National Trust represent their members and supporters.**

**Paragraph 4:** *“CN may appoint additional members, being individuals via expression of interest, or stakeholder group representatives, to the CRG to help ensure a diverse and LGA-representative membership. Members of stakeholder or community groups may nominate an alternate delegate, if the principal member is unavailable or unable to continue participation in the CRG. The stakeholder or community group will advise CN of any changes to nominated representative in writing to [oceanbaths@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:oceanbaths@ncc.nsw.gov.au).”*

**We recommend that paragraph 4 be amended to:** *“CN may appoint additional members, being individuals via expression of interest, or stakeholder group representatives, to the CRG to help ensure a diverse and LGA-representative membership after discussion with the current CRG representatives. CN will notify CRG representatives in writing at least 14 days before an additional member is put up for recommendation. The reasons for the appointment will be fully explained in the correspondence. Consideration will also be given to recommendations by a CRG representative who on behalf of their organisation recommend in writing the appointment of an additional member/members. Members of stakeholder or community groups may nominate an alternate delegate, if the principal member is unavailable or unable to continue participation in the CRG. The stakeholder or community group will advise CN of any changes to nominated representative in writing to [oceanbaths@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:oceanbaths@ncc.nsw.gov.au).”*

**The recent concern expressed by several CRG representatives on the process followed by CN on the recent appointment of a new member justifies our above recommendation.**

**Paragraph 8:** *“A Community Chairperson may be selected by CN from community representative members of the CRG by way of an EOI and endorsement from the CRG. The Chairperson may be called upon to speak on behalf of the CRG publicly and channel feedback from the CRG to CN outside of the meeting process.”*

**We raise concerns about the selection of a community chairperson for the following reasons:**

- Chairing a meeting would effectively prevent an organisation representing their own views at that particular meeting.
- A facilitator is currently paid to manage the meetings with total neutrality.
- Being called upon to speak on behalf of the CRG publicly would compromise an organisation's independence.
- The accepted rules for formal meeting protocols (such moving motions and resolutions, voting and amending motions quorums, etc) does not apply to the current CRG meeting structure. The current structure of the meetings would not protect the appointed "community chairperson" from accusations of bias and failure to follow protocol.

**We recommend that paragraph 8 be deleted.**

**Our preference is an impartial, professional facilitator to provide neutrality.**

**5. Functions of Community Reference Group Members**

We agree on all clauses, however, we recommend that a further clause be included re the role of CN representatives attending the meetings.

**We recommend the follow:**

**"CN commits to full and open transparency from CN staff attending the CRG meetings"**

**6. Community reference Group meetings**

Agreed.

**7. Community reference Group Correspondence**

Agreed

**8. Conduct of meetings and confidentiality** This is too vague and the references linked, although valuable and should be included are complex. The documents do not refer specifically refer to “Community Reference Group Representatives”.

**This section should be expanded to include declaration of conflicts of interest by a CRG representative.**

We recommend that on the commencement of every zoom meeting that all CRG representatives must declare any possible conflict of interest (Col). These Col could vary depending on the agenda topics for a particular meeting. For example, a Col was an issue when the meeting agenda was discussing café/kiosk. FONOB Inc believe that the representative for “local businesses” had a potential Col.

If a Col is identified at the commencement of the meeting then the rules should clearly state that the facilitator can exclude that member from joining in an identified point of discussion.

**We recommend this statement be included:**

*“On receiving the invitation and agenda for a meeting all representatives accepting the invitation should respond in writing if they believe they have a potential conflict of interest. On the commencement of the meeting all attending representatives should declare any potential conflict of interest. The facilitator may exclude that attendee from speaking on a particular agenda item or on occasions it may be necessary to exclude a representative from attending a meeting due to a conflict of interest. The facilitator will give full consideration to any objection raised by a representative during the commencement or during the course of the meeting procedures.”*

## **9. CRG Reporting Structure**

Agreed

10. I.....declare as follows:

Agreed

FONOB Inc.

31st August 2020.



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Email from Karen Read (1/09/2020)

NERG response to Draft ToR

P1 ...as the City develops concept plans...

Which entity is 'the City'?

P1 ...The purpose of the CRG is to enable two-way communication and engagement between CN and community representatives...

On several occasions, NERG has submitted feedback and questions to conveners, with the specific request that the communication be shared with all CRG members. The sharing of correspondence has been controlled by conveners, and only some correspondence has been emailed to members of the group, in contravention of Council's open governance and transparency platform.

P1 ... provide a conduit...facilitating the sharing of information between their networks and the project team.

Individual members can simply represent their own interests. Unlike stakeholders, they have no obligation to report back to a wider community group. With respect to the Ocean Baths CRG, individual representatives far outnumber members who represent a large group of people. How will conveners ensure individuals provide information to a wider audience?

P2 ... The CRG will be facilitated by an independent external facilitator who will prepare a report following each meeting for distribution to members. Meeting reports will also be available on CN's website...

There is no mention of the facilitator's role in the compilation and distribution of meeting minutes. Suggested addition: Minutes for each meeting will be compiled from the audio recording and distributed to all CRG members for approval. Members can comment on the minutes and amendments suggested if necessary. Finalised minutes will be distributed to all CRG members, CN representatives and appointed specialists and contractors.

P2 ...50% stakeholders or community groups (directly invited) and 50% individual community members (EOI)...

There are 10 Individuals and only 7 stakeholder members, so not really close to 50/50%.

P2 ... CN may appoint additional members, being individuals via expression of interest, or stakeholder group representatives, to the CRG to help ensure a diverse and LGA-representative membership...

We believe that any change to membership should be discussed with CRG members before any 'appointments' are made. The new member appointed to the group by Council was never justified or explained to existing members. A belated explanation referred to gender perspective for the changerooms, but that focus session had already been completed.

P2 ... A Community Chairperson may be selected by CN from community representative members of the CRG by way of an EOI and endorsement from the CRG. The Chairperson may be called upon to speak on behalf of the CRG publicly and channel feedback from the CRG to CN outside of the meeting process...

NERG does not believe that the CRG membership would be fully represented by one person, given the diversity of ideas and opinions. There would be possible conflict of interest, perception of bias and undue pressure for that spokesperson. The appointment of one spokesperson from the group could be construed as divisive by other members. It could have the unintended consequence of splitting the CRG group. The role of spokesperson should be fulfilled by an independent facilitator.

P3 ... Meeting agendas will be issued at least two days prior to each meeting. A Meeting Summary will be circulated within two weeks of the meeting...

NERG does not agree that a two-day time frame for groups to respond to items on the agenda is sufficient. Members representing a large group need more than two days to canvas their members and compile a collective response, if they are to truly represent their groups. We believe it should be a minimum of four days.

P3 ... All correspondence... will be acknowledged within two business days and a response provided within 14 days of receipt of the correspondence ...

A NERG email sent on 19/08/20 addressing concerns about inaccuracy of minutes has had no acknowledgement of receipt.

P3 ... CN will present how items and ideas have influenced the project at the next available meeting until the conclusion of the project...

The statement is vague and lacks markers that would demonstrate what and how items and ideas have influenced the project can be translated into identifiable objectives or outcomes. What evidence will CRG members be provided with, to ensure their ideas have been accurately presented to the Coastal Revitalisation Project Control Group? (Already there are unresolved, disputed meeting minutes.)

Who are the members of the Coastal Revitalisation Project Control Group, and what is the role of that entity? We are not aware of any reference to this body at previous CRG meetings.

P4...

- Provide information on current usage and areas for improvement of the Baths
- Provide feedback and information to the community
- Representing my user group
- Provide feedback to City of Newcastle (CN) on proposals...

NERG suggests that point 3 (above) be added to the end of point 2? Is this a typo?

How do individual CRG members demonstrate that they comply with... Provide feedback and information to the community representing my user group...? Is it more appropriate that they sign a different declaration, tailor made to describe individual representation?

The CRG has been operational for several months, and Council has been re-writing the ToR for some time. The ToR have several aspects that NERG would not agree to. There is an over-riding responsibility for CRG community representatives to comply with guidelines/protocols while CN representatives have struggled to provide a well framed consultation process, articulated from the start with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, specified terms and established procedures. The CRG has been developed on the run, in a sometimes ad hoc manner. It was clear that details had not been refined before the CRG met for the first time. We believe that if CN was truly committed to consultation, then the specifics of the consultation process should have been fully determined prior to the first meeting. Our experience to date is that CN has not been wholly committed to following the terms of the new ToR, even as CRG members are being asked to adopt them.

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