Building Newcastle's Future: Priority Projects

2026/2027



Wallsend Electorate

City of Newcastle

Acknowledgement of Country

We all sit on Awabakal and Worimi land.

The City of Newcastle (CN) acknowledges its Local Government Area (LGA) sits within the Country of the Awabakal and the Worimi peoples. We Acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient relationships. CN acknowledges the custodianship of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples and the care and stewardship they have performed in this place since time immemorial.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.



Enquiries

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Cover image: Lambton Pool

Strategic alignment

Newcastle is a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city.



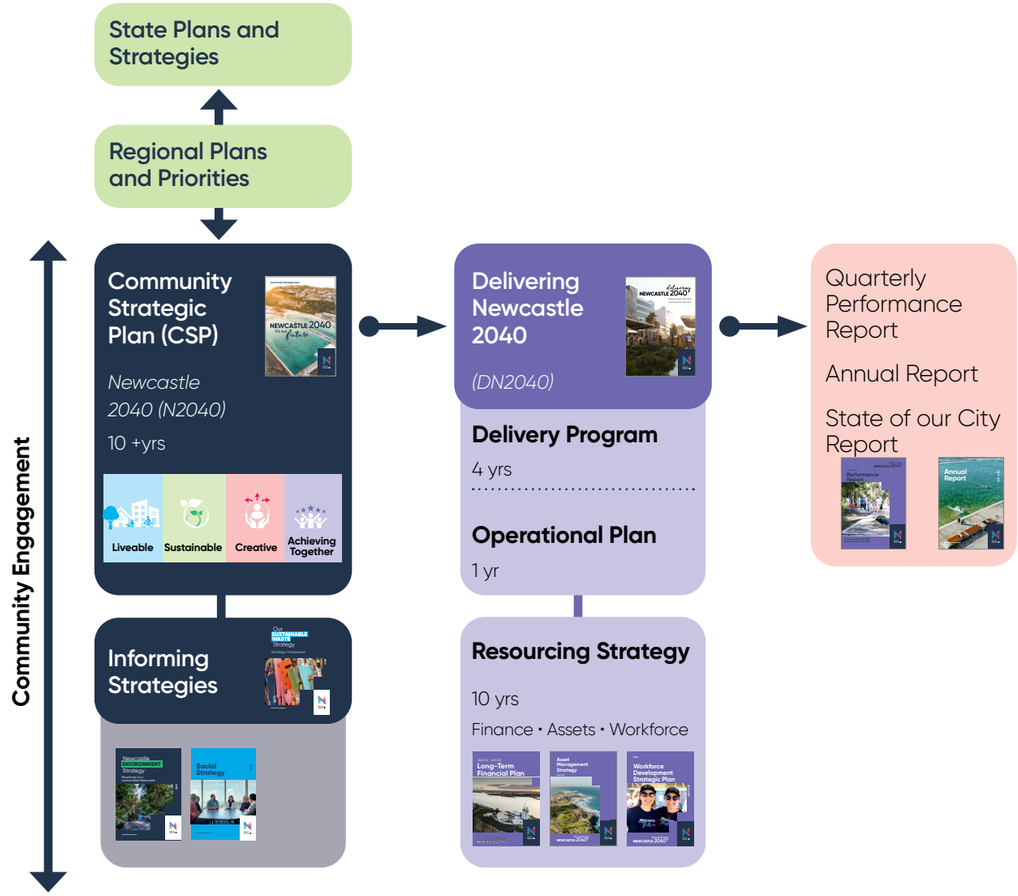
Wallsend Active Hub

Strategic alignment of priority projects

City of Newcastle's priority projects are informed by *Newcastle 2040*, our Community Strategic Plan, that outlines the community's vision for Newcastle as a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city. Through the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, Council translates this vision into long-term planning, infrastructure investment and service delivery.

Newcastle 2040 is supported by a suite of strategies and plans aligned with key regional and state strategies, including the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* and *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*. Together, these documents provide a clear line of sight from community aspirations to the projects and investments needed to support Newcastle's future.

The framework below demonstrates how state and regional priorities inform City of Newcastle's strategic direction and priority projects, supporting delivery of the community's vision for Newcastle.



Creek Road Regional Sports Complex

1

Ask

Providing funding of $25 million to deliver the Creek Road Regional Sports Complex, a key project to meet growing demand for high-quality, weather resilient sporting facilities in the city's western suburbs.

Background

The Creek Road Regional Sports Complex will deliver a critical new sporting hub for Newcastle's growing western suburbs, addressing identified gaps in local sports infrastructure. Recognised as a priority in City of Newcastle's Strategic Sports Plan and the Western Corridor Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan, the Creek Road Regional Sports Complex responds to increasing demand driven by population growth.

The Creek Road Regional Sporting Complex is guided by the adopted Creek Road Masterplan providing a multi-sport community facility with regional level playing fields, along with walking trails and community spaces to an area of high population growth. It will accommodate regular community sport use, whilst also providing the opportunity for state-level competitions traditionally held in CBD locations.

The fields, contemporary amenities, grandstands and club rooms will provide significant community benefit, especially to cater for the increase in female participants and those with accessibility requirements. The weather resilient playing fields will reduce the impact of match cancellations caused by extreme weather, which in 2025 resulted in Newcastle Football postponing 2,543 fixtures across 14 weekends - roughly 180 games per weekend. Across Newcastle's 160 sporting fields, in 2025 there were 102 days of the winter sport season where fields were closed due to rain events.

The Creek Road Regional Sporting Complex is supported by a range of stakeholders including NSW Cricket, Northern NSW Football, NSW Rugby Union, NSW Rugby League and NSW Touch/Oztag. The adopted Creek Road Masterplan will ensure enhanced participation, the strengthening of talent pathways, and the delivery of long-term health and wellbeing benefits for the local community.

Benefits to the NSW State Government

Delivers resilient, high-impact community infrastructure aligned with NSW Office of Sport priorities.

Advances state objectives for health, inclusion, and gender equity by supporting multi-code facilities, female-friendly amenities, and accessible design.

Maximises return on state investment by funding a regional sports hub that serves multiple LGAs, strengthens talent pathways, and supports workforce participation and community wellbeing in a growth area.

Benefits to the Wallsend State Electorate and Hunter Region

Addresses critical infrastructure shortfalls in Newcastle's western suburbs, meeting growing demand for sport and recreation facilities driven by rapid population growth and increasing participation rates, while supporting the published Electoral District Priorities for Wallsend.

Improves playing field capacity and reliability by reducing match cancellations and scheduling pressures for local sporting clubs and competitions.

Creates a district-level sporting hub in the western corridor of Newcastle, increasing participation opportunities and supporting healthier, more active communities.

Aligns with the following State and Local Strategies and Plans

NSW Active Living Strategy

NSW Sport Infrastructure Strategy

NSW Health and Wellbeing priorities / Preventative Health Strategy

Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 (Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities)

City of Newcastle Strategic Sports Plan 2020-2030

City of Newcastle Community Strategic Plan (Newcastle 2040)

City of Newcastle Delivering Newcastle 2040 (2026/27 Operational Plan)

***Newcastle 2040* Strategic Alignment:**

3. Creative Newcastle

3.3 Connected and fair communities





Concept designs for Creek Road Regional Sports Complex

Lambton Pool Dive Tower

2

Ask

Provide funding of $1 million to deliver critical safety and compliance upgrades to the diving facilities and floodlighting at Lambton Park War Memorial Swimming Centre, enabling the safe reopening of the dive tower platforms (5m, 7.5m and 10m) and supporting the safe operation of the 1 metre springboards through the installation of lifting devices that address manual handling risks, ensuring the ongoing viability of diving participation across the Hunter region.

Background

Lambton Park War Memorial Swimming Centre is home to the region's primary public diving facilities which supports training, competition and school-based participation through the Hunter United Diving Academy (HUDA). Hunter regional athletes currently travel over 200km to Sydney which offers the closest comparable facilities.

A 2026 Structural Engineering Risk Assessment and Access Safety Review identified significant fall-from-height risks associated with the existing dive tower access, edge protection and guarding arrangements, resulting in the closure of the dive tower platforms. The assessment found the facilities do not meet the requirements of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Work Health and Safety Regulation, contemporary Australian Standards and SafeWork NSW requirements.

This funding will deliver permanent engineered safety improvements, including compliant balustrades, guardrails, access controls, lifting mechanisms and associated structural modifications required to safely reopen the dive tower as well as provision of floodlighting for safety requirements. The funding will also deliver lifting devices for the 1-metre springboards to address manual handling risks and support the safe operation of the facility by staff.

The critical safety and compliance upgrades will restore access to specialist aquatic infrastructure that is currently unavailable due to safety closure, improve workplace safety, protect the long-term viability of the asset and ensure continued access to diving opportunities for the Newcastle and Hunter communities.

Benefits to the NSW State Government

The investment into the region's primary public diving facilities at Lambton Pool supports the NSW Government priorities relating to community sport participation, water safety and access to safe sporting infrastructure by restoring access to a specialised regional diving facility currently unavailable due to closure and safety risks.

The upgrades will deliver permanent engineering controls that ensure compliance with work health and safety legislation and contemporary Australian Standards, reducing risk, improving workplace safety and protecting public assets through proactive infrastructure investment.

By restoring access to the region's primary public diving facilities at Lambton Pool, the investment supports participation pathways such as learn-to-dive through to competitive sport, while maintaining access to specialised aquatic infrastructure that serves Newcastle, the Hunter region and surrounding communities, aligning with the broader NSW objective of increasing community sport participation and physical activity.

Benefits to the Wallsend State Electorate and Hunter Region

The investment will restore safe access to the electorate's only dedicated public diving facilities at Lambton Pool, enabling residents to participate in diving programs, training and competition without travelling over 200km outside the region. The project also aligns with the published Electoral District Priorities for Wallsend.

Reopening the diving boards will support HUDA members of all ages, as well as school groups and new participants, providing opportunities for physical activity, skill development, social connection and community engagement.

Investment in the facility will preserve an important community and regional sporting asset, improve safety and workplace outcomes and strengthen access to inclusive aquatic recreation and participation pathways from learn-to-dive through to competitive sport within the Wallsend electorate and broader Hunter region.



Existing Dive Tower at Lambton Pool

Aligns with the following State and Local Strategies and Plans

NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2024–2044

NSW Office of Sport – Strategic Directions & Facility Planning Framework

NSW Health – Preventative Health Strategy

NSW Water Safety Framework / Royal Life Saving NSW Partnership Priorities

City of Newcastle Community Strategic Plan (Newcastle 2040)

City of Newcastle Inland Pools Strategy 2043

City of Newcastle Delivering Newcastle 2040 (2026/27 Operational Plan)

***Newcastle 2040* Strategic Alignment:**
1. Liveable Newcastle
1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places

Lambton Indoor Pool

3

Ask

Provide funding of $15 million through a funding partnership to progress the Lambton Indoor Pool project as an indoor aquatic facility, delivering year-round, climate-resilient access to swimming, water safety and community programs while piloting a scalable, modular model for renewing ageing public pool infrastructure across NSW and Australia.

Background

An indoor aquatic facility at Lambton delivering year-round climate-resilient access to swimming would deliver Newcastle's first public year-round pool with access to safe, inclusive swimming programs for Newcastle's inland suburbs. It would also significantly address the needs identified in City of Newcastle's Inland Pool Strategy 2043.

The indoor aquatic facility at Lambton will be developed using the proposed pattern-book and modular aquatic infrastructure approach being advanced by Royal Life Saving NSW. It will also demonstrate a modern and scalable model for renewing ageing public pools as well as providing investment into infrastructure that is more reliable, efficient, and responsive to community demand with a focus on accessibility and benefits to people of all ages.

The indoor aquatic facility will also support preventative health, learn-to-swim, rehabilitation, and all-weather participation outcomes while reducing long-term operational risk through energy-efficient systems and climate-resilient design.

Investment into Lambton Pool as a pilot for the modular aquatic infrastructure approach will provide a practical proof-of-concept for future aquatic facility renewal across NSW, generating an evidence base for future investment decisions and positioning the project as both a critical local investment and a model for broader infrastructure reform.

Benefits to the NSW State Government

Year-round indoor aquatic facilities directly support NSW priorities around water safety, learn-to-swim participation, and public health, aligning with the NSW Government's work with Royal Life Saving NSW, Office of Sport objectives, and the need to address declining swimming competency and ageing aquatic assets across the State.

An indoor aquatic facility at Lambton delivering year-round climate-resilient access to swimming supports preventative health outcomes by enabling consistent access to physical activity, rehabilitation, and therapeutic programs, aligning with NSW Health priorities focused on reducing long-term demand on hospitals and acute care services. Investment into this facility also supports community wellbeing and long-term health system sustainability.

The Royal Life Saving NSW pattern-book and modular approach aligns with NSW Government priorities to improve capital efficiency, reduce delivery risk, and create scalable, repeatable infrastructure models, supporting Treasury, Infrastructure NSW, and State Infrastructure Strategy objectives for smarter infrastructure investment.

Investment into Lambton Pool as a pilot for the modular aquatic infrastructure approach, will generate an evidence base to inform future aquatic infrastructure renewal across NSW and Australia.



Concept design for the proposed Lambton Indoor Pool

Benefits to the Wallsend State Electorate and Hunter Region

A modern, modular facility improves energy efficiency, asset reliability, and lifecycle performance, reducing exposure to escalating maintenance costs, unplanned closures, and future replacement risk while ensuring the long-term sustainability of aquatic services for Newcastle's Wallsend electorate. The project also aligns with the published Electoral District Priorities for Wallsend.

An indoor aquatic facility also guarantees reliable, year-round delivery of learn-to-swim, rehabilitation, school and community programs, improving access to safe and affordable aquatic opportunities for residents of Newcastle's inland suburbs and supporting physical activity, water safety, social inclusion, and community wellbeing close to home.

Aligns with the following State and Local Strategies and Plans

NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2024–2044

NSW Office of Sport – Strategic Directions & Facility Planning Framework

NSW Health – Preventative Health Strategy

NSW Water Safety Framework / Royal Life Saving NSW Partnership Priorities

City of Newcastle Inland Pools Strategy 2043

City of Newcastle Community Strategic Plan (Newcastle 2040)

City of Newcastle Delivering Newcastle 2040 (2026/27 Operational Plan)

***Newcastle 2040* Strategic Alignment:**

3. Creative Newcastle

3.3 Connected and fair communities



Concept design for the proposed Lambton Indoor Pool

Richmond Vale Rail Trail

4

Ask

Provide matched funding of $5 million to progress delivery of a shovel-ready anchor stage of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail, a key component of the Hunter Region Shiraz to Shore recreational trail. This investment will establish a priority section of the 32km regional walking and cycling pathway, supporting active transport, tourism growth, and connectivity across Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock.

Background

The Richmond Vale Rail Trail (RVRT) is a 32km regional level walking and cycling linkage connecting Shortland, Minmi, Fletcher, Hexham and Tarro. As a key component of the Hunter Region Shiraz to Shore recreational trail, it also strengthens connections between Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock local government areas (LGAs). The project aligns with the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan and is included in the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan.

It offers significant region-wide recreational, tourism, environmental and economic benefits, including improved access to natural areas, safer active transport infrastructure and increased visitation. Delivery of this stage will also support ongoing collaboration across the Hunter Region to complete the broader 100km+ Shiraz to Shore recreational trail.

Benefits to the NSW State Government

High-value infrastructure investment delivering a proven cost–benefit ratio of 2.4, maximising return on state funding.

Accelerates Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan and the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan delivery by advancing a priority regional active transport and recreation corridor.

Supports the NSW Active Transport Strategy by providing a safe, off-road walking and cycling alternative that increases participation and reduces car dependency.

Provides a safe active transport link between Beresfield/Tarro, Minmi and Shortland, giving a viable alternative for cyclists away from the state road network, which has a history of significant cycling accidents.

Benefits to the Wallsend State Electorate and Hunter Region

Delivers a shovel-ready project with development approval secured for a 15km priority section (Shortland-Minmi-Pambalong) and aligns with the published Electoral District Priorities for Wallsend.

Improves local active transport safety by providing a high-quality off-road route for commuters, families, and recreational users.

Enhances access to natural assets including the Hunter Wetlands National Park and Pambalong Nature Reserve, supporting community wellbeing and connection to these natural areas.

Unlocks future funding and delivery stages by establishing a completed anchor section within the approval timeframe and addressing early delivery milestones.

Aligns with the following State and Local Strategies and Plans

Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan

NSW Active Transport Strategy

NSW Open Space and Greener Places Policy

NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

City of Newcastle Cycling Plan 2021-2030

City of Newcastle Walking and Mobility Plan 2024-2034

City of Newcastle Community Strategic Plan (Newcastle 2040)

City of Newcastle Delivering Newcastle 2040 (2026/27 Operational Plan)

***Newcastle 2040* Strategic Alignment:**

1. Liveable Newcastle
1.2 Safe, active and linked movement across the city



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