

Our **SUSTAINABLE WASTE** Strategy

Engagement Report

2023



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Executive Summary

The City of Newcastle's (CN) *Sustainable Waste Strategy* is important to the day-to-day lives and the sustainable future of every Novocastrian.

Waste services constitutes 41% of all the contact residents and ratepayers have with the City of Newcastle. Furthermore, most residents, every week, put at least one of a possible three bins out for curb-side collection and many take great care to ensure the right material is placed in the right bin.

Additionally, there is a growing urgency to establish a circular economy, locally in the Newcastle and Hunter region, throughout Australia and globally. The environmental imperative is particularly acute as the world battles to keep global warming in check and minimise the waste polluting our oceans and natural landscapes. There is also an economic imperative to embrace and facilitate the circular economy. We must move from a linear economy to a circular economy, to seize on significant economic opportunities it presents, and to end the unnecessary waste of invaluable finite resources.

Our Sustainable Waste Strategy (the *Strategy*) is an expression of CN's strong desire for responsible, environmentally sustainable, and commercially feasible waste and recycling operations to effectively manage Newcastle's current and future waste streams. It seeks to maintain an important and recognised social licence with our community and an enduring value proposition for the city and our residents.

It is for all these reasons that the community engagement strategy that supports the *Strategy*, sought to be as far reaching as possible across the City's population. The engagement team utilised broad scale engagement approaches including traditional media and mailed newsletters to all households, as well as highly targeted approaches that aimed to engage those stakeholders likely to be most interested and impacted by the *Strategy*.

Particular attention was paid to those residents living in the suburbs adjacent to the Summerhill Waste Management Centre, which is the centrepiece of the *Strategy*. The engagement strategy also focused on other stakeholders with an inclination toward and interest in the circular economy and sustainability issues.

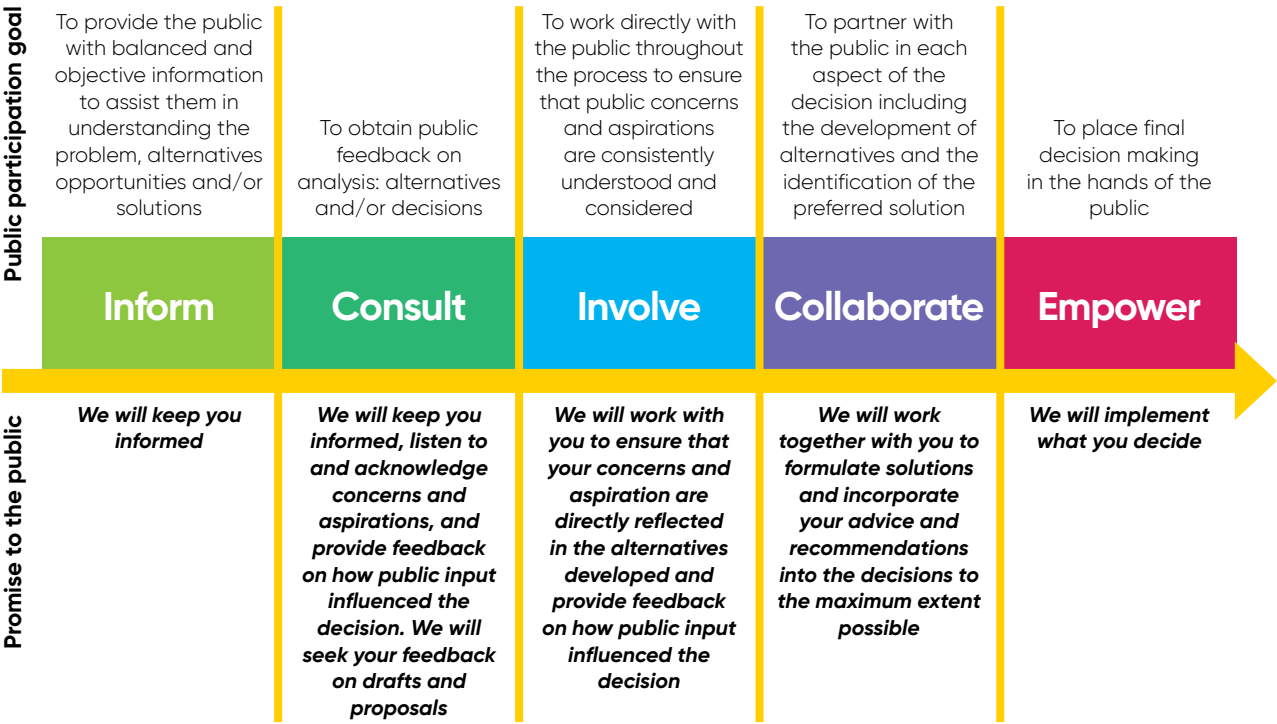
The engagement strategy was cognisant of 'how' we engage the community, ensuring wherever possible it was on the community's terms, and aimed to cut through the noise and barrage of messages we all receive every day. The core messages of articulating the benefits of the *Strategy* to Planet, People and Prosperity aimed to provide a logical structure for what is a complex subject matter. A dedicated series of short, sharp professionally shot videos, engaging by design, also helped the campaign cut through online.

The engagement team also spent considerable time in the community, prioritising the communities around Summerhill, as well as leveraging the community events scheduled prior and during the *Strategy*'s public exhibition period. A dedicated event targeting industry, business, and key stakeholders also helped us explain the *Strategy* to those essential in helping CN bring the circular economy to life in the region.

As comprehensive as the community engagement program was – reaching every household – ultimately the loudest message we heard from the community, was the same message we heard in the lead up to launching the *Strategy*. Let's get it done! For the environmental, social and economic benefits, Novocastrians are keen to see CN turn Summerhill into a resource recovery hub and bring the advantages of a circular economy to the region as soon as possible.

Engagement Strategy

The communications and engagement strategy was underpinned by the IAP2 framework for community engagement. The public exhibition for the *Strategy* was in fact the culmination of a process running over several years, during which Waste Services had sought to involve the community through their input which has helped shape the *Strategy* in the first instance.



Taken from the International Association of Participation IAP2 spectrum.

The Communication and Engagement Strategy aimed to: Inform, Consult and Involve

Inform

To educate the City of Newcastle community, industry and government stakeholders on:

- The intended benefits of the *Strategy*, especially as it pertains to the three pillars:



- The broad benefits of the circular economy
- The consultative process itself and opportunities to *Have Your Say*
- Opportunities for people to interrogate the details of the *Strategy*, and the three supporting documents; the Strategic Framework, White Paper and Delivery Plan

Consult

To actively encourage feedback from across the community, industry and government stakeholders, and their specific concerns identified. Not only did CN promote the core principles of the *Strategy* (Planet, People, and Prosperity) but actively encouraged a more detailed interrogation of the *Strategy* and its details.

Consistent with the fourth core value of IAP2's "Core Values for Public Participation", the communications plan sought out and facilitated the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. This meant a particular effort to inform, consult and involve members of the community from Ward 4, plus businesses and industries with an interest in the circular economy, community members interested in sustainability, environmental issues, circularity and the prosperity of the City.

Involve

The public exhibition and previous consultative engagements of *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy* has sought to involve the community, industry and government stakeholders in the development of this *Strategy* and that has been one of the key drivers of its development.

Continuing with this community, industry and government stakeholders involvement, another key objective of the engagement strategy is to consider stakeholder feedback and where it may necessitate potential changes to the *Strategy* for Councillors to consider before its adoption.





Engagement Objectives

To better understand community, government and industry opinion on *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy*, CN held a number of engagement activities.

The engagement activities sought to:

- Obtain community, government, industry stakeholder feedback on *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy*.
- Increase awareness and understanding of CN's strategic planning process and alignment with critical local, state and federal policy direction.
- Strengthen relationships and build awareness for community, government and industry stakeholders, and CN.

Engagement Activities

A summary of the *Strategy* communication and engagement activities is listed in Table 1.



Table 1 Summary of community engagement activities

Category	Activities	Reach	Direct Engagement
Have Your Say: Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Our Sustainable Waste Strategy</i> Have Your Say page• <i>Our Sustainable Waste Strategy</i> Microsite• Feedback submission	1,429	819 unique website views 565 Microsite unique views 45 respondents
Face-to-Face Engagements and Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 engagement events	1,307	340
Newsletters and Postcards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CityNews A4 full page• Postcards issued to Summerhill customers and surrounding properties• Postcards available at public facilities	98,223	-
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facebook & YouTube video series• LinkedIn & Instagram posts• Your Voice & Natural Connections E-newsletters	27,795	12,882
Traditional Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radio• Newspaper (paper and online)• Magazines• Television	316,609	-
Artwork Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Close the Loop School Artwork Competition	71 schools ²	22
Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 strategic committees	77	77
Have Your Say: FOGO Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food Organics and Garden Organics processing facility – Have Your Say page	669	669 unique website visits 71 respondents
Have Your Say: MRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials Recovery Facility – Have Your Say page	1730	1,730 unique website visits 278 respondents
Phone Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone survey to residents	1,207	1,207
Quarterly Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring and Summer Quarterly Survey to residents	1,113	1,113
Total		450,230	19,818

¹Reach includes audiences which overlap, eg: audiences that heard news of the *Strategy* on ABC radio breakfast and may have also seen it their Facebook feed and will have also received the CityNews newsletter. While it's difficult to measure these overlapping audiences, it is safe to say reach was near saturation across the City.
²Not included in headline Reach figure

Key Findings

The development of *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy* (the *Strategy*) was done with the involvement of the community.

Before the *Strategy* was developed, the community was surveyed through numerous mechanisms to understand their views on resource recovery and how City of Newcastle (CN) may respond to a waste challenge, which was – prior China’s National Sword Policy – largely hidden from public view.

During this consultation phase, CN learned that residents in Newcastle strongly support more responsible waste management, with:

- **99% support** of the City implementing **new waste programs and infrastructure**
- **93% support** for **maximising the working life of the Summerhill Waste Management Centre**
- **75% of residents** said that they would be **willing to change the way they manage waste at home** (to reduce waste to landfill) even if there was some inconvenience to them

Despite the overwhelming support for meaningful action and investment to address our waste challenges, it was still necessary to ensure the Newcastle Community had ample opportunity to understand the *Strategy* and have their input.

Every household in Newcastle interacts with Waste Services and 41% of the active contacts Council receives from the community are all about Waste Services. Ahead of any significant changes to those services, whether overtly visible or not, it is in the interests of democratic principles and sound public policy development that the community has an opportunity to understand them and respond to them.

Despite a city-wide engagement campaign, communicating directly with every household; plus proactive engagement into communities online; through face-to-face community events; and via traditional media, *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy* has proven entirely uncontroversial.

With literally tens of thousands of points of engagement across an omnichannel communications strategy, there were 45 responses

to the *Strategy*. Of those responses, 28 can be classified as supportive, 18 neutral and just one was not supportive. Some feedback will necessitate changes to the *Strategy* (detailed on page 11 in “Response to Feedback: Changes to Strategy”), however these are minor in nature and add value to it and its implementation.

In engaging the community at nine events across the City, the overwhelming sentiment toward the *Strategy* and its core initiatives, was “that makes sense”. Some expressed surprise that CN was not already processing the city’s yellow bin content locally, while others were excited over the prospect of being able to include food organics in the green bin collection. In short, for many community members engaged, the *Strategy* is a ‘no-brainer’.

Face to face engagement at Wallsend Shopping Centre



Public place bins

Response to Feedback: Changes to Strategy

Our Sustainable Waste Strategy had been widely consulted prior to public exhibition period, 28 September – 9 November 2022, which has meant much of the feedback provided by the community, government and industry stakeholders has already been incorporated into the *Strategy*.

However, some additional insights were provided during the public exhibition which has meant minor alterations to the *Strategy*. This includes:

- A strengthened focus on providing resource recovery education programs specific to Multi-Unit Dwellings, student accommodation, renters and culturally linguistically and diverse communities.
- Greater engagement with food rescue organisations.
- Specific collaboration with the healthcare sector, even more relevant with the recent announcement of plastics in healthcare products being placed on the Ministers National Product Stewardship list.
- Moving forward a feasibility assessment of a tip shop due to popular demand for this type of service.
- Ensuring any future facility design considers improved accessibility and usability of the site by residents.

Appendix A: Engagement Activities



Have Your Say Survey: Strategy



819
Have Your Say unique website views



565
Microsite unique views



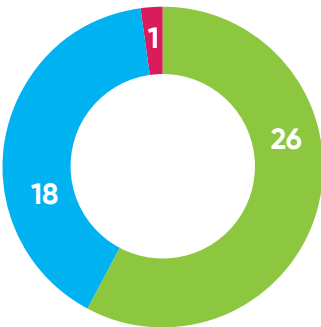
45
respondents completed survey

Face to face engagement at Wallsend Shopping Centre



Engagement

- The feedback form was live on CN's 'Have Your Say' (HYS) page from 28 September – 9 November 2022.
- The HYS page was also promoted through multiple complementary communications channels including face-to-face engagements and events, newsletters and postcards, online, traditional media and a children's artwork competition. These channels are further expanded upon in the following sections.



Feedback
A total of 45 respondents completed the online form. Including:

- 26 supportive responses
- 18 neutral responses: providing recommendations to the Strategy
- 1 unsupportive response

Response Examples

- Supportive responses:**
- "I think this a **fantastic** idea for the future."
 - "It is **great to see the level of ongoing community engagement**. The focus on being a resource recovery centre is also key."
 - "**I am really excited to see we're moving to a circular economy model - this makes me so happy.**"
 - "The provision of including a **processing plant for SWMC is a great initiative**
 - "I believe the **direction** you are going is a **great idea.**"
 - "I thought the your **waste strategy is great**, certainly starting education at the early schooldays is the key to ensuring sustainability. From a commercial perspective the future of summerhill and the changes being made will assist us greatly in having a reputable facility within our own region that can start to take recyclable materials. This will add confidence to the commercial sector as we move forward."
 - "**REALLY excited** to see that you are planning a facility to take **food scrap composting**. This will reduce my bin contents by nearly half. I'd love to see it fast tracked/prioritised."
- Key Suggestions/Concerns:**
- Concerns about **traffic issues** around introducing a new collection service.
 - Improve **community engagement** through focus on advertising in businesses, holding workshops, rebates for reusable items such as nappies.
 - Setting up a **tip shop** at the facility.
 - Queries around **polystyrene recycling**.
 - Greater access to **soft plastic drop-off** location in local suburbs.
 - Suggestion around having the **green-lid bin collection once a week** and the **red-lid collection every fortnight**.
 - Financial incentive for businesses** who recycle correctly
 - Working closely with the **health sector**.
- Unsupportive response:**
- This proposal is words on a page and **doesn't fix the main issues** with Summerhill.

Face-to-Face Engagements and Events

 **1,307**
individuals were reached

 **340**
individuals were directly engaged

Engagement

During the exhibition period, Council engaged the community through a number of face-to-face events to raise awareness of the *Strategy* among residents, businesses and other key stakeholder groups, see Table 2.

At each event, the team held a stall, consisting of a City of Newcastle marquee with signage and flyers (on 100% recycled paper) providing a brief on the *Strategy* and QR code which links to its details online and where they could provide feedback through HYS. Staff – wearing *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy* branded T Shirts – were also on hand to explain the *Strategy*, its key elements and answer questions.

The engagement team leveraged community events scheduled in the lead up to and during the public exhibition in addition running dedicate events to capture the attention of specific stakeholder groups.



Table 2 Overview of Face-to-Face Events

Event	Description	Reach	Direct Engagement
Existing Community Events			
Seaside Scavenge: 12 March 2022	Seaside Scavenge is both an awareness campaign, as well as a series of practical, community clean-up days at key coastal locations across the country. Participants were already heavily engaged in sustainability and waste manifest as litter. While significantly held in advance of the public exhibition period, conversations were focused on the underlying principles of the Strategy. People were encouraged to register their contact details so they could be alerted when the Strategy went on exhibition, incentivised to go in the draw with a voucher for a local sustainable giftwares shop.	unknown	19
Ronni Kahn – Humble Lecture: 22 July 2022	Founder of OzHavest, Ronni Kahn delivered CN's annual Humble Lecture at City Hall. Her keynote was on food waste, the circular economy and finding your passion. The engagement team hosted a stall in the theatre's foyer, engaging guests as they came into the venue and networked for drinks. Additionally, the Deputy Lord Mayor made a speech, flagging Our Sustainable Waste Strategy and the approaching public exhibition period.	590 attendees	15
Run4Reef Stall: 16 Oct 2022	The first event of its kind, Run4Reef was a series of race events held across 22 cities in Australia and New Zealand with the aim of raising money to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Complete with stall and display assets, the engagement team spoke with runners and their supporters, along with the general public along the foreshore, sharing insights into the Strategy and encouraging feedback.	Unknown	56
Newcastle Pride Festival Stall: 6 Nov 2022	A popular event in Newcastle in its own right, drawing on a diverse demographic, the Pride Festival was an ideal event to have a presence among thousands of people from across the City of Newcastle and beyond. Community members engaged tended to be well-informed, already passionate recyclers and keen to see strategy come to life.	Organisers estimate 12-13K attendees to Festival	81
Dedicated Community Events			
MRF Fletcher engagement 25 June 2022	As part of the community engagement for the MRF development application (a key component of the Strategy) a community engagement stall was run at Fletcher shopping village.	-	50
Wallsend Shopping Centre Stall: 8 Oct 2022	Wallsend was chosen as it is within 4km of Summerhill Waste Management Centre to engage residents who would be most impacted by the facility.	-	40
Fletcher Shopping Village Stall: 15 October 2022	Chosen for its close proximity to Summerhill, the engagement team ran a stall at Fletcher Shopping Village. While the stall was prominently situated and the centre well attended, one-on-one engagement at this event was notably low as most visitors were intent on shopping without disruption.	-	8
Political & Industry Stakeholder Event 3 Nov 2022	CN hosted an industry and stakeholder event, held at the Hub at CN's Central Administration Centre. Invitations to the event included a brief on the Strategy and invited recipients to attend the evening event, learn more on the Strategy at the dedicated website and/or have their say there too. With contributions from the Director of Waste Services and the Deputy Lord Mayor, the Strategy was detailed including its guiding principles of Planet, People and Prosperity, and the key infrastructure planned for Summerhill and the role it is to play in the circular economy. Information on the Strategy was displayed around the room and staff available to answer questions and engage directly with event attendees. Guests were also provided with a 'prospectus' summarising the Strategy in considerable detail, equipping readers with a high-level understanding of the Strategy.	377 views to the event invitation page 214 invitations and Strategy Summaries sent	65 event attendees

Feedback

While detailed feedback was always encouraged via the HYS page, there was a range of consistent themes garnered from conversations with community members at events (Please note this constitutes anecdotal, qualitative evidence only):

- Overwhelmingly, the majority of those engaged directly were **enthusiastic** for the key initiatives that underpin the strategy – particularly the prospect of a local **MRF** and the expansion of the green waste collection to include food organics once the **FOGO facility** was established.
- Some individuals expressed **surprise** that CN was not already processing its **'yellow bin waste'** locally.
- Widespread **awareness** that neighbouring Council, Lake Macquarie, was already **collecting** and **recycling food organics**.
- Regular **praise** for the current **Curby soft plastics recycling scheme**, as an example of a boutique recycling option.
- There were numerous **questions** around recycling best practice including **recycling e-waste** and the optimal cleanliness of **rigid plastics** for recycling.
- Provision for **textile recycling** was mentioned by a number of people.
- Having a **tip shop at Summerhill** was frequently mentioned as a way to divert waste from landfill and give goods a second life.
- A surprising number of individuals were already at the leading edge of best practice, **successfully minimising the amount of waste they send to landfill**, examples included:
 - Widespread use of home **composting**
 - **Chickens** to assist with food scraps
 - Industrious use of the **Return and Earn scheme**, including a young teenager who'd raised over \$3800 through her activities with friends and neighbours
 - **Conscious purchasing** strategies to avoid bringing **unnecessary packaging** into the home
 - A lone but interesting perspective on the need to **minimise garden waste** (and the need to transport it via Council's collection service) by promoting **native gardens** and **discouraging traditional lawns** and **deciduous trees**.



Postcards and Newsletters



8,533
postcards
were distributed

Engagement

While circular principles favour a digital-centric communications strategy supported by community engagement, in the interests of accessibility and equity, information was also disseminated in hardcopy forms.

The *Strategy* and its initiatives were relevant to all residents given Waste Services is by far the most frequent interaction most people have with the CN. With this in mind, the digital-favoured engagement strategy was supported by some hard copy collateral ensuring every resident in the City knew of the *Strategy* and their opportunity to provide feedback. This included:

- a concise **postcard**, directing recipients to the website, a summary of the *Strategy*'s key principles and avenues to HYS.
- A section of the CityNews **newsletter** distributed to households all across the City.

Postcard

Printed on high quality recycled and recyclable card, the postcards touched on the three principles of the *Strategy* of Planet, People and Prosperity, directing people to the *Strategy* website for more in depth details and to the HYS page.

Postcards were distributed to:

- 6,000 residents, via letterbox drop, closest to Summerhill Waste Management Centre, including the suburbs of Maryland, Wallsend, Fletcher and Minmi.
- 820 people throughout several CN run public facilities including:
 - All Libraries
 - City Administration Centre
 - Civic Café
 - Visitor Info Centre
 - Museum



89,690
newsletters delivered
to residences

- 500 residents at the Chemical Cleanout Event on the 29 October 2022.
- 1,213 to customers visiting the Summerhill Waste Management Centre.

Newsletter

CN's *CityNews* newsletter is distributed across the City's households, updating residents on key Council services, initiatives and policies. Distributed 3-4 times a year, *CityNews* is a key conduit between CN and residents across the city.

A double-sided, 6 page document, of which one full A4 page of *CityNews* was dedicated to the *Strategy*, including some insights and statistics on Waste Services, overview of the *Strategy* and how to HYS, encouraging readers to visit the City of Newcastle website.

Newsletters delivered to residences: 89,690

Feedback

The postcards and *CityNews* served to ensure every household across the City, especially those in the vicinity of Summerhill Waste Management Centre were aware of the *Strategy*'s public exhibition process and the opportunities to provide feedback.

Given the linear nature of this communication, it's difficult to measure the resulting visits to the *Strategy* website.

Online



1,429
total website
views



25,981
total social
media reach



9,755
social media
engagement



2,555
total e-newsletter
opens

Engagement

The communications campaign had a considerable focus on both owned and earned assets online, with the *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy* microsite³ as the campaign's central depository of detailed information on the *Strategy*, including the documents that constitute the its details.

Both organic and paid social media tactics were employed to further promote the *Strategy* and the opportunities for stakeholder feedback.

The primary content used in social media was a series of videos, promoting the main pillars of the *Strategy*, in Planet, People and Prosperity. Using Waste Services staff and the Deputy Lord Mayor as spokespeople, the intent of the videos was to produce engaging content that would attract and maintain the audience's attention, explaining the *Strategy* in a clear, concise way. The videos were also shared via YouTube attracting unique viewers on the platform itself. There were five videos in the series including:

- [An overview of the strategy, including the three pillars of Planet, People and Prosperity \(3Ps\)](#)
- [The benefits of the Strategy to the Planet](#)

- [The benefits of the Strategy to the People of Newcastle](#)
- [The benefits of the Strategy to the Prosperity of Newcastle](#)
- [A second overview video including the Deputy Lord Mayor](#) (DLM) as spokesperson (for organic uses only).

Tables 3a and 3b summarise the online engagement:

Table 3a Online Engagement: website	Unique visits (engagement)
Our Sustainable Waste Strategy microsite	565
Have Your Say Webpage & form	861
Feedback submission	45
Total	1,429

^{*}These figures have been counted in the Have Your Say Survey – *Strategy* section

Table 3b Online Engagement: social media (Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn & Instagram)	Reach	Post Engagement ⁴
CN Facebook Paid Video Series	16,035	8,727
CN Facebook Organic video Series	6,779	561
YouTube Video Series	353	353
LinkedIn	802	43
Art Gallery Instagram	1,370	58
Art Gallery Facebook	642	13
Total	25,981	9,755

E-newsletter

Our *Natural Connection* newsletter is published each month and contains environmental news and information about our sustainability events and workshops as well as other community events.

Open rate: 640

YourVoice is our e-newsletter encouraging the community to have their say on a range of CN projects, services, and initiatives. It's sent monthly and contains public exhibitions seeking feedback and the *Strategy* was featured in two editions.

Open rate: 2,487

Feedback

Proportional to the reach of social media, over a third of people who saw the post in social media engaged either as a reaction, comment, share and/ or click through. Over 90% of reactions were positive. Much of the negative feedback or comments that were made, were related other CN services or initiatives rather than the *Strategy* itself.

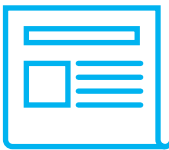
³ <https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/our-sustainable-waste-strategy>
⁴ The number of times people engaged with your post through reactions, comments, shares, views and clicks

Traditional Media



75,000
people reached
through broadcast TV
(NBN News & Radio)

(multiple coverage across the same media outlet during the communication campaign has been counted only once⁵)



241,609
people reached through
print and online

(as previously stated, multiple coverage across same outlet across campaign counted only once)

Engagement

The communications strategy supporting the *Strategy* sought to leverage traditional media wherever possible, acknowledging that older demographics in particular are still substantial consumers of traditional media. There were a number of junctures in the campaign that resulted in successful media uptake, detailed in the following Table 4.

Table 4 Traditional Media Engagement

Publication /outlet	Audience Total Estimate
Launch of Public Exhibition	
ABC 1233 Drive	5,000
Newcastle Herald	33,000
Newcastle Weekly ⁶	155,000
ABC 1233 Breakfast	10,000
Launch of Close the Loop Competition	
National Tribune	28#
Mirage News	81#
Intouch Magazine	53,500
Newcastle Weekly	155,000
NBN News (Newcastle & Hunter) ⁷	60,000
Inside Local Government	Not Avail
Winners of Close the Loop	
Mirage News	148#
The National Tribune	77#
NBN News	60,000
Newcastle Weekly	155,000
Intouch Magazine	53,500
Total unique publication per outlet: Three media releases across eight outlets with a total audience of:	316,609

Feedback

Editorial coverage of *Our Sustainable Waste Strategy* and the Close the Loop competition in the media were universally positive. As a linear communications method, it's difficult to attribute feedback to this publicity.

Average online article views
⁵ Please note: media outlets' estimates of audience reach are often overly ambitious. Additionally, audience members will routinely consume news from multiple sources, and will be counted in the audiences reach across multiple outlets.
⁶ Newcastle Weekly *Advertising Kit*
⁷ Estimated from *Regional TAM survey 06/02 – 29/10* and *Regional Universe Estimates 2022*: 18.5% of an estimated 330,400 households, approximately 60,000



Launch of Close the Loop Competition



Winners of Close the Loop

Artwork Competition: Close the Loop

 **22**
people submitted
in entries

 **71**
schools engaged

Engagement

The engagement team sent an invitation to 71 schools throughout the City to participate in the *Close the Loop* artwork competition, on behalf of the Lord Mayor.

Included was a student-friendly flier explaining the competition and a background briefing for teachers, including the competition terms and conditions and references to useful teaching resources.

The engagement team followed up the invitations with two rounds of phone calls, speaking to administrative, teaching staff and subject coordinators, resending the invitation where necessary.

The competition closing date was extended, after conversations with teachers and staff revealed a busy curriculum period in the closing weeks of the term, including a focus on the passing of the Queen.

The competition was also promoted at several of the community events, including at Fletcher Village, Wallsend Shopping Centre and Run4Reef (see Table 2).

Discussions around the competition were underpinned by constant references to the *Strategy* itself, including its guiding principles (Planet, People and Prosperity) and its core initiatives including the proposed MRF and FOGO processing facility.

The announcement of the winners was made on Sunday the 6 November 2022, coinciding with National Environment Week beginning the following day.

Feedback

Conversations about the competition with school staff and with community members were positive and supported by Circular Economy educational resources.

Competition Incentives

- Two sets of prizes were allocated to incentivise participation in the competition:
- 2 x iPad Minis and Apple Pencils (1 for Primary, another for Secondary Schools) for students who produced the artwork judged to be the best in each category
 - School prize: randomly drawn from the participating students, a workshop with GoCircular which will assist the school to become more sustainable by joining the circular economy.



A few examples of entries received



Advisory Committees

 **77**
directly engaged

Engagement

The City of Newcastle Advisory Committees provide advice and guidance on the development of strategies, and identification of challenges and opportunities for the City. CN Committee positions are voluntary positions held by CN staff, Councillors and community members. Consultation of the Strategy occurred at the following Advisory Committee meetings:

5 July 2022: **Infrastructure**
5 July 2022: **Strategy & Innovation**

2 August 2022: **Community & Culture**
6 September 2022: **Liveable Cities**

7 September 2022: **Youth**
26 September 2022: **Guraki**

Feedback

Each Advisory Committee was asked what they perceived the key challenges and opportunities will be that the Strategy can address. The following provides a sample of the statements received back.

Challenges:

- High state and federal diversion targets
- Changing people's behaviour in terms of recycling
- Lack of critical infrastructure
- Maximising value streams
- Inefficient market - lack of competition
- Capital investment and community education
- The targets are not supported by critical infrastructure across the state
- Reuse options for unwanted household items
- People want waste/recycling to be easy
- Interaction with growing communities on boundaries
- Protecting our asset
- No domestic recycling capacity
- Cultural barriers
- Consumer culture
- EPA levy and reliance on this as a state tax
- Regulatory uncertainty - Will Govt allow landfill in 10-15 years' time?
- Changing consumption behaviours rather than just end-of-life recycling
- Traffic and transport it's a busy site
- Convenience trumps sustainability
- Personal responsibility to recycle correctly.
- Illegal dumping on private land/bush land

Opportunities:

- Maximize **income** to ratepayers
- Building **trust** and a social licence with the community
- Creating a **circular economy** so it's imbedded in the community
- Identification as **critical infrastructure**
- A circular economy waste strategy encompasses data and incorporates **IoT capacity**.
- **Waste as a resource** and seen as such by the community
- A **Regional Hub** for the Hunter and longer-term investment
- **Economic viability** - not only should it be good for sustainability it has to also be managed responsibly
- **Avoid** creating a legacy problem for future generations with our disposal practice
- Meet region's needs - **sustainably**
- **Circular economy; environmental sustainability; social justice; regional security**
- Assist in achieving **net zero emissions**
- Living documents around **educating people** that change with the times
- Wide **residential uptake** and participation and understanding
- Ongoing **education** and **advocacy** on the importance waste education
- **Close the loop** completely on waste.

Have Your Say Survey: FOGO Facility



669
visits to the Have
Your Say web page



71
respondents
completed survey

Engagement

The Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) processing facility is a critical infrastructure required to allow CN to progress towards meeting 80% recovery State & Federal targets. It was essential feedback from this engagement was incorporated into the *Strategy*.



The survey was live on CN's HYS project page in November – December 2021. QR codes and links to the survey were available on the project Fact sheet, FAQs, A1 corflute posters, and postcard letterbox drops. All surveys were completed online, a total of 71 respondents completed the survey.

Feedback

- **75.9%** were **'extremely supportive'**
- **12.1%** were **'very supportive'**
- **10%** reported being **'not supportive at all'**

Key findings:

- The greatest perceived benefit of an organics processing facility are:
 - Minimising waste going to landfill
 - Reduction of carbon emissions caused by landfill; and
 - Producing compost that can be used by landscapers, farmers, and residents
- The highest reported concern about the organics processing facility were odour and residential waste collection services more than a quarter of respondents indicated no concerns about the proposal.
- Respondents were asked to describe any additional aspects that council should consider in the design of the facility. The most commonly heard themes related to:
 - Traffic concerns;
 - Location concerns;
 - Other projects/infrastructure.

Some suggests provided by respondents included:

"Talk to local residents about relocating the facility"	"It'd be nice to see a roadmap of sorts and definition of what 'net zero by 2030' actually means"	"Minimise visual impact"	"Ensure that relevant area are enclosed so vermin and odour issues eliminated"
"Have you looked at vermiculture processes having any part to play?"	"Keep educating the public. I found out about this from local politician's social media. This is an excellent way to reach people"	"Perhaps food wastes bins can be put into footpaths and public parks by City Council to be taken away to the compost facility"	"If rotary equipment allow sufficient space surrounding the equipment, for future surveying alignment measurements to be conducted"
"Ensure the building and facilities are powered by renewables and buildings are constructed in the most energy efficient way possible"	"Like Lake Macquarie Council, Newcastle Council should provide their residents with organic waste bins"		

FOGO Facility coreflute

We are proposing to build an organics processing facility at Summerhill Waste Management Centre to process food and garden organics (FOGO), diverting it from landfill.

The proposal involves construction and operation of a fully-contained composting facility which includes receiving, composting, maturation, and storage areas. The proposed facility will use new technology to process organic materials into compost for reuse.

The facility is intended to increase resource recovery from food and garden organics, reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and contribute to the City's goal of net zero emissions from its operations by 2030.

Organics Processing Facility

City of Newcastle

Have Your Say Survey: MRF



1,730
visits to the Have Your Say web page



278
respondents completed survey

Engagement

The future Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) that would be located within CN at the Summerhill Waste Management Facility is essential in providing long-term security around residential yellow-bin recycling services. It was essential feedback from this engagement was incorporated into the *Strategy*.

The survey was live on CN's HYS' page from 11 May – 28 June 2022. All surveys were completed online, a total of 278 respondents completed the survey.

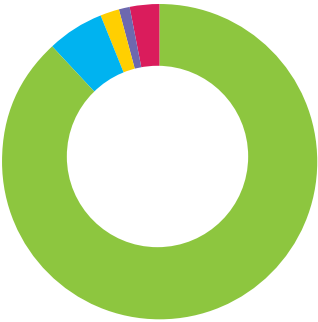
Respondents were asked the following questions:

1. How supportive are you of the proposal to build a Material Recovery Facility at Summerhill Waste Management Centre?
2. From what you know about this Material Recovery Facility, what do you believe are the most significant project benefits?
3. From what you know about a Material Recovery Facility, are there any areas of concern for you?
4. Based on your existing knowledge of the site and surrounding area, are there any aspects that City of Newcastle should consider in the design of the facility?

Feedback

The key findings from the MRF survey were as follows:

- The **main concern** raised by respondents was **increased traffic (36%)** caused by the new facility, followed by **noise (15%)**, and **odour (10%)**.
- The **most significant benefit** from the MRF was perceived to be **soft plastic recycling (13%)**, followed by ensuring **expansion potential (11%)**, **educational campaign (9%)**, and use of **solar (9%)**.
- An overwhelming **96% of respondents** said they were either **supportive** or **very supportive** of the proposal.



- Very supportive
- Supportive
- Neither supportive nor unsupportive
- Unsupportive
- Very unsupportive

MRF coreflutes

We are proposing to build a Material Recovery Facility at Summerhill Waste Management Centre.

The Material Recovery Facility (MRF) will sort mixed recyclables collected from yellow lid bins into individual material types—paper, cardboard, glass, plastics, steel and aluminium.

The clean and separated materials can then be sold to recycling factories to be made into new products.

PROPOSED MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY (MRF)

PROPOSED ORGANICS PROCESSING FACILITY

SUMMERHILL WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTRE

Have your say

newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay

City of Newcastle

How it will work

At present, your household recyclables are taken to the Central Coast to be sorted. Building a local MRF at Summerhill Waste Management Centre will:

- allow recyclables to be sorted in Newcastle.
- reduce transport costs and save greenhouse gas emissions.
- create up to 28 new jobs.
- be owned by CN and provide continuity of your kerbside recycling service into the future.
- together with our new Organics Processing Facility, create a resource recovery hub that will encourage new businesses to establish, leading to more jobs.

MRF processing

- 1 Mixed materials arrive and are loaded on to the conveyor in the receive area
- 2 Contamination is removed by hand
- 3 Disc screens separate paper and cardboard and remove glass
- 4 Glass breakers break glass into small pieces
- 5 Magnets remove steel
- 6 Eddy currents split aluminium from plastic containers
- 7 Optical separators sort the various plastic types
- 8 Paper, plastics, aluminium, steel are baled
- 9 Glass is stored in large bins
- 10 Clean and separated materials are transported to recyclers to be made into new products

Phone Survey



1,207

individuals were
directly engaged

Engagement

Community research was conducted through a series of phone surveys delivered by reputable community research organisations.

Table 4 Online Engagement: Phone Survey

	How many residents surveyed?
28th of October 2020 to the 6th of November 2020	406
1st of September to the 7th September	400
19th of November to the 30th of November	401
Total	1,207

- The phone survey questionnaire asked a series of questions that included:
- Identifying levels of importance and satisfaction with different waste services and facilities
 - Exploring awareness and usage of different waste streams
 - Identifying the proportion of waste in red bins that is food waste, and whether residents could manage with reduced collections if a food waste collection service is provided
 - Key personal and household characteristics, including how full are the household’s red lid and yellow lid bins usually

- Use of the Return and Earn Scheme (often described as “bottle banks”) for recycling bottles
- Collection of soft plastics for recycling
- Collection of unwanted textiles including clothing and linens
- Speed of Council’s response to illegal dumping
- Use of and operating hours of the Summerhill Waste Management Centre
- Measuring support for key principles of council’s Waste Management Strategy.

Table 5 Phone Survey Response Summary

Survey Category	Survey Responses Summary
Importance of Waste Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Residents view all waste services as highly important, but especially the three bin services (general waste, recycling, and garden organics).
Satisfaction of Waste Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All waste services received high satisfaction ratings, with ≥85% of residents stating they are at least somewhat satisfied.
Awareness and Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awareness of the kerbside bulky waste collection is very high (96%), with 70% of residents having previously used the service.Whilst awareness is also relatively high for vouchers offered by Council (79%) and the Summerhill Community Recycling Centre (70%), just 54% of residents were aware of the Sort and Save Service at Summerhill;Less than half of residents have ever used each of these three services– and there is seemingly a multiplier effect where lower awareness equates to a more than incremental reduction in usage.
Support for a Waste Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Residents expressed high levels of support across all key principles for a new strategy, with two thirds of residents selecting the ‘top box’ of very supportive for ‘programs and infrastructure to add value to disposed materials’.Support was equally high for the development of a MRF, with residents discussing the increased recycling opportunities it will provide and the reduction in waste sent to landfill. Furthermore, the benefits the facility may provide to the area in terms of job creation and the local economy were also top of mind amongst supportive residents.
Waste Diversion and Value Adding Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">When presented with a variety of different waste diversion and value adding initiatives, the majority of residents (≥87%) believe each option should be explored, though the two most frequently selected options were:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Generating green energy (from our organics for example) to power a local recycling facility (95%);Partnering with university to research new ways to divert waste and new product uses for recyclables (95%).
Return & Earn Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nearly all respondents were aware of the Return & Earn scheme for recycling bottles (95%), and 47% of households have used it.Users mostly found it easy to use (70%) while 46% of non-users thought it would be easy to use.
Bulk waste collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Under half the respondents to the online questionnaire had used the kerbside collection service (42%) and around one in three had used vouchers for the SWMC (37%).

Quarterly Survey

 **1,113**
individuals were
directly engaged

Engagement

The City of Newcastle undertakes a community survey on a quarterly basis to better understand key issues, community needs and priorities regarding all the services and facilities provided by the City.

As part of the early engagement to guide the development of the *Strategy*, the CN leveraged two quarterly surveys which contained waste and resource management questions. Council received:

- 561 responses for the Spring Quarterly survey 2019
- 552 responses for the Summer Quarterly survey 2020

The purpose of the questions in the survey were to build context for service assessments and to rate respondents according to their level of experiences towards CN waste services.

Feedback

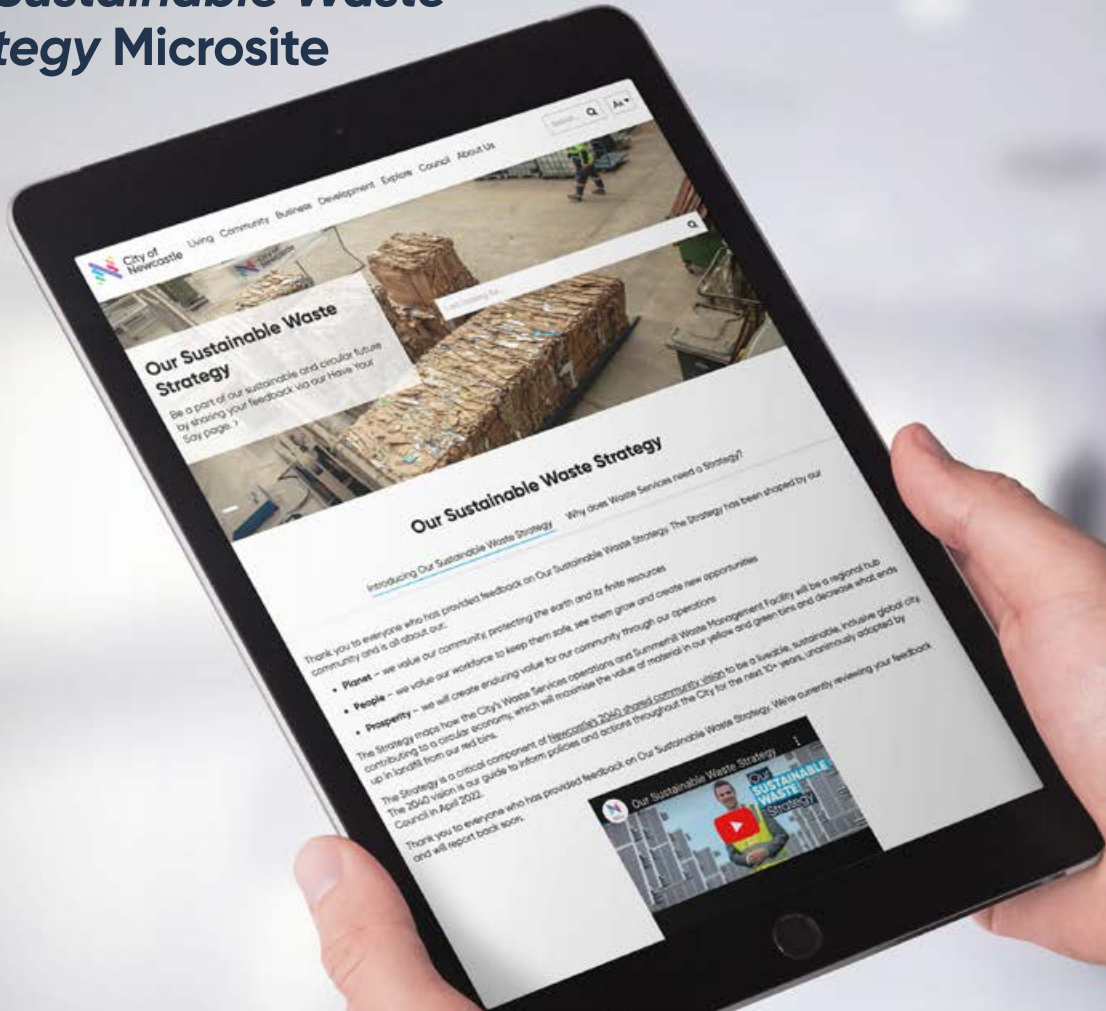
Key findings of the surveys were as follows:

- **Nearly 3 in 4 (74%)** have said that it is **extremely important** that Newcastle **reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill**, suggesting a broad high consciousness towards reducing waste for the area.
- Kerbside red lid bin (general waste) – **85%** rated that they are **"satisfied/very satisfied"** with this service.
- Kerbside **yellow lid bin** (recycling) – **88%** rated that they are **"satisfied/very satisfied"** with this service.
- Kerbside **green lid bin** (garden waste) – **85%** rated that they are **"satisfied/very satisfied"** with this service.
- Relatively **lower awareness** towards **free drop-offs for e-waste, problem waste and small electronic/electrical** items compared to other services offered. There is **opportunity to promote** this more regularly as potential uptake is also comparatively higher with at least **40%** or more saying they would consider using such services in the future
- Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with waste services offered by City of Newcastle.
 - **89%** saying that they are **satisfied/very satisfied** with the services currently
 - **8%** have said that they were **"dissatisfied/very dissatisfied"**

Appendix B: Promotional Material Examples

Public place bin

Our Sustainable Waste Strategy Microsite



Industry Briefing Event Invitation

Have Your Say Webpage



Postcard



Videos

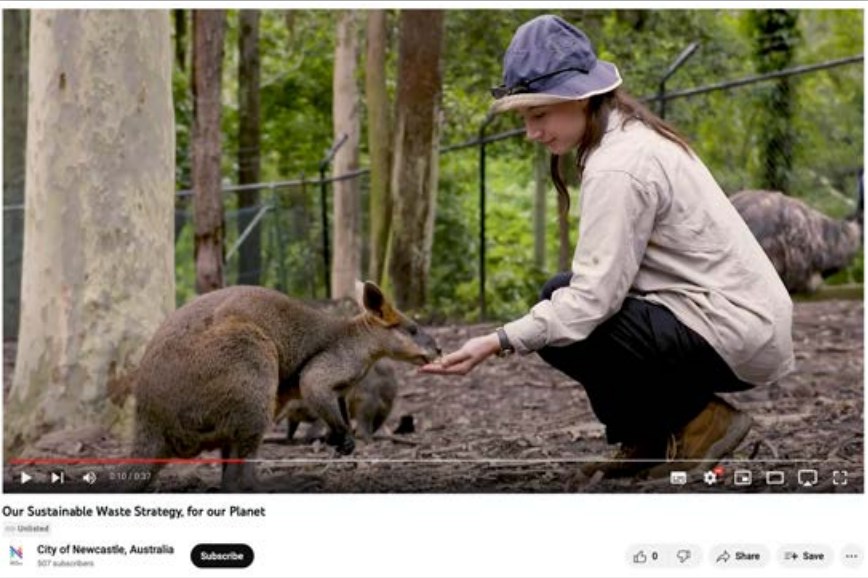
Video #1 – Our Sustainable Waste Strategy: An overview (for our planet, our people and our prosperity)



Video #5 – [Deputy Lord Mayor version]. Strategy Overview – planet, our people and our prosperity



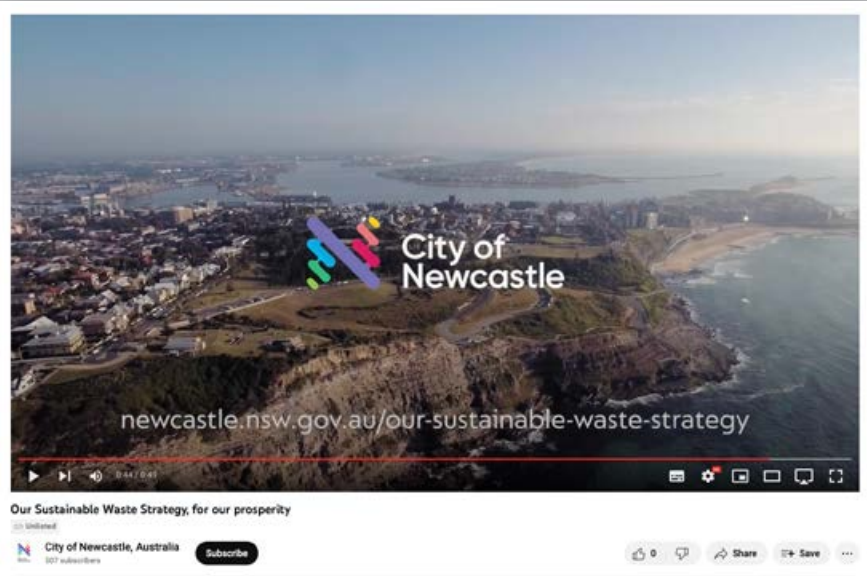
Video #2 – For our Planet



Video #3 – For our People



Video #4 – For our region's Prosperity



Close the Loop School Artwork Competition

Promotional materials



Poster



Digital screen at 12 Stewart Avenue



Facebook post and tile

Media images

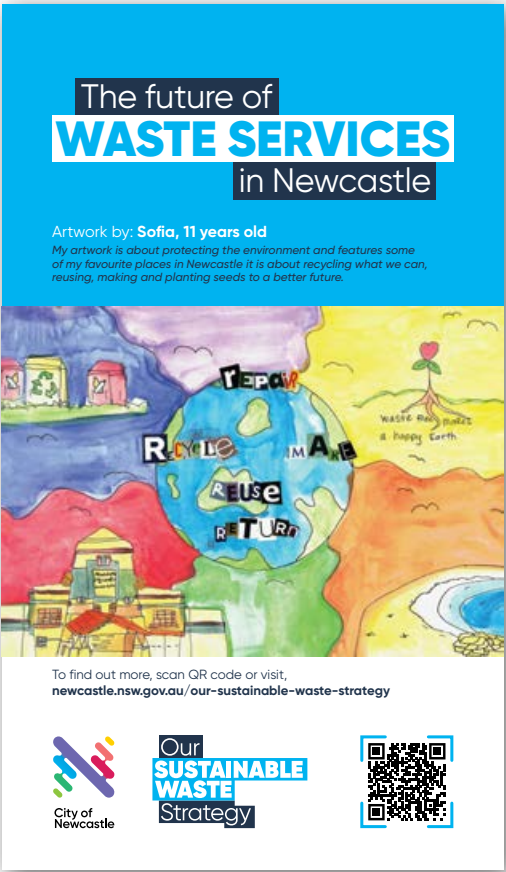


Competition promotion

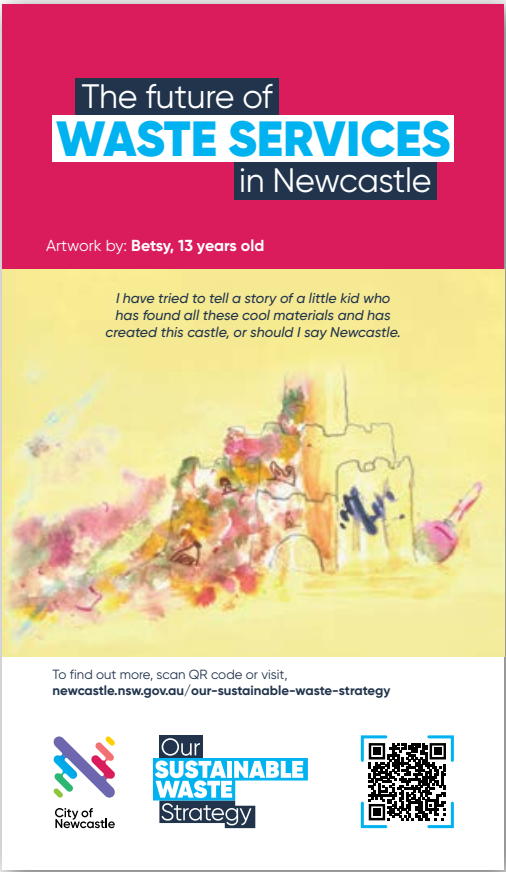


Competition winners and truck liver

Truck Livery and Public Place Bins



Public place bin - Sofia



Public place bin - Betsy



Waste truck livery - Sofia



Waste truck livery - Betsy

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