



Hunter & Central Coast
Development
Corporation



Honeysuckle Ideas

OUTCOMES REPORT

APRIL 2021



Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to all Elders past, present and future.

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation

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Please note, reference imagery has been included throughout this report as indicative of community ideas and future use outcomes.

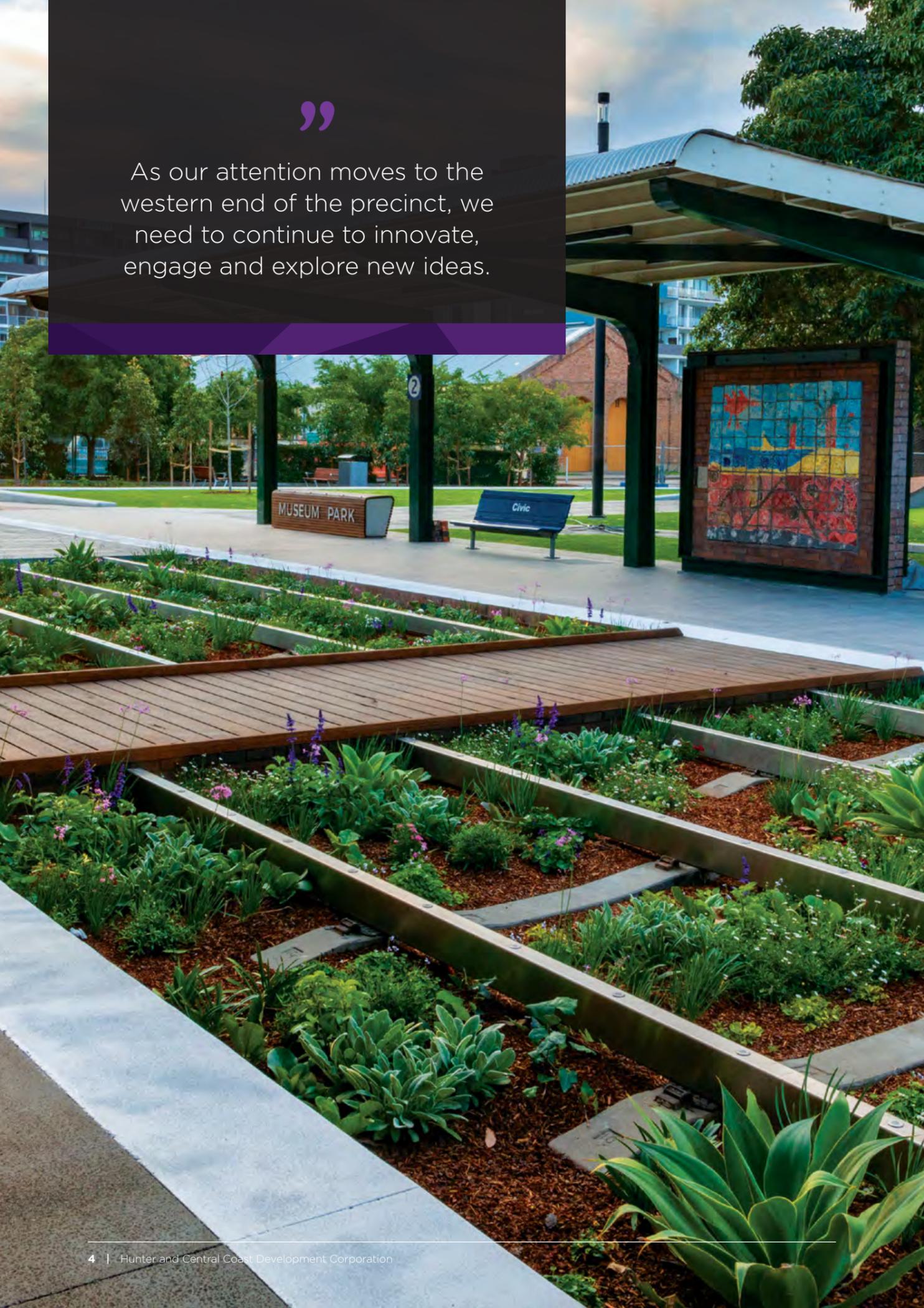


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As our attention moves to the western end of the precinct, we need to continue to innovate, engage and explore new ideas.



Message from Valentina Misevska

Chief Operating Officer
Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation

The transformation of Newcastle’s harbourside into an accessible, useable and popular urban space, linking the waterfront with the city has been almost 30 years in the making.

From the creation of a new housing development at Linwood, the replacement of the Cowper Street bridge and the construction of a shared pathway connecting Carrington to the city through to the adaptive reuse of old rail sheds into Newcastle Museum and the creation of the residential, dining and commercial hub at Honeysuckle – the changes have transformed Newcastle’s harbour front areas into places where people want to visit, work and live.

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) has been at the helm throughout and it’s important that as we approach the end of the project, we continue to focus on what the city needs and what the community wants.

As our attention moves to the western end of the precinct, we need to continue to innovate, engage and explore new ideas. We want to ensure we are creating great places where people want to spend time, and showcase Newcastle as a smart, liveable and sustainable global city.

This is why we undertook the Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program which sought input from our community on how the final development in the precinct should emerge, with a special focus on environmental, social and economic outcomes.

With five hectares of land remaining, HCCDC has already set aside two hectares for public domain. Informed by public engagement undertaken in 2018, the public domain will include a waterfront promenade, two new parks and the naturalisation and greening of Cottage Creek.

The final three hectares of land remaining for development has the potential to transform this area into an iconic gateway to the city as the future CBD, which is why community feedback about future use is so important.

The feedback we heard was diverse and we have reviewed all the comments to develop key themes and a set of objectives to guide future development in the precinct.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the program, I am pleased to share the Honeysuckle Ideas Outcomes Report with you.

Report Introduction

Honeysuckle Ideas

Honeysuckle Ideas was a community engagement program delivered by Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) from September to November 2020.

The engagement program sought to understand community and stakeholder aspirations for the future use and function of the remaining lands at Honeysuckle West. These aspirations were based around three key pillars – social, economic and environmental.

Feedback against these pillars will be considered alongside expert analysis of social infrastructure and impact, economic and sustainability to ensure future development of the remaining parcels considers community aspirations while still meeting the needs of the market.

All comments, feedback and ideas were reviewed and key themes were developed. These themes reflect what was heard during the community engagement period as well as the broader planning considerations for the remaining land. The themes were then used to develop a set of objectives to help guide the divestment process, as a reference point for ongoing decision-making and public messaging relating to the final parcels.

The scope of the engagement, including information about the project non-negotiables, was available on the project website and the information flyer for the project. The team facilitating the engagement also advised participants of the scope and any non-negotiables directly throughout the course of the engagement program. Although this information was available, comments about out of scope issues were still provided and these have been considered within the context of the project non-negotiables.

Honeysuckle Ideas pillars

The engagement activities, including survey questions and ideas wall visual guides, were shaped around HCCDC's three key pillars:

-  **social**
-  **economic**
-  **environmental**

People were asked to share their aspirations including ideas that encouraged improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for the Throsby and Wickham development sites. Brief explanations of the pillars were included in activities to try and help focus the discussion, see below.

Description of three pillars and examples



The ideas for creating cities that are vibrant, accessible and inclusive are endless.

Some examples include:

- buildings connected to open space where people of all ages and abilities can interact
- places to visit at all times of the day and night with great atmosphere
- end of trip facilities to encourage active transport
- housing choices
- places that showcase our indigenous and non-indigenous heritage and culture
- be easily accessible by a range of transport options.

Social



There are many ways to help support economic development, jobs and growth in a sustainable way.

Some examples include:

- opportunities that encourage a range of retail options
- creating a financial and commercial precinct
- mixed-uses that create jobs
- iconic buildings that attract visitors 24 hours/7 days
- street fronts that encourage visitors to stay in the precinct.

Economic

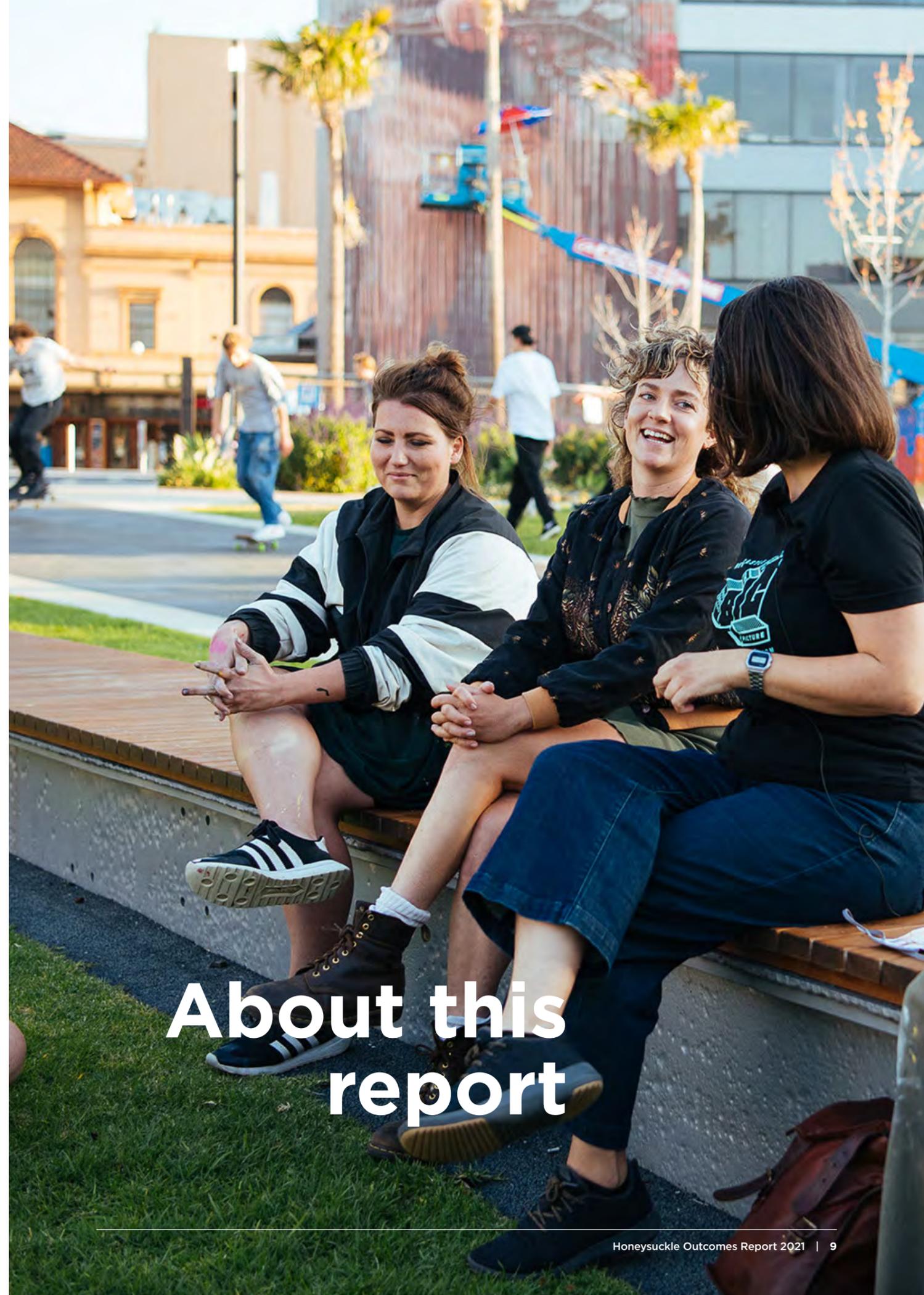


There are so many different ways that a development could incorporate environmental initiatives into the buildings and spaces around the buildings.

Some examples include:

- green buildings that reduce or eliminate negative impacts and enhance positive impacts on the climate and natural environment
- efficient use of water, energy and other resources
- sustainable cities and communities.

Environmental





About Honeysuckle

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) has led Honeysuckle’s renewal since the early 1990s when the plan was initiated to remediate and repurpose seven precincts, spanning four kilometres of waterfront land. As the master developer for Honeysuckle, HCCDC has managed the staged divestment of the land, and the area has so far seen more than \$1 billion in private investment and generated an estimated \$3 billion in economic activity.

The 52-hectare site now supports a diverse mix of employment, residential, tourism, recreation and public domain uses for the community. It also celebrates and enhances heritage and is known as one of the most successful urban renewal programs in NSW. HCCDC continues to deliver new public domain and infrastructure to ensure the former industrial land continues to thrive.

There are two final, undeveloped parcels of land at Honeysuckle West known by HCCDC as Throsby and Wickham. The Honeysuckle foreshore area falls within the Newcastle City Centre zone of the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012 (NLEP 2012). The planning controls are already in place and are summarised below.

Map of project area



This report provides the outcomes of the Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program. The report outlines the purpose and approach for engaging with the community, key themes of the feedback received and how this input will be used.

Site description and planning controls

	Throsby	Wickham
Size of area	2.2 hectares	1.1 hectares
Zoning	B4 Mixed-use allowing for a mixture of compatible land uses (such as office residential and retail) that support nearby commercial centres	B3 Commercial Core allowing for employment and community uses such as retail, business, office, entertainment, community, and other suitable land uses that serve the needs of the local and wider community
Height	30m water’s edge 45m along the edge of Honeysuckle Drive	90m

The report includes information about the:

- two phase engagement process including the activities used to gather broad community feedback during phase one and detailed discussions during phase two
- levels of participation in the different activities
- key themes across all activities
- objectives for the future use and function of the site and how these were developed
- next steps in the process for divesting the remaining lands at Honeysuckle.

There are a range of strategic documents that provide an overarching framework for future uses of the remaining lands and these were considered and discussed throughout the engagement process.

These documents are the:

- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036
- Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 and Updated 2014
- Government Architect of NSW Better Placed Policy 2017
- Newcastle Community Strategic Plan 2030

The Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program was undertaken so HCCDC could understand community and stakeholder aspirations for the future use and function of the remaining lands to inform the preparation of a divestment strategy.

The report was prepared by Mara Consulting with guidance from the HCCDC project team.



The Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program sought feedback from a diverse cross section of the Newcastle and the Hunter community.

Engagement process

How were people engaged?

The Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement program was delivered in two phases from September to November 2020.

Phase one

Open from 24 September to 18 October 2020 sought broad stakeholder and community input. The engagement program focused on two main aspects of future land use:

- broad ideas about the potential use of the precinct
- priorities and preferences relating to economic, environmental and social uses, features and objectives.

Engagement activities included facilitated discussions, a digital ideas wall and a survey exploring the three project pillars – social, economic and environmental considerations – as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The activities were promoted through a mix of editorial, advertising (print, digital and radio), social media, direct email, and a precinct wide letterbox drop.

Participants in phase one activities were invited to provide their contact information so they could be kept up to date on the project and receive invitations to future activities. 128 people chose this option and were subsequently invited to participate in phase two activities.

Phase two

Included reviewing all the feedback gathered in phase one to develop key themes and create draft project objectives.

Interested stakeholders and community members, comprising 156 people in total, were then invited to participate in two focus groups on Monday 26 October. A third focus group was held on Monday 9 November with internal stakeholders from HCCDC.

The feedback provided in phase one was grouped into categories that were then translated into themes. During phase two, the focus groups confirmed that the themes were consistent with the community feedback captured in phase one. As part of phase two, the focus groups were then asked to respond to draft objective statements, which were derived from the themes, and discuss how these could be incorporated into the draft project objectives.

The feedback from the focus groups in phase two was then used to create final project objectives.



Who participated?


794 people
 visited
 Social Pinpoint
 3055 times


294 surveys
 completed


132 comments
 with 240 ideas


50+
 emails, video/phone
 calls and online
 presentations

Campaign summary

- 2000 residents letterbox dropped in Honeysuckle, Wickham and Newcastle West
- Two e-newsletters sent to 118 stakeholders/stakeholder groups and 251 primary and secondary schools
- Live reads on Triple M
- News articles/editorial in the Newcastle Herald, Newcastle Weekly, Hunter Headline and Newcastle Live
- Print and digital advertising Newcastle Herald
- Print and digital advertising Newcastle Weekly
- Digital advertising, Hunter Business Chamber e-newsletter
- Digital advertising, Hunter Headline
- HCCDC Facebook advertising
- Posts on HCCDC social media channels
- On site signage in the Honeysuckle precinct



Phase One



Broad engagement

The broad engagement phase included a range of consultation activities to encourage participation from a broad demographic. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, activities were hosted online including facilitated discussions, a digital ideas wall and a survey exploring the three project pillars – social, economic and environmental considerations – as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Information about the project scope and non-negotiables, that is, the issues that were out of scope, was available on the project website and the information flyer for the project. The team facilitating the engagement also advised participants of the non-negotiables directly throughout the course of the engagement program.

Consultation approach

What were people engaged on?

People were asked to share their aspirations for the remaining land in Honeysuckle including ideas that encouraged improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for the development sites. A map showing the two parcels of land that were the subject of the engagement program were available on the project website, information flyer and the ideas wall for reference.

Honeysuckle West ideation

An online ideas wall was set up to provide the broad community with the opportunity to share ideas and participate in discussion about other people's ideas.

The wall was populated with three visual guides that reflected the three pillars – social, economic, and environmental - to generate discussion. Participants were advised engagement activities were limited to the parcels of land that were part of a future divestment, as consultation about the public domain along the foreshore was undertaken in 2018.

Participants were also advised that the engagement was not focusing on:

- any ideas that are focused outside the project area
- any ideas that relate to the non-development of the land (including retention of temporary car park and re-use or removal of existing buildings)
- any recommendations to change zoning, height of buildings or density
- any ideas that relate to on-water development / uses.

The ideas wall was moderated to ensure no offensive language was used or inappropriate/off topic images posted.

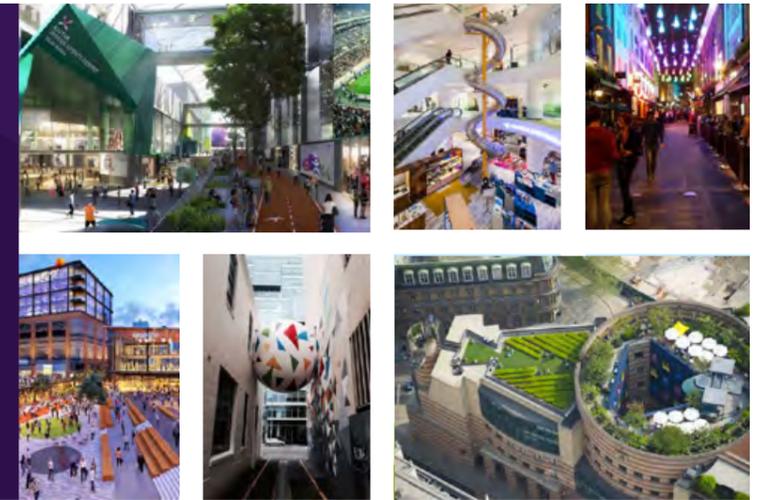
Context and examples for each pillar were also provided in the instructions, these were:



What are examples of social initiatives that could be incorporated in the future development?

The ideas for creating cities that are vibrant, accessible and inclusive are endless.

Social



What are examples of economic initiatives that could be incorporated in the future development?

There are many ways to help support economic development, jobs and growth in a sustainable way.

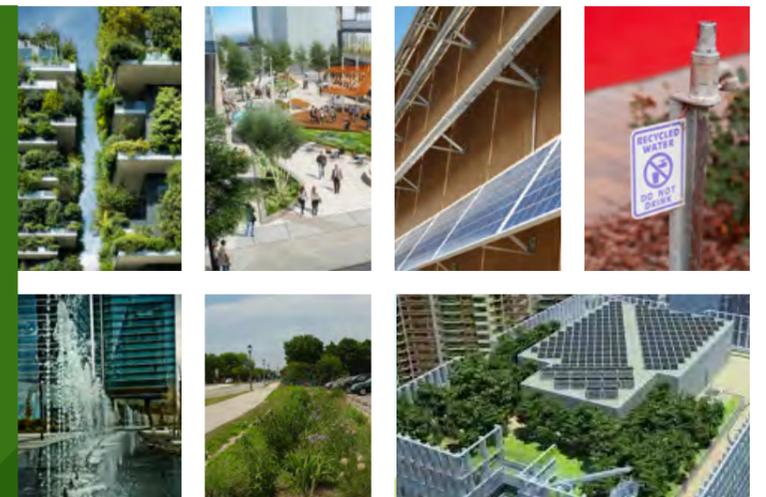
Economic



What are examples of environmental initiatives that could be incorporated in the future development?

There are so many different ways that a development could incorporate environmental initiatives into the buildings and spaces around the buildings.

Environmental



Consultation outcomes

The ideas wall was open from Thursday 24 September to Sunday 18 October 2020.

At the completion of the consultation period, feedback was analysed and the process involved looking for similar elements and collating these into broad categories.

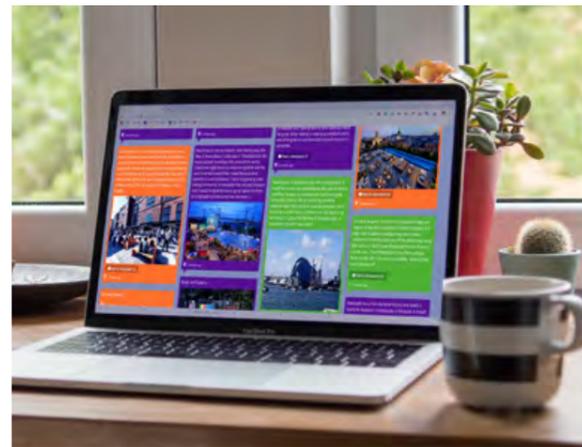
A summary of the types of comments included in each category are outlined on page 19. These categories were used across all engagement activities to ensure there was a consistent approach to data collection and analysis.

Comparisons were made to areas such as Southbank in Brisbane that features commercial buildings, leisure activities, open space and a cultural precinct. Participants also indicated a mix of business/economic uses was important including things that activate and provide for multiple uses.

The river and water, as well as the heritage (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) were broadly suggested and was mentioned frequently. The reuse of historic buildings was raised, particularly connections to surrounding spaces and public transport. Access to green space also appeared frequently in the commentary. The land use does not allow for open green space, however the Honeysuckle Public Domain Concept Plan provides information about larger green spaces already proposed for the precinct.

It is noted that some responses were out of scope of this consultation project, as mentioned in the introduction to the report. These have been considered in the context of the project non-negotiables.

See the final section of this report for more information on the methodology for data collection, analysis and reporting.



Feedback included a range of ideas and images posted on the wall, as well as comments posted on suggestions from other participants.



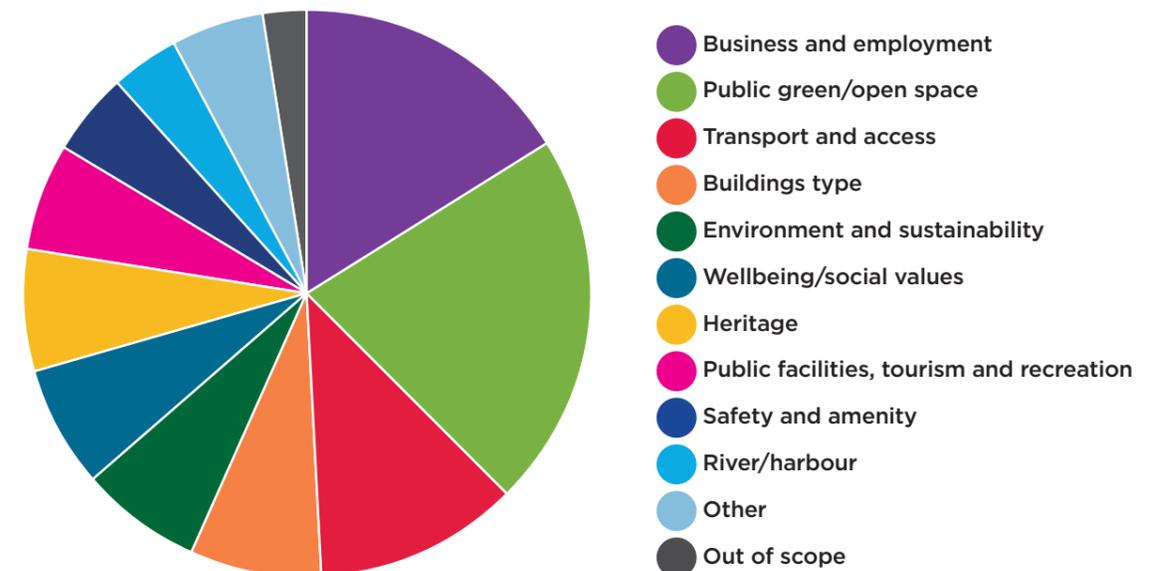
Categories and descriptions

The below categories and descriptions were used for grouping comments across all activities.



Categories mentioned in comments

This below graph shows the percentage of participants that mentioned above categories in comments across all activities.



Social pinpoint ideas

The below represents a range of ideas raised by the community. This visual display doesn't represent popularity or commonality.

connectivity
 energy efficient
 public or affordable housing
 biodiversity
 iconic, beautiful and innovative building design
 shared pathways and cycleways
 places to make social connections
business, employers and jobs
 natural environment
 recreation areas by the harbour
 maritime history
seafaring elements
 whatever you do, make it inclusive
 shade, seating and toilets
 public green space
restaurant, cafés and rooftop bars
 edgy boutique's and bespoke retail
 encourage night life
 reuse and retain heritage

Aboriginal heritage
 family focussed areas
 cinema
 no offices
 conferences
shady trees
 education

disability and pram access

no apartments
 incorporate environmental and sustainability initiatives
open 24hrs per day
places of interest
 children's playground
 markets and stalls
 roller skating rink
green elements on buildings
 connection to Interchange and public transport
 hotels



In their words

Examples of comments within scope

- "Please plan for wide walking and bike riding paths along the Foreshore. It is so easy to access the beach from Islington, Wickham, Carrington and Maryville and such a lovely thing to do for families, so we need safe paths for children."
- "Lovely idea to integrate the Wickham School of Arts into a park like area, it would be good to connect the harbour and the transport interchange via this way."
- "There should be a large ground-level opening in any remaining waterfront development on the Throsby site that provides an immediate connection between the Interchange/Wickham site and the River. This would be similar to Maitland Levee's Riverlink Building but on a far grander scale. Not only would it allow for a major pedestrian access point from the West End to the River, but it would also provide space for markets, artistic displays, events, etc."
- "Safety of the open spaces being delivered by HCCDC will be very important, especially to make women living in the city feel comfortable at night."

- "Grassed areas with shady trees to encourage more bird life into the city and pleasant spots for people to sit and relax."
- "A meeting place like Sydney's Barangaroo but 10 times better because its personal, local and simple but caters to all walks of life."
- "Device charging benches."
- "We need to incorporate the river into the planning and have more of a focus on linking to and with the river - not just more buildings."

Examples of out of scope comments

- "There should be a ferry stop that connects with the Interchange (by foot). This would allow Stockton residents to have greater access to the Interchange and the emerging Honeysuckle area as well as direct tourism from the Interchange to Stockton. A stop next to the marina in front of 'Throsby' would be perfectly placed."
- "I'd wonder if the maritime items can go to Nobbys (I recall there has been discussion on this before I think) or Fort Scratchley? Museums cost money and generate only a little income normally but it being with another use or co-located somewhere already running as such might work better..."

Online survey

Priorities and preferences for Honeysuckle West

The survey provided questions to enable participants to provide more detailed feedback on priorities and preferences for future use and function of the remaining lands. The detailed questions were aligned with each pillar – social, economic and environmental. The series included:



question one	a question on the importance of social, economic and environmental initiatives in future development, with a five-point scale of options to answer
question two	ten statements relating to social, economic and environmental features of a new development, with a five-point scale of options to answer
question three	twelve statements relating to social, economic and environmental outcomes of a new development, with participants to select their top five (up to)
question four	open-ended question choosing one social, economic and environmental outcome and explaining why it is important

The final substantive question was on the importance of relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals to the future development of the lands, with a five-point scale of options to answer. The survey also asked participants to provide demographic data and their email address if they wanted to receive project updates, however it was not mandatory to respond to this.

Consultation outcomes

The survey was open from Thursday 24 September to Sunday 18 October 2020. In total 294 completed surveys were received.

The survey questions were designed to elicit participants' views on future outcomes on the Honeysuckle land. Respondents were asked how important it was to incorporate social, economic and environmental outcomes into the future development of the Honeysuckle West lands.



Question one

Respondents were asked how important social, economic and environmental initiatives were in future development. They were provided a five-point scale of options to select an answer from.

There was a relatively high level of importance recorded for all three pillars:

- social (4.2)
- economic (3.7)
- environmental (4.3)

All statements received a **mean score of over 3 out of 5**, meaning that on balance, participants agreed with the statements.

Question two

Respondents were provided statements relating to social, economic and environmental features of a new development.

They were asked how important specific features were in relation to the Honeysuckle lands with a five-point scale of options to select an answer from.



Social

The statements *“active transport options and links to public transport”, “promotes good design not only how it looks, but how it works and feels for people”* and *“creating vibrant spaces that encourage events and activation”* were seen as highly important.

Whereas the statement *“range of residential options (student accommodation, affordable, social and different sizes)”* had the lowest mean score for importance however still had a slightly higher than neutral position.

Social statements ranked in order of importance:

1. Active transport options and links to public transport
2. Promotes good design not only how it looks, but how it works and feels for people
3. Creating vibrant spaces that encourage events and activation
4. Inclusion of art, culture and heritage items (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal)
5. Street level activation (retail, outdoor dining and trading)
6. Accessible spaces within buildings (rooftops, terraces, laneways)
7. Buildings and spaces that have things to do during the day and night
8. Buildings that are innovative and show design excellence
9. Buildings that cater to a range of uses (residential, community, retail, commercial)
10. Provision of services and facilities (end of trip facilities, childcare)
11. A range of residential options (student accommodation, affordable, social and different sizes).



Economic

Economic statements ranked in order of importance:

1. Buildings and spaces that incorporate high standards of architectural, urban and landscape design
2. Attracts visitors to the area with a cultural attraction/s
3. Buildings that are highly efficient (low costs to run/maintain)
4. Active street fronts with businesses that encourage people to visit and stay in the precinct
5. Promotes opportunities to become a premier destination for Newcastle and the region
6. Innovative and creative building designs
7. Creating jobs across a range of sectors
8. Attracts visitors to the area with a tourism attraction/s
9. Spaces that are used during the night and day
10. Buildings that cater for a range of uses (retail, large events, conferences, tourism, entertainment)
11. Precinct featuring diverse commercial space (large and small offices plus co-working spaces) alongside mixed entertainment (waterfront cafes, restaurants, bespoke shops and large retail anchor)
12. Buildings and spaces that encourage innovation and digital technology
13. A place that will attract major employers to Honeysuckle (head office buildings)
14. Buildings that incorporate hotel accommodation
15. Attracting global/iconic brands
16. Commercial office space from large scale through to co-working.

Economic statements that were ranked as having the highest importance were *“buildings and spaces that incorporate high standards of architectural, urban and landscape design”, “attracts visitors to the area with a cultural attraction/s”* and *“buildings that are highly efficient (low costs to run/maintain)”*.



Environmental

Environmental statements ranked in order of importance:

1. Incorporating landscaping and green spaces into the spaces around the buildings
2. Connecting urban spaces with nature
3. Access/linking to public and active transport
4. Incorporating landscaping and green spaces into the buildings
5. Buildings connected to open space
6. Renewable energy initiatives
7. Developments that efficiently use resources
8. Buildings incorporating general sustainability principles and contribute positively to environmental, economic and social outcomes
9. Developments that incorporate reduce, reuse and recycle principles
10. Innovative building designs.

“Incorporating landscaping and green spaces into the surrounding buildings” had the highest mean score for the level of importance, closely followed by *“connecting urban spaces with nature”* and *“access/linking spaces public and active transport”*.

“Innovative building designs” had the lowest mean score, however, is still higher than the neutral position.

The three statements that were ranked as having the lower levels of importance but still a higher than neutral importance ranking were *“attracting global/iconic brands, commercial office space from large scale through to co-working”,* and *“buildings that incorporate hotel accommodation”*.

Question three

Respondents were presented with statements relating to social, economic and environmental outcomes of a new development and were asked to select up to five priority outcomes.



Social

Top three social outcomes

1. Buildings connected to open space where people of all ages and abilities can interact
2. Spaces that can accommodate a range of cultural activities including art, music, theatre, dance and events
3. Places to visit at all times of the day and night/ Safe spaces for all ages, abilities and backgrounds



Economic

The top three economic outcomes

1. Active street fronts that encourage visitors to stay in the precinct
2. Activated spaces that can accommodate events and activities
3. Genuine mixed-use precinct that creates jobs across a range of sectors



Environmental

Top three environmental outcomes

1. Landscape that encourages biodiversity, provides shade (minimises urban heat), and incorporates native vegetation
2. Living infrastructure that improves our wellbeing and health, and connects to nature in an urban environment
3. Solar and renewable energy use



Question four

This was an open-ended question where respondents could choose one environmental, social or economic outcomes and explain why it was important to them.



Social

Comments talked about the area being vibrant, accessible and safe to all ages and abilities. This included being affordable – whether that is activities, attractions or accommodation. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history was mentioned frequently. Many different types of activities were mentioned with the common thread being a precinct with multiple uses.

—
“A place for all to visit, not just a cold commercial area. There must be life, cafes with outdoor dining, music, buskers, life!”

—
“Buildings and spaces that are adaptable so that they can be used for a range of things and encourage people to mix and interact.”

—
“A safe, vibrant space where the community comes together for a range of activities.”



Economic

Comments frequently referenced job creation with spaces for business alongside hospitality and retail. Having an attraction that would draw people – both locals, national and international visitors – to the area was frequently mentioned.

—
“We need attractions with high appeal and a point of difference in order to attract tourists as well as Novocastrians from the suburbs.”

—
“Mixed use precinct to ensure that there is more than just commercial occupation during standard business hours.”

—
“Genuinely unique and mixed approach eg hospitality, tourism, retail, culture. Don't just try to attract a brand, it needs to be unique to this place not chain stores.”



Environmental

Comments included the need for active and public transport links through the precinct to the harbour and the city. Energy efficient buildings was frequently mentioned along with the need to have shaded green spaces with native vegetation.

—
“The entire precinct should be carbon neutral. We need new developments that don't detract from the well being of the planet.”

—
“Better access to public transport from more areas of Newcastle so that people can get there without driving.”

—
“Green spaces and building design that makes the best use of the surrounding natural features.”

Direct feedback

Email and phone

Direct phone and email contact information was provided on all materials and advertising to ensure people were able to provide ideas and comments directly to the engagement team.

29 email submissions were received to the project inbox and four phone calls were received during the broad engagement period from Thursday 24 September to Sunday 18 October 2020.

Consultation outcomes

The feedback was logged in a consultation register and categorised using the same project code frame as the other engagement activities. The themes were consistent with the comments received via the online ideas wall and the survey. Given no new issues or themes were raised via this method, no further data analysis was undertaken.



Information sessions

Three information sessions were held with key stakeholders and already engaged community members to provide an overview of the project and provide participants with a better understanding of the constraints and non-negotiables for the site.

The purpose of these discussions was to share information on the engagement program, explain the activities available and answer questions from participants. The purpose was not to seek feedback.

Invitations to these sessions were sent via email to people with a known interest in the precinct. These were identified through HCCDC customer interactions, previous engagement activities within the precinct and known community groups.

Two sessions were held via Zoom on Thursday 24 September to coincide with the opening of the engagement process. These were attended by seven people across two sessions.

Key stakeholders from government agencies and industry groups were also emailed with information about the community engagement program, including an invitation for a direct briefing with the project team. This invitation was accepted by Committee for the Hunter and a third session was held on Tuesday 6 October.

Consultation outcomes

As mentioned above, the purpose of these discussions was to share information on the engagement program, explain the activities available and answer questions from participants. The purpose was not to seek feedback.

Phase Two



Developing objectives

Key themes were confirmed and draft objective statements were discussed with stakeholders and community members in the focus group sessions during phase two.

The feedback provided in phase one was grouped into categories that were then translated into themes. During phase two, the focus groups confirmed that the themes were consistent with the community feedback captured in phase one. As part of phase two, the focus groups were then asked to respond to draft objective statements, which were derived from the themes, and discuss how these could be incorporated into the draft project objectives.

The project objectives were subsequently discussed and further refined in a workshop with staff from across HCCDC and the Mara Consulting project team. The final objectives are included in this outcomes report on page 33.

What were people engaged on?

Three focus groups sessions were held on Monday 26 October and Monday 9 November. The purpose of the sessions was to reflect on the broad community feedback, discuss words and statements that resonated with participants and then discuss how this feedback could be included in key themes and objectives.

A total of 29 participants were part of the discussion and represented key stakeholder groups, community organisations, residents and HCCDC internal stakeholders and staff.

Each focus group session included:

- a discussion about future development of the remaining land at the western end of Honeysuckle Drive, in Newcastle
- reflection on the feedback received and how this has been translated into draft themes and objectives
- getting participants views and opinions about the draft project objectives.

Consultation outcomes

During the sessions, it was generally acknowledged that the land was a significant opportunity for future development. There was a strong sentiment that the site is worthy of tourism, business and recreation uses that could attract international visitors and interest.

Environmental outcomes, particularly sustainable buildings, solar and renewable energy use were generally considered as elements that should be included in any new development. Key themes were tested to assess whether they were reflective of the feedback in phase one.

Participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed about each of the themes that were developed from the phase one engagement. Participants used the “chat” function in the online meeting to indicate:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither disagree/agree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

The themes tested were based on the feedback gathered in the broad community engagement and include public facilities and attractions, green areas, mixed use business, transport and access, heritage, river access, great building design and safety and amenity.

There was high level of agreement that all themes were reflective of the broad engagement. The themes with the highest levels of agreement were transport and access, great building design and heritage.

The draft objective statements were assessed to understand if the message and the tone was supported or not.

The discussion helped to identify statements that are likely to be positively received in relation to a future divestment.

Positive statements

Statements resonated well and would provide a strong base for the development of objectives.

- A welcoming gateway to Newcastle that celebrates our harbourside lifestyle
- A place where welcoming green spaces are an essential part of the overall precinct design
- Genuine mixed-use precinct that showcases Newcastle’s local talent in business, bespoke retail, arts and culture for locals and visitors
- Sustainable places that celebrate and enhance Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and culture
- Vibrant places connected to open spaces where there is activity at all times of the day and night.

Neutral statements

Considered by the focus group participants to have a more neutral sentiment and did not resonate as highly.

- Great places for all ages and abilities, where people can connect and build a sense of community
- Attractive and usable places that celebrate our history and our inclusive and active lifestyle
- Places that attract people, to live and visit, from across the region and around the world by providing world class attractions, lifestyle and facilities
- Living infrastructure that improves our wellbeing and health, and which connects people to nature and the river

Comparisons were made between the statements to understand the preferences and test ideas that will resonate with the community.

Themes

The final themes and objectives were finalised in collaboration with HCCDC to ensure the feedback gathered was reflective of the community engagement. The project themes are:



Magnetic destination

Uses that create a vibrant lifestyle precinct with attractions and offerings that encourage people to visit, join in and linger from the ground level to the rooftops.



Natural environment

Multi-use spaces that feature natural green elements in, on and around buildings and infrastructure that supports biodiversity and a connection with the natural elements of the area.



Economy

A diverse mix of business offerings and opportunities that creates jobs and supports a vibrant, inclusive and successful commercial and visitor economy, with activity day and night.



Quality connections

A well-connected precinct with buildings and infrastructure that showcase and enhance access and views towards the river and harbour, while enabling and encouraging active transport and easy connectivity to transport nodes, waterfront promenades and city attractions.



Heritage

Future uses and functions that celebrate the region's heritage and connect people to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history and the city's cultural, maritime and industrial roots.



Excellence

Innovative, iconic and exciting buildings that feature design excellence in built structures, environmental sustainability, safety and accessibility for all.

Objectives

The project objectives will guide the future divestment of the Throsby and Wickham land parcels. The project objectives are:



Create a magnetic mixed-use destination

A landmark precinct that attracts people to work, live and play.



Create a great place that is connected

An enviable destination that links people to transport, place and the waterfront.



Respect and acknowledge heritage and culture

Care for Country and embrace the unique culture and history of Newcastle's waterfront.



Demonstrates excellence in design and sustainability

Quality urban and architectural design incorporating best practice sustainability.



Be people focused and accessible

A place for the whole community.

What's Next

The Outcomes Report and Objectives will be used to inform ongoing project decision making as we work to realise an exciting outcome for the final parcels of Honeysuckle lands.

Over coming years, HCCDC will work to divest the remaining parcels of land in Honeysuckle to create great places that will underpin the growth of the western CBD, and become a vibrant destination that the community can enjoy and be proud of.



Methodology for data collection, analysis and reporting



The Honeysuckle Ideas Outcomes Report provides a summary of the community engagement program including key themes from the community input and the subsequent objectives developed for the future use and function of the remaining lands.

The engagement program was guided by the Honeysuckle Ideas Communications and Engagement Strategy developed by Mara Consulting with guidance, review and approval from HCCDC and in line with IAP2 engagement best practice.

The strategy provided the road map for strategic community engagement and detailed the key engagement methodology, risks and mitigating measures, community, stakeholder and interest groups, media and communications messages, consultation activities and communications tools to be used.

Each activity undertaken throughout the program was developed and deployed by a team of communication and engagement specialists from HCCDC and Mara Consulting. The HCCDC project team also reviewed all materials, content and questions of the different engagement tools to ensure the input being sought added value to the divestment process.

Code frame for data collection

A code frame is a tool for organising and quantifying free text responses to identify reoccurring themes in open survey questions and other engagement activities.

This project code frame is built using concepts, phrases or words that were reoccurring in responses. It was an inductive and iterative process focused on interpreting the meaning of responses rather than just identifying key words. Responses could be coded to either one or multiple topics.

Specific topics mentioned in multiple responses were identified and these are then grouped into related themes. Some themes include many topics while others only include a small number.

The same code frame was used for all free text or verbal data gathered during the engagement process.

Sentiment (whether the comment was positive or negative) was not specifically coded for. We did however identify sentiment for a few topics where respondents clearly expressed opposing views. Where this occurred, we did create new topic codes to capture opposing and supporting responses. These topics were:

- support or oppose retail
- support or oppose offices
- oppose high-rise buildings
- oppose apartments.

The number of responses in a theme does not tell us that people were in favour or against the theme, only that it was mentioned. In general comments attributed to topics were neutral or positive, however this was not always the case. Additional analysis would be required to quantify sentiment within and across themes.

Survey results

Results presentation

In the survey, respondents were presented with five-point Likert scales for assessment of level of agreement/importance and satisfaction with various statements. Scales were from strongly disagree/not at all important to strongly agree/extremely important.

The scale was used to calculate an overall average (mean) score. To obtain a score of 5.0 ALL respondents who gave a rating would have to have answered '5', i.e. answered strongly agree. Therefore, a higher rating represents a relatively more favourable response. A score of 3 out of 5 suggests a neutral opinion, i.e. no strong feelings either way.

Interpretation

In interpreting the scores, it should be remembered that:

- The higher the score, the higher the level of agreement.
- An agreement score of greater than 3 indicates that, on balance, participants agreed with the statement.

When interpreting the results, the distribution of ratings and the score need to be considered together not individually. For example, ratings which are evenly spread over the 1 to 5 scale may yield the same mean score as those which are relatively polarised at either end of the scale. The implications for these contrasting distributions are very different, despite the fact that they received the same score.



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