

Social Strategy Public exhibition report

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Executive summary

Newcastle has changed a lot over the years. Today it is more diverse than ever, with people of all ages, background and beliefs. In 2021, City of Newcastle (CN) heard from over 2000 people who told us about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusions issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, access to services, safety and inclusion in the Newcastle area. These ideas and feedback were used to develop the Social Strategy (SS). To help finalise the draft framework, CN sought feedback from the community and stakeholders via public exhibition of the draft SS from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

The engagement objectives included gaining a better understanding of community and stakeholder opinion on the draft SS, including what they like about the draft and what could be improved; generating conversation around social justice and CN's role and actions; and strengthening relationships and building trust between community members, key stakeholders and CN.

During the public exhibition, a variety of communications and promotion activities were deployed to raise awareness of the SS and promote the opportunity for community members to provide feedback. Key communications activities included a dedicated Have Your Say Page, post card style hand outs and static displays, emails to key stakeholders, social media posts, newsletters, and a media release.

The community were invited to provide feedback on the draft SS through the online open feedback form, or alternatively by mail, email, phone. In total there were 30 submissions through the online form and email.

The online submissions revealed general support of the Strategy, with **70% of respondents agreeing with the four priorities** and offering suggestions for improvement rather than disagreeing with the strategy overall. The feedback for areas that were liked and areas that could be improved to the draft strategy and implementation, were broken into key themes/topics.

Areas that are liked themes/topics included:

- Emphasis on strong communities, that are resilient, engaged, inclusive, diverse, and connected
- Inclusion of housing affordability and access
- Priority on health and safety for all communities.

Areas that could be improved included:

- Community engagement, including early and ongoing consultation to improve community-led decision making
- Mention of traffic and transport connectivity, accessibility, and parking
- Local government responsibilities and remit, policies, and implementation
- Other suggestions included community education, inclusive infrastructure/event spaces, housing affordability/development, support for new parents, sustainability and support for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Community members and key stakeholders were also able to provide feedback through one of the 15 stakeholder and community events and workshops that ran during the public exhibition period led by CN's Community Planning and Development Team. Collectively, approximately 300 community members and stakeholders attended the events. The documented conversations and feedback from these workshops were also analysed and discussed. Across the feedback that emerged from the workshops, five key themes were identified:

- Tailored support for specific groups people of diverse sexualities and genders, new parents, people with disability, older people, Culturally and Linguistical Diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and domestic and family violence survivors
- Collaboration and partnership with relevant sector leaders and organisations on a local, state and national level
- Community engagement, including regular and ongoing consultation
- Local government roles, responsibilities, remit, and advocacy.



1. Background

Newcastle has changed a lot over the years. Today it is more diverse than ever, with people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs. Individually we may be very different but, together Newcastle is a place we come together to live, work or visit. As the region continues to grow, City of Newcastle (CN) wants to make sure that individuals can grow with us and are a valued part of our vibrant community.

In 2021, CN heard from over 2000 people who told us about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusion issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, access to services and safety and inclusion in the Newcastle area. These ideas and feedback were used to develop the Social Strategy (SS).

To help finalise the draft framework, CN sought feedback from the community and stakeholders via public exhibition of the draft SS before finalising and presenting he final Strategy to Council for adoption.

This report outlines the SS public exhibition engagement activities that were undertaken from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

2. Engagement objectives

To better understand community and stakeholder opinion on the draft SS, CN publicly displayed the Strategy from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

More specifically, the public exhibition sought to:

- Obtain community and key stakeholder feedback on the draft SS, identifying what they like about the draft Strategy and what could be improved.
- Generate conversation around social justice and CN's role and actions, including CN as a Refugee Welcome Zone, gender equity advocate, child friendly, safe city and advocate for First Nations reconciliation.
- Strengthen relationships and build trust between community members, key stakeholders, and CN.

3. Communication and promotion

During the public exhibition, a communications campaign was implemented, including a competition to raise awareness of the SS and promote the opportunity for community members to provide feedback.

Key communications activities are summarised on the following page, and key pieces of communications collateral are available in <u>Appendix 1</u>.



Channel	Description	Reach
Have Your Say webpage	A dedicated project webpage was created on CN's Have Your Say landing page. A link to this page was also added to CN's Public Exhibitions page. The page aimed to provide information and raise awareness about the draft Social Strategy and direct people to the online feedback form.	3,699 page visits
Post card and static displays	A post card style handout was designed to be distributed at events and workshops that took place during the public exhibition period. To support this, static displays with information about the proposed Social Strategy were displayed at community centres and libraries across the city.	500 post cards distributed 15 onsite locations
Stakeholder emails	Information about the draft Social Strategy was emailed to subscribers of the Community Planning & Development community admin newsletter, community members who requested to stay informed about Social Strategy updates and community development stakeholders.	Distributed to 1,145 subscribers
Social media	The public exhibition was promoted via a paid post on CN's Facebook page. The post intended to raise awareness and encourage people to have their say.	9,926 reached 143 engagements 506 clicks
Newsletters	Information about the draft Social Strategy was published in two of the dedicated Have Your Say monthly e-newsletters.	Distributed to 2,439 subscribers
Media	A media release with information about the draft SS was issued on 10 October 2022	n/a



4. Engagement activities

The community were invited to provide feedback on SS from 28 September to 25 November 2022.

The community were able to provide comment on the SS in a number of ways:

Feedback form

A link to the guided online feedback form was provided on the dedicated Have Your Say page. The Have Your Say page provided the Strategy to view in several formats, including a summary version that was embedded into the form for reference. A Mentimeter version of the feedback form was also used at the LGBTQIA+ Community session (17 October 2022). The guided form, including single choice, and open-ended questions asked participants the following questions:

- 1. Do you agree with the four priorities?
- 2. What parts of the draft Strategy do you like?
- 3. What parts of the Strategy could be improved?
- 4. Do you have any additional comments about the draft Social Strategy?

In total, 28 people provided feedback via the feedback form (including online and Mentimeter). Findings from the online form are presented in section <u>5. Key findings.</u>

Other submissions

Community members were also able to provide feedback on the SS by mail, email, or phone. In total, 2 submissions were received via these channels.

Stakeholder consultation, committee meetings and workshops

The Community Planning and Development team (CP&D) organised and facilitated a variety of events and workshops to promote the draft Strategy and seek feedback. The team met with approximately 300 community members and advocates to raise awareness of the Strategy and ask for feedback. The events included:

- Drop-in sessions at Hope Street, Baptist Care (12 October, 13 October, and 19 October 2022)
- LGBTQIA+ Community session, Lambton Park Hotel (17 October 2022)
- Guest Lecture on Sustainable Development Goals, University of Newcastle (18 October 2022)
- Hunter Ageing Alliance Morning Tea & Learn, CN Digital Library (20 October 2022)
- Community Sector Afternoon Tea, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (26 October 2022)
- Community & Culture Advisory Committee Meeting, City Hall (31 October 2022)
- Making Change in Our Suburbs Meeting, Shortland Public School (9 November 2022)
- Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) Morning Team & Learn, CDAH Office (15 November 2022)
- Making Changing in Our Suburbs Youth Project, Wallsend Library (16 November 2022)



- Humanitarian Settlement Program Newcastle meeting, Hamilton (16 November 2022)
- Access & Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting, CN Digital Library (17 November 2022)
- LGBTQIA+ Representatives meeting, The Edwards (18 November 2022)
- Wallsend Active Hub Open Day (20 November 2022)
- Soul Café meeting, Soul Café Homeless Support Services (22 November 2022)
- Disability & Employment Video launch, CN Digital Library (25 November 2022)
- Liveable Cities Advisory Committee Meeting, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (29 November 2022)

During these events, CP&D representatives engaged in a number of focus group style discussions about the draft SS where they were able to receive feedback and comments. The key themes that emerged from nine of these workshops are presented in <u>5. Key findings.</u>

5. Key findings

During the community consultation period CN received:

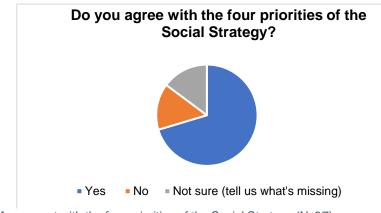
- 28 feedback forms
- 2 written/emailed submissions
- Feedback from 9 workshops or meetings (attended by 290 community members/stakeholders)

5.1 Feedback form / written or emailed submissions

Respondents of the online feedback form were a self-selecting sample, and results are therefore not necessarily representative of all relevant stakeholders. The responses and feedback from the online feedback form and written submissions are outlined in this section.

5.1.1 Agreement with four priorities (feedback form only)

Respondents who completed the feedback form were asked if they agree with the four priorities in the draft Strategy (Priority 1: Equitable communities, Priority 2: Inclusive communities, Priority 3: Connected communities, Priority 4: Healthy Communities). The majority of respondents (70%) stated that they agreed with the priorities in the SS, while 14% stated that they did not and 14% answered *Not sure* (see figure 1).







All respondents were able to write additional comments to support their response.

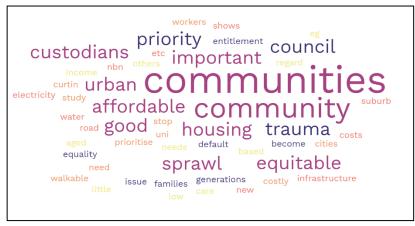
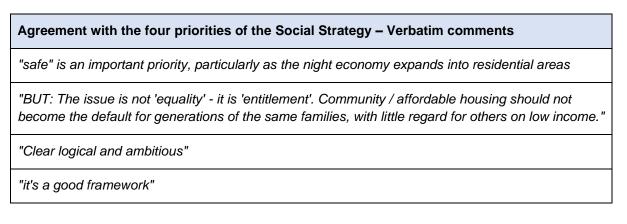


Figure 2: Word cloud of additional comments to support their agreement with the four priorities of the draft SS

Of those who agreed, three respondents continued to praise the priorities in their commentary, one comment specified that the focus should be on entitlement rather than equity, and the importance of housing security and affordability. One respondent also specified that safety was also an important priority as the night-time economy expands.

Table 1: Selection of verbatim comments on agreement with the four priorities of the SS



Of those who disagreed, commentary focused on the inclusion of safety to limit trauma for people experiencing disability (one respondent) and clarifying the role of local government in developing strategies such as the SS (one respondent).

Table 2: Selection of verbatim comments on disagreement with the four priorities of the SS

Disagreement with the four priorities of the Social Strategy – Verbatim comments

"I would like to council to address safety as a way to limit trauma such as the trauma of being disabled and forced to wheel through the kitchen each time because there that's the only accessible entrance and work alongside people with lived experience and support them"

"Has nothing to do with what the council is employed to do"



Of those who answered unsure, one respondent expressed the need to prioritise transport and connectivity to mitigate urban sprawl. Another respondent suggested that Awabakal and Worimi peoples be recognised as ongoing custodians.

Table 3: Selection of verbatim comments from those who answered unsure in agreement with the four priorities of the SS

Answered unsure to the question agreement with the four priorities of the Social Strategy – Verbatim comments

"Overall excellent. However, recognition of Awabakal and Worimi peoples as more than the 'descendants of the traditional custodians' is really important - they are the ONGOING custodians of these unceded lands.

I also think that reference to the UNDRIP would enhance the strategy"

"Need to prioritise walkable cities and to stop urban sprawl. Urban sprawl is too costly: A 2009 Curtin uni study shows infrastructure (road, water, NBN, electricity etc) costs for a new suburb are \$684,000 per dwelling (Curtin_Sustainability_Paper_0209). Buses / active transport"

5.1.2 Areas that are liked

26 out of the 28 respondents discussed what they liked about the SS.

Strong Communities

Of the 26 submissions that discussed what they liked about the SS, 18 submissions made a comment of support for the strategy's focus on building strong communities that are resilient, engaged, inclusive, diverse and connected. Eight of these respondents made explicit mentions of the *inclusive / inclusion* priority, and four referred to the *equity / equitable* priority as ways the strategy will strengthen communities. Two responses also commented on the inclusion of 'reconciliation.'

"Overall it provides a vision of a friendly, busy, and cultured city, with activities for all - a diverse and growing community."

"Everything about inclusion, safety, belonging, deep connection, fun and playfulness, healing..."

"All, but the priority to Connected Communities is very relevant" "All elements. I first visited Newcastle 5 or so years ago and immediately felt a sense on openness and community, so much so I moved here 18 months ago. The sense of welcoming is real and appears to be here for all. Anyone that builds on Newcastle's existing goodness is to be supported"

Figure 3: Selection of verbatim comments on the theme: Strong communities as priorities to support a socially just and inclusive place for all

Housing – affordability and access

Five submissions noted support for housing as a suitable priority included within the strategy. One of the five submissions mentioning housing noted that additional detail would be needed including eligibility, responsibility, and location.



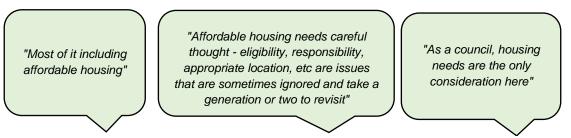


Figure 4: Selection of verbatim comments on the topic: Housing (affordability and access) as a priority to support a socially just and inclusive place for all

Health and safety

Five submissions emphasised their support for the reference to health and safety in the draft Strategy. One of the five respondents who referred to health and safety in their response, specified that this was particularly important in places, spaces, and social infrastructure within Newcastle.

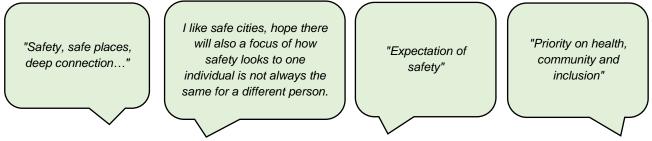


Figure 5: Selection of verbatim comments on the topic: Health and safety as priorities to support a socially just and inclusive place for all

5.1.3 Areas that could be improved

20 of the 28 respondents who completed the online form, and all the written submissions discussed what could be improved or aspects that may be missing in the Strategy.

Community engagement – early and ongoing consultation / community led decision making

Seven responses mentioned that an emphasis on early, increased and ongoing community engagement would be important in delivering on the priorities highlighted in the SS. Furthermore, two respondents suggested that they would like CN staff to be more visible in the community to improve the engagement on these issues as part of the Strategy. One respondent suggested that the current community consultation model would need to be improved to deliver the strategic priorities and strengthen community led decision-making.



Table 4: A selection of verbatim comments on areas that could be improved related to community engagement

Areas that could be improved – *Community Engagement* – Verbatim comments

"Council to have Pride in us. Not just see us as some group to occasionally cater for. Don't think it's all done because you talked to us a couple of times. Nothing is really done until our society changes and we truly"

"I feel like there could be more community consultation, particularly with marginalised communities within LGBTQI+ communities"

"It's a good start, but ideally needs to move beyond the current government-community consultation and build more substantial community led decision making. It is hard to know how and where to engage council staff around these issues"

"More emphasis on Community Engagement and respect for Community involvement and response"

Traffic and Transport – connect ability, accessibility, and parking

Six responses commented on including a reference to public transport or parking. Two of the six respondents suggested that frequent, efficient and affordable transport would be key to delivering the connected communities priority.

Table 5: a selection of verbatim comments on areas that could be improved related to traffic and transport

Areas that could be improved - Traffic and Transport - Verbatim comments

"A free tram or bus link to certain locations which are not on the public and private bus routes would be a help with the connections"

"Transport. All these local social events mean nothing when the community of people can't attend due to transport, parking"

"CONNECTED COMMUNITIES should also emphasise the importance of frequent, efficient, and inexpensive public transport"

Local Government – responsibilities and remit, policies and implementation

Five responses noted that greater detail was needed on how CN would effectively resource the strategy, align or update current Local government frameworks to support the strategy and their overall commitment to implementing the strategy.

Table 6: a selection of verbatim comments on areas that could be improved related to Local Government

Areas that could be improved – *Local Government* – Verbatim comments

"The terms SIA process, Social Impact Assessment, Community Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment are taken to be interchangeable terms and to have a similar intent. The existing SIA Policy (1999) has not been reviewed and updated since its adoption and implementation."

"Are there the resources, will and commitment to make this happen?"



Other areas

Other suggested improvements included an emphasis on community education (three respondents), additional inclusive infrastructure / event spaces (three respondents), housing affordability / development (two respondents), support for new parents / 'First 2000 Days' (one respondent), sustainability (one respondent), and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members including advocating regarding Justice and incarceration (one respondent).

Table 7: selection of verbatim comments on other areas that could be improved

Areas that could be improved – *Other* – Verbatim comments

Education. It's important to educate people about people of difference in many ways. Formal, schools, workplace, entertainment, media, public events ...

"NCC should recognise that the most critical years of a person's life is the first 5 years. These determine the outcome with regard to health (mental and physical), employment, addiction, incarceration, domestic violence."

"Justice seems to be missing - maybe because it seems beyond the power of council. So is health, and yet that is included."

5.2 Feedback from workshops

Over the public exhibition period, the CP&D attended over 15 workshops, including lunch and learn events, advisory committee meetings, informal events with key stakeholder and community groups to discuss the draft SS and gather feedback. The conversations and feedback were documented across nine of the fifteen sessions. The remaining six sessions were information sessions, so no formal feedback was recorded. The workshops included:

- Drop-in sessions at Hope Street, Baptist Care (12 October, 13 October, and 19 October 2022)
- Hunter Ageing Alliance Morning Tea & Learn, CN Digital Library (20 October 2022)
- Community Sector Afternoon Tea, CN Lord Mayors Reception Room (26 October 2022)
- Community & Culture Advisory Committee Meeting, City Hall (31 October 2022)
- Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) Morning Team & Learn, CDAH Office (15 November 2022)
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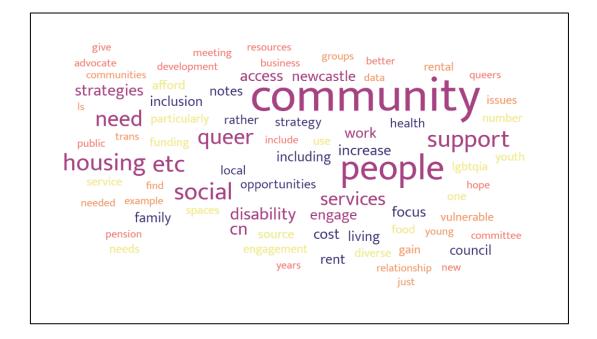


Figure 6: Word cloud of feedback from workshops across the public exhibition period

5.2.1 Key themes

Across the feedback that emerged from the workshops, five key themes were identified.

Tailored support for specific groups – LGBTQIA+, New parents, People living with disability, Elderly/Ageing, CALD, First Nations, and Domestic and Family Violence victims.

Workshop attendees, highlighted the need for the SS to address the specific needs of various communities / groups within Newcastle, including LGBTQIA+, elderly/ageing, First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse, domestic and family violence victims, new parents and children, young people and those experiencing homelessness.

Across these groups, participants mentioned the need for the strategy to support tailored services and facilities for various groups, including hybrid and holistic health and support services. Furthermore, participants indicated that it would be beneficial if the Strategy / CN would support recruitment of the variety of health care professionals, staff and volunteers required to meet the needs of these services in the area.

Additionally, across these specific target groups, workshop participants highlighted the need for tailored, inclusive spaces and events, such as alcohol-free night life, outdoor activities (mitigate COVID-19 risk), and a variety of workshops and events that could improve the skills, confidence, and wellbeing of community members.

Inclusive language and data were also mentioned as a way of ensuring that the needs (and nuances) of each group within Newcastle area are understood and appropriately addressed.

Table 8: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme tailored support for specific groups

Tailored support for specific groups - Verbatim workshop notes

Explore the idea of 'Data Feminism'

Young girls experience bias in urban spaces, an example includes state parks not inclusive

What makes individuals feel safe and included as a queer person. Othering of the queer community. Queer community want to be labelled.

Broad perspective is needed. It is not just about seniors and young people focus on a broad spectrum of people and particularly those falling through the gaps. Would be good to have an even bigger focus in LS on how do I find my community? And focus on who aren't we hearing from? And why?

A need for more volunteers in the [aged care] sector. Discussed what Local Government can do in this space and reflect in the LS Strategy.

Would like to see more information in Social Strategy on the importance of the first 2000 days of life of babies and young children

Night Life in Newcastle is very alcohol-based culture dominant. Are there options available focused activities.

D&FV are different. Importance of having a gendered and queer lens on strategies. Sex work –wasn't mentioned in strategy but it is addressed in the national plan on D&FV

Collaboration / partnership

Across the workshops, participants discussed the need for CN to collaborate and partner with relevant sector leaders and organisations on a local, state and national level to achieve the SS objectives. More specifically, attendees discussed ways that existing facilities, programs, events, and infrastructure could be leveraged / maximised to ensure strategic alignment and progress on identified objectives in the Strategy.

Additionally, participants suggested that the CN could support / fund various initiatives in collaboration with local businesses, education partners (universities/TAFEs/school) and community groups. In particular the development of inclusive resources, workshops, internship / work opportunities.

Table 9: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme collaboration / partnership

Collaboration / partnership – Verbatim workshop notes

Could Council support funding/mentorship regarding business ideas. Support with grants. Include collaboration with Economic Development team.

Innovation and Entrepreneur / Creative Industries Course that looks at hypothetical problems. Design focus on Social Innovation. Use practical CN examples in courses.



For "galvanising and harnessing" service/community goodwill and action from different community services, volunteer groups etc, with differing objectives and values, consider applying similar "shared skill sets" model

Less diversity of services, and get existing to work more effectively, CN can assist with this (funding, social network analysis, strategic planning for key sectors)

Asked for clarify regarding Community Sector Interagency meetings. Look at ways to make these work better/harder.

Community engagement / regular/ongoing consultation

Throughout the workshops and sessions, the need for ongoing and regular community engagement to take place with various community members and stakeholders, particularly those who are apart of specific groups/communities was discussed. Attendees discussed the need for CN to seek feedback in a more informal manner, including visiting various community members in their spaces and having conversations. Discussion about ongoing community engagement also included suggestions for ongoing/regular meetings to measure progress towards the Strategy objectives.

In addition, respondent's suggested that engagement opportunities should be incentivised through payment and/or food, drinks and events. Respondents also expressed the need for engagement opportunities to be promoted via accessible channels, including online and in person.

Community engagement was also discussed as a way to empower community leadership and community / stakeholder involvement in the Strategy.

Table 10: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme community engagement

Community engagement – Verbatim workshop notes

Create a way that community can engage

People who aren't rate payers, can they engage with CN and these strategies. There are many people who are renters and those in social housing

Reference Group for Queer community. There is a genuine need and want to have a group of community representatives to speak to regularly.

Pay Queers for consultation

engage with people who may not usually be involved in strategic planning

Local government roles, responsibilities, remit and advocacy.

During the sessions with stakeholders and community members, attendees discussed the roles and remit of CN and staff in improving social inclusion. Across the workshops, participants discussed the need for Council to be a key leader in educating the broader community and businesses about different groups and communities facing adversities.

Furthermore, attendees suggested that CN/local government could assist in advocating for improved outcomes on a variety of issues including affordable housing, cost of living pressures,



housing supply and affordability, increased welfare and pension payment and support including resource development for small businesses.

Local government – Verbatim workshop notes

Would like CN/strategy to identify ways to assist/advocate/support addressing very-low income households living off 'below poverty line' pensions.

CN to advocate for more funding roles, tafe/uni placements, etc.

Only people over 67 years can access higher threshold for pension. Need for advocacy for people on disability pension.

There has been an increase in D&FV victims applying to have AVO's adjusted to allow perpetrators to see the children. Further assistance with their children needed, which has spiked the amount of work for Hunter Legal Centre. Look at more low-cost care and holiday activities for children of young single mums would be helpful. Is there remit to Council to help with this.

Table 11: A selection of verbatim workshop notes on the theme Local Government - roles, responsibilities, remit and advocacy

Final take outs

Overall, the community was very supportive of the draft SS. The key areas/aspects of the Strategy that received positive comments were the inclusion of items related to:

- 1. Strong communities
- 2. Housing affordability and access
- 3. Health and safety

The key aspects/areas of the Strategy with suggested improvements included:

- 1. Community engagement, including early and ongoing consultation to improve community-led decision making
- 2. Mention of traffic and transport connect ability, accessibility, and parking
- 3. Local government responsibility and remit, policies, and implementation



Appendix 1 – Promotional materials

Have your say webpage



Postcard





Newsletter

Have Your Say e-Newsletter

Still time to have your say -Local Social Strategy

In 2021, we heard from the community about their ideas and opinions on social justice and inclusion issues such as community participation, satisfaction with wellbeing, access to services, safety, and inclusion in the Newcastle area.

These ideas and feedback were used to develop an important framework called the Local Social Strategy.



The draft strategy is on public exhibition. You can have your say until 5pm on **Friday 25 November 2022**.

HAVE YOUR SAY



Media release





Appendix 2 – Online feedback form and submissions

[Page 1]

The Social Strategy

The City of Newcastle (CN)'s Social Strategy 2030 places people at the centre of its vision of a socially just and inclusive place for all.

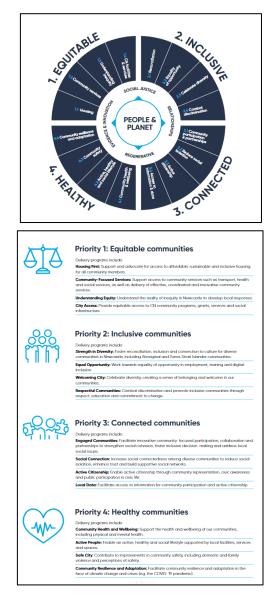
We used feedback from over 2000 people who told us about the social issues they care about and what community means to them to draft the Strategy. You can view and find out more information about the draft Social Strategy <u>here</u>.

To provide your feedback, please complete the online form.

If you'd like to submit a written response, please email engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au

[Page 2]

Please review the draft <u>Social Strategy</u> (summary or full version), or below key sections of the Strategy to answer the next questions.





Do you agree with the four priorities of the Social Strategy?

Yes (open response) No (open response) Not sure (tell us what's missing) (open response)

What parts of the draft Strategy do you like?

[Open response]

What parts of the draft Strategy could be improved?

[Open response]

Do you have any additional comments about the draft Social Strategy?

[Open response]

[Page 3]

Your details

Name

[Open response]

Suburb

[Open response]

Email

[Open response]

I'd like to receive further information from City of Newcastle related to social justice and inclusion

Yes

No

[Page 4]

Thank you for your feedback.

For more information about the Social Strategy, head to: https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/haveyour-say/projects/local-social-strategy

-End form-

