Understanding attitudes and beliefs towards aspects of the *Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program*

Results from an online and paper survey of 1,215 Newcastle and lower Hunter residents.

**Client:**
UrbanGrowth NSW

**Dated:**
October 2015
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Executive summary

This online survey was commissioned by UrbanGrowth NSW to understand how those residing in and around Newcastle and the lower Hunter feel towards the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program (NUTTP, or the Program). Feedback was specifically sought on four urban transformation Opportunities and three potential Outcomes as a result of urban transformation.

The online survey augments a parallel random CATI (telephone) survey of 613 adult residents in the Newcastle, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Cessnock LGAs (see separate report.)

The online survey (with paper option) was open from Wednesday August 12th to Friday September 18th. By survey deadline, 1,215 valid and complete responses had been received.

Note that due to the self-selecting nature of this sample, results cannot be extrapolated to the wider Newcastle and lower Hunter community. Instead results are representative only of those who chose to participate in the survey.

Among the survey’s major conclusions:

1. There was a high level of visitations to the city centre, with three in five respondents visiting at least weekly. Highest visitation was among those aged 25-44. The major purpose for visitation was leisure (dining, movies etc.), mentioned by 79% of respondents. Other popular reasons included visits to city beaches (70%), visits to parks (63%) and shopping (61%). In all, 42% said they had visited for some work-related purpose.

2. In terms of what people like about the Newcastle city centre as it is now, major factors included the city’s beaches and beach culture, surrounding natural beauty, its convenience, and the amount of open and/or green spaces.

3. As to what they would like to see improved, public transport headed the list. Other popular items included improved walking and cycling connections, more open and/or green space, and more dining, entertainment and retail options.

4. There was a high level of agreement with the proposed Objectives. Additional suggested Objectives included: a focus on maintaining heritage buildings; improved transport planning and/or access; retaining heavy rail; improving the entertainment mix within the city; supporting light rail; and stimulating the local economy.

5. Of the four development Opportunities presented, Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City, appeared to be the preferred option (being liked by 42% of those taking part). Opportunity 3 – Harbour Play City, and Opportunity 1 – Greenway were the next most liked (at 25% each), while Opportunity 2 – Harbour West City, was liked by only 17% of respondents. Three in ten respondents claimed to like none of the four Opportunities presented. (This was significantly higher than the phone survey’s 10%).
6. Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City, and Opportunity 1 – Greenway were the most disliked options, being nominated as such by 34% of respondents each. However there was little difference between these and the other two Opportunities, with all recording dislike ratios of between 27 and 34%. With 42% liking and 34% disliking, Opportunity 4 was the most polarising option.

7. There was strong support among online respondents for all three of UrbanGrowth NSW’s proposed Outcomes. The idea of a Civic Link from the Civic precinct to the harbour was supported by 65% of those surveyed, and opposed by 25%.

Likewise the idea to revitalise Hunter Street attracted 64% support, against 24% opposition.

The idea for an entertainment precinct in the East End was supported by 61% of respondents, and opposed by 22%.

8. Support for all three Outcomes was strongest among younger respondents (i.e. those aged under 45) and those with children at home. Opposition to the three ideas appeared largely driven by a desire to see the return of heavy rail to the Newcastle city centre.

9. In relation to eight attitudinal statements regarding development of the Newcastle city centre, agreement was highest with the statements “the restoration of heritage buildings and items is very important to me”, “urban renewal can have good outcomes for existing residents if it is well planned and delivered well” and “urban renewal can improve the area by bringing in more jobs, shops, public facilities and housing”.

Agreement was lowest for the statements “apartment living will lower the value of property in surrounding areas”, “any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area” and “the city centre is largely fine as is.”

Opinions were divided in relation to the statement “the current height of commercial and residential buildings in Honeysuckle (4-12 storeys) is appropriate for the city centre”.
Introduction

Background

In May 2015, UrbanGrowth NSW commissioned Jetty Research to undertake attitudinal research regarding the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program (the Program) among a random sample of adult residents in Newcastle and the lower Hunter region. Specifically, the research sought to understand how those residing in and around Newcastle and the lower Hunter region felt towards the Program. Feedback was specifically sought on four urban transformation Opportunities and three potential Outcomes as a result of urban transformation.

In addition to a statistically valid, random telephone survey of 613 Newcastle and lower Hunter adult residents (see separate report), an online resident survey was also undertaken. Both versions had similar survey objectives:

⇒ Determine (and benchmark) current perceptions of Newcastle city centre;
⇒ Determine current Newcastle city behaviours;
⇒ Measure awareness of the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program;
⇒ Test early Opportunities and potential Outcomes:
  o Understand reaction to each opportunity and potential outcome;
  o Evaluate levels of support for each opportunity and potential outcome;
  o Determine potential improvements to each opportunity and potential outcome.
⇒ Understand any concerns that exist regarding the Urban Transformation and Transport Program.

Methodology

The online survey sought to augment the telephone survey in understanding attitudes and opinion towards UrbanGrowth NSW’s ideas for the transformation of the Newcastle city centre. The survey was designed to allow all those who wished to participate in the engagement process an opportunity to do so, and in a manner that was informed via access to the same background information available to those completing the random telephone survey.

The survey questionnaire, essentially the same as that used for the random telephone survey¹, was constructed collaboratively between UrbanGrowth NSW and Jetty Research (see Appendix 1), based on satisfying the above objectives. Preparation of the survey methodology and questionnaire was overseen by the Newcastle Urban Transformation Steering Group. The steering group comprises senior representatives of Newcastle City Council, UrbanGrowth NSW and Hunter Development Corporation.

The survey was open between Wednesday August 12th and Friday September 18th, 2015. The online survey was promoted via communications collateral including a postcard and newsletter, advertising in the local and regional press, at the 13 community engagement events held as part of Revitalising Newcastle, via the engagement program’s social media channels, and via a button on the engagement website homepage.

¹ Due to time constraints, the telephone survey excluded questions 6 and 10 of the online survey (shown in Appendix 1). Other than this, the online and telephone questionnaires were the same.
By the survey completion deadline, 1,215 valid surveys had been received. (Of these, 1,129 were online and 86 were paper-based.) Average survey completion time for the online version was 26 minutes.

Please note that due to the nature of the survey, not all respondents answered every question. The number of respondents answering each question is marked as “n = XXX” in the graph accompanying that question. Caution should be taken in analysing some questions due to the small sample size.

Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores, Chi-square or other analysis of variation (or ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone. Unless indicated otherwise, significant differences are typically highlighted in blue (above mean) and pink (below mean).

Statistically significant differences by age, gender and/or LGA have been noted in the comments accompanying each graph or table. In the absence of such commentary, results can be assumed to be consistent between different demographic groups.

**Sampling error**

Due to the self-selecting (i.e. “opt-in”) nature of the online survey, and the fact that it was more likely to be completed by those with strong views and/or a high level of interest in the subject matter, random sampling error cannot be applied to the results. This in turn means that the findings cannot be extrapolated to the wider Newcastle and lower Hunter communities.

As results are representative only of those who chose to take part, they should instead be interpreted as a snapshot of community opinion. These views may or may not represent those of the wider community.

(A separate report shows comparisons between the representative telephone and non-representative online surveys.)

(Continued next page...)

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2 Where references are made throughout this report to the online survey, this also includes paper-based surveys.
Sample characteristics

The survey sample exhibited the following characteristics:

**Graph i: Sample by Gender**

The sample was slightly skewed towards males, who made up 55% of the overall sample.

**Graph ii: Sample by Age**

The age distribution of responses was clustered around the 25-44 and 45-64 age groups – collectively accounting for almost 80% of respondents.
As one might expect due to the subject matter, more than two-thirds of respondents lived in the Newcastle LGA.

Seven in ten online respondents lived in separate (detached) houses, with the balance equally spread between semi-detached houses and apartments.
Almost one third of those responding to the online survey had children living in their home.
Part 1: Newcastle city visitation behaviours

The survey commenced with a number of questions relating to Newcastle city centre visitation. These questions were designed to understand local and nearby residents’ frequency of visitation to the Newcastle city centre and their reasons for visiting.

KEY FINDINGS

1. There was a high level of visitations to the city centre, with three in five respondents visiting at least weekly. Highest visitation was among those aged 25-44.

2. The major purpose for visitation was leisure (dining, movies etc.), mentioned by 79% of respondents. Other popular reasons included visits to city beaches (70%), visits to parks (63%) and shopping (61%). In all, 42% said they had visited for some work-related purpose.

Respondents were first asked how frequently they had visited the Newcastle city centre in the past six months.

Graph 1.1: Frequency of visitation to the Newcastle city centre in the past six months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more times</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a high level of visitation to the Newcastle city centre among respondents, with almost three in five saying they visited at least once a week. Those aged 25-44 were the most likely to be frequent visitors, with 64% of this age group visiting weekly or more. And as one would expect, those residing in the Newcastle LGA were more likely to be weekly visitors to the city centre (at 68%, against 41% of those living in other LGAs). There was no significant difference in visitation patterns between men and women.
Entertainment, dining, beaches, parks and shopping were the major reasons for visits to the Newcastle city centre – with all being mentioned by more than three in five respondents. Meanwhile around three in ten visited for work-related meetings, and a similar proportion worked in the city centre. (In all, 42% of respondents visited the city centre for work-related purposes.)
Part 2: Preference for changes to the Newcastle city centre

As with the telephone survey, online respondents were next asked which aspects they considered to be the best things about the city centre, and what they would like to see change in the future.

KEY FINDINGS

1. In terms of what people like about the Newcastle city centre as it is now, major factors included the city’s beaches and beach culture, surrounding natural beauty, its convenience, and the amount of open and/or green spaces.

2. As to what they would like to see improved, public transport headed the list. Other popular requests included improved walking and cycling connections, more open and/or green space, and more dining, entertainment and retail options.

Respondents were first asked, if they were talking to someone new to Newcastle, what would they tell them are the best things about the city centre as it is now. (Note that responses came from a prompted list of offered options, plus “other”).

Graph 2.1: Aspects respondents consider to be the best thing about the Newcastle city centre

*If you were talking to someone new to Newcastle, what would you tell them are the best things about the city centre as it is now? (n=1215, multiple answers allowed)*

- Local beaches/beach culture: 89%
- Surrounding natural assets/beauty: 65%
- Close to everything: 44%
- Existing open/green space: 35%
- Community feel/spirit: 31%
- Retail and entertainment options: 30%
- Local events and celebrations: 16%
- Diversity of the community (cultural/socio-economic etc.): 16%
- Affordable housing: 8%
- Type of housing: 7%
- Community facilities (education, health etc.): 6%
- Public transport access: 5%
- Heritage Buildings/history: 3%
- Nothing much: 2%
- Foreshore/Honeysuckle/Waterfront/Harbour: 2%
- Other: 8%

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3 “Foreshore/Honeysuckle/Waterfront/Harbour” was not offered as a prompted option, and hence the 2% shown here comes via respondents mentioning these aspects as “other”. The result for this attribute would almost certainly have been considerably higher had this been offered as a prompted option.
Major perceived attributes of the city centre included: local beaches and beach culture (mentioned by almost nine in ten respondents); the city’s surrounding natural assets; convenience; its open and green space; community feel/spirit; and the retail and entertainment options.

Respondents were then asked what they would like to see changed about the Newcastle city centre to make it a better place to live, work or visit. Responses again came from a prompted list of offered options, plus “other”.

Graph 2.2: Aspects respondents would like to see change in the future

As to what improvements respondents would like to see in future, there was a wide list of options stated. Heading this was improved public transport – nominated by more than three on four of those taking part – and improved walking or cycling connections between the city centre and nearby suburbs.

Other popular suggestions included more green or open space, improved dining, entertainment and/or retail options, more local events, more jobs within the city centre, and improved traffic flow.

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4 Note that “More parking” was not offered as a prompted option. It is reasonable to assume the 4% figure shown here – derived from comments in “other” – would be considerably higher had it been included in the list of options.
Part 3: Awareness of and attitudes towards the Program

Respondents were then asked a series of questions regarding their opinion towards the project objectives and the four different urban transformation Opportunities contained within the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program. (These Opportunities were prepared with reference to feedback from the Design Newcastle community engagement process held in 2014 and advice from Newcastle City Council and urban renewal experts.) Respondents were able to access the project information via a link in the survey.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Awareness of the Program was extremely high among online respondents (as one would expect from a self-selecting sample), with 94 per cent of respondents saying they were aware of the project prior to commencing the survey.

2. Of those willing to suggest additional objectives to the five listed in the accompanying documents, popular suggestions included: a focus on maintaining heritage buildings; improved transport planning and/or access; retaining heavy rail; improving the entertainment mix within the city; supporting light rail; and stimulating the local economy.

3. Of the four development Opportunities presented, Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City, appeared to be the preferred option (being liked by 42 per cent of those taking part). Opportunity 3 – Harbour Play City, and Opportunity 1 – Greenway were the next most liked (at 25% each), while Opportunity 2 – Harbour West City, was liked by only 17% of respondents. Three in ten respondents claimed to like none of the four Opportunities presented. (This was significantly higher than the statistically valid phone survey’s 10%.)

Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City, and Opportunity 1 – Greenway were the most disliked options, being nominated as such by 34% of respondents each. However there was little difference between these and the other two Opportunities, with all recording dislike ratios of 27-34%.

Respondents were first asked if they were previously aware of the Program:

Graph 3.1: Awareness of the Program prior to the survey

Prior to this survey, had you heard about the State Government’s plans for urban renewal of the city centre, including the areas around Wickham, Civic and Newcastle Stations?

(n=1215)
Awareness among online respondents was extremely high, with 94% of those taking the survey saying they were previously aware of the project. This was consistent by age, gender and place of residence.

Respondents were then asked to review the five Program Objectives (via an online link) and indicate whether they believed there were any additional objectives that should be added:

**Graph 3.2: “Other” potential objectives important for the future of Newcastle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Newcastle’s heritage</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport planning/access</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support heavy rail</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/bar/diverse entertainment</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support light rail</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic stimulation</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More/better parking</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No oversized/obstructive buildings</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve cycle/pedestrian pathways</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move forward as soon as possible</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More housing</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three in ten did not offer any additional objectives to the five listed. Of those who did, popular suggestions included: a focus on maintaining heritage buildings; improved transport planning and/or access; retaining heavy rail; improving the entertainment mix within the city; supporting light rail; and stimulating the local economy.

Respondents were then directed to another online link where they were able to review UrbanGrowth NSW’s four urban transformation Opportunities for the city centre. After reviewing the four Opportunities, respondents were asked which of them they liked and disliked, and why.

A summary of the likes and dislikes for the four Opportunities is shown in Graph 3.2, next page:
This suggests that Opportunity 4 – Harbour Entertainment City was the most liked of the four Opportunities presented, with 42% saying they liked it. However it was also the most disliked (equally with Opportunity 1 – Greenway), suggesting it was a polarising option among online respondents.

Meanwhile 25% each liked Opportunity 1 – Greenway and Opportunity 3 – Harbour Play City. Just 17% liked Opportunity 2 – Harbour West City. Three in ten respondents didn’t like any of the four Opportunities presented.

There was relatively little distinction among those options disliked, with between 27 and 34 per cent of respondents negatively disposed to each of the four Opportunities. Just over one-third of those surveyed did not dislike any of the four.

Those aged less than 45 were significantly more likely to like Opportunity 4 (at 55%, against 31% of those aged 45-plus.) Conversely respondents aged 45 and more were significantly more likely not to like any of the four proposed Opportunities (at 38%, against 17% of younger respondents.)

Respondents were then asked specifically what they liked and disliked about the options they had chosen. A summary of “like” themes for the four Opportunities is shown in Table 3.1, next page.
### Table 3.1: Reasons for liking the four Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Reason for like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 1 - Greenway</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>More open space/less development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Appeal to broad demographic/all ages entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Protecting rail corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Waterfront/foreshore access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 2 - Harbour West City</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>Support Proposed Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Greenspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Transport links/good accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 3 - Harbour Play City</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>Support proposal aspects/ balanced/family friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Stimulate economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Improved transport/parking/access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 4 - Harbour Entertainment City</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>Stimulate local economy/advantageous use of assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>Draw people to CBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Family/all ages entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.2: Reasons for disliking the four Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Reason for dislike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 1 - Greenway</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Ignores development potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Boring/too much space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Access/transport issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Broken promise/optimise rail line development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 2 - Harbour West City</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Want rail back/overdevelopment of corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Poor accessibility/transport options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Not meeting objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 3 - Harbour Play City</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Dislike proposal aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>Want railway back/ anti development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Dislike transport/access options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity 4 - Harbour Entertainment City</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Anti/poor proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Want trains back/dislike transport solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Needs more green space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 4: Attitudes towards the Three Potential Outcomes

Residents also reviewed (via a separate online link) information about three potential Outcomes resulting from urban transformation. These included: the creation of a Civic Link; the revitalisation of Hunter Street; and the creation of an entertainment Precinct in the city’s East End.

(These Outcomes were prepared with reference to feedback from the Design Newcastle community engagement process held in 2014 and advice from Newcastle City Council and urban renewal experts.)

The survey asked respondents their opinion towards each of the three potential Outcomes, their reasons for this opinion and any ideas for other possible uses for this site.

KEY FINDINGS

1. There was strong support among online respondents for all three of UrbanGrowth NSW’s proposed Outcomes. The idea of a Civic Link from the Civic precinct to the harbour was supported by 65% of those surveyed, and opposed by 25%.

2. Likewise the idea to revitalise Hunter Street attracted 64% support, against 24% opposition.

3. The idea for an Entertainment precinct in the East End was supported by 61% of respondents, and opposed by 22%.

4. Support for all three ideas was strongest among younger respondents (i.e. those aged under 45) and those with children living at home.

5. Opposition to the three ideas appeared largely driven by a desire to see the return of heavy rail to the Newcastle city centre.

Respondents were first asked for their opinion towards UrbanGrowth NSW’s idea of a Civic Link linking the Civic precinct to Newcastle Harbour:

Graph 4.1: Attitudes regarding a Civic Link

| Attitudes regarding a Civic Link from the Civic Precinct to the harbour |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Mean = 3.72        | Net Support = +45% |
| Strongly opposed   | Somewhat opposed | Neutral        |
| 14%                 | 6%              | 15%            |
| Somewhat supportive| Strongly supportive |
| 21%                 | 44%             |

(n=1215)
Among online respondents there was strong support for this idea, with 65% supportive and only 20% opposed. Support was strongest among those aged 18-44 and those with children living at home, while there were no significant differences based on whether or not the respondent lived in the Newcastle LGA, or by gender.

Table 4.1: Reasons to support/oppose the Civic Link

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason’s for opinion</th>
<th>Civic link</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More accessibility/parking/connectedness</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support development/project aspects</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase tourism/economic growth/forward thinking</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough transparency/unclear local benefit</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want railway back</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose project aspects/location</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote location/attract people</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse entertainment</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cater to all ages</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key reasons for support included: the improved accessibility and connectedness this link would provide; its ability to increase tourism and/or the economy; and general support for development. Among those opposed, the main objections were a desire for the return of heavy rail, and the lack of perceived benefits.

Table 4.2: Other ideas on future uses for the Civic Link site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other ideas for site</th>
<th>Civic link</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No/no comment</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other entertainment/cultural suggestions</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better facilities/infrastructure</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend transport connections</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider future growth</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring back heavy rail</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More green/outdoor spaces</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated rail services</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No highrises</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to other possible uses for the site, supporters of the Civic Link sought specific entertainment or cultural options, and noted the need for improved infrastructure or facilities in the proposed area. Opponents shared this wish, while again re-stating their desire to see heavy rail returned to the area.
Respondents were then asked for their opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW’s idea for the revitalisation of Hunter Street.

**Graph 4.2: Attitudes regarding the revitalisation of Hunter Street**

Support was again extremely strong, with 64% supportive against 24% opposed. As with the Civic Link, those aged less than 45 and those with children living at home were significantly more supportive than older respondents and those without dependent children.

**Table 4.3: Reasons to support/oppose the revitalisation of Hunter Street**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason/s for opinion</th>
<th>Hunter St</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support development/project aspects</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose project aspects/location</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote location/attract people</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More accessability/parking/connectedness</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough transparency/unclear local benefit</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase tourism/ economic growth/forward thinking</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want railway back</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major reasons for support were a general desire to see development and/or projects begin in Hunter Street, and to attract additional people to the area. Opponents meanwhile pointed to concerns with aspects of the proposal, and a desire for greater access to the site.
Meanwhile both supporters and opponents of the plan wanted to see improved infrastructure/facilities in Hunter Street. Opponents again pushed for the return of heavy rail to Hunter Street.

Finally in this section, respondents were asked for their opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW’s idea for an Entertainment Precinct in the city’s East End:

**Graph 4.3: Attitudes regarding an Entertainment Precinct**

![Graph showing attitudes towards an Entertainment Precinct]

UrbanGrowth NSW’s concept for an entertainment precinct was also enthusiastically received, with 61% supportive against 22% opposed. Once again, those aged under 45 and those with dependent children were significantly more likely to support the idea. (However as with the previous two Outcomes, there were no significant differences by gender or respondent place of residence.)
Table 4.5: Reasons to support/oppose an entertainment precinct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason/s for opinion</th>
<th>Entertainment Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support development/project aspects</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse entertainment</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose project aspects/location</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase tourism/economic growth/forward thinking</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote location/attract people</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough transparency/unclear local benefit</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More accessability/parking/connectedness</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cater to all ages</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want railway back</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major reasons provided for support were general support for development, the desire for a diverse entertainment district, and its ability to improve tourism and/or the economy. Opponents disliked specific aspects of the concept, or its location.

Table 4.6: Other ideas on future uses for the entertainment precinct site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other ideas for site</th>
<th>Entertainment Precinct</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No/no comment</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other entertainment/cultural suggestions</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better facilities/infrastructure</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring back heavy rail</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend transport connections</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider future growth</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More green/outdoor spaces</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No highrisks</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated rail services</td>
<td>.4%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major suggestions included specific entertainment suggestions, or a more general desire for improved facilities. Opponents, meanwhile, again made their desire clear for a return of heavy rail to the area.
Part 5: Current attitudes towards the Newcastle city centre

The survey continued with a series of eight attitudinal statements relating to the Newcastle city centre. Residents were asked to rate each statement on a five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree through to strongly agree. The statements were designed to understand respondents’ attitudes towards urban renewal generally, and the more specific impacts of urban renewal.

**KEY FINDINGS**

1. In relation to eight attitudinal statements regarding development of the Newcastle city centre, agreement was highest with the statements “the restoration of heritage buildings and items is very important to me”, “urban renewal can have good outcomes for existing residents if it is well planned and delivered well” and “urban renewal can improve the area by bringing in more jobs, shops, public facilities and housing”.

2. Agreement was lowest for the statements “apartment living will lower the value of property in surrounding areas”, “any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area” and “the city centre is largely fine as is.”

3. Opinions were most mixed in relation to the statement “the current height of commercial and residential buildings in Honeysuckle (8–12 storeys) is appropriate for the city centre”.

Graph 5.1 (next page) outlines the level of agreement with each of the eight statements, which are ranked from highest to lowest strong agreement:

(Continued next page...)}
Strongest agreement came with the statement that “the restoration of heritage buildings and items is very important to me” (82% agree, 7% disagree). This was followed by “urban renewal can have good outcomes for existing residents if it is planned and delivered well” (85% agree, 8% disagree) and “urban renewal can improve the area by bringing in more jobs, shops, public facilities and housing” (73% agree, 11% disagree).

At the opposite end of the scale, only 7% of respondents agreed that “apartment living will lower the value of property in surrounding suburbs” (against 66% disagreeing) and just 11% of respondents agreed that “any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area” (vs. 74% disagreeing). Likewise, only 14% agreed that “the city centre is largely fine as it is” with 73% disagreeing.

The statement for which there was greatest uncertainty was “the current height of buildings in the Honeysuckle area (4-12 storeys) is appropriate for the city centre”. In this instance, 48% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 35% disagreed.

Those living in the Newcastle LGA were significantly more likely to agree that “urban renewal can have good outcomes for existing residents if it is well planned and delivered”, and more likely to disagree that “apartment living will lower the value in surrounding suburbs” and “any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area”, than those living in neighbouring LGAs.
Part 6: Other ideas and suggestions

The survey concluded with respondents being asked if they had any final suggestions or comments. Some 845 of the 1,215 valid responses took advantage of this opportunity. And as might be expected, there was an enormous variety of ideas and suggestions in terms of theme, detail and length.

These comments have been supplied separately to UrbanGrowth NSW, so that they can be incorporated into the wider planning process.
APPENDIX 1: Online Survey
1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important survey, being conducted on behalf of Urban Growth NSW. This is designed to provide feedback from Newcastle and other Hunter residents on their vision for the future of the Newcastle city centre.

The survey should only take 10 minutes to complete, and all answers are confidential. Completion deadline is Friday 18 September 2015.

To begin the survey, please tick "commence survey", below.

*  
  - Commence survey
  - No, I do not wish to take part.

2. In which of the the following local government (i.e. council) areas do you live?

*  
  - Newcastle
  - Port Stephens
  - Lake Macquarie
  - Cessnock
  - Maitland
  - Other __________

3. What is your age range?

*  
  - Under 18 years
  - 18-24 years
  - 25-44 years
  - 45-64 years
  - 65+ years
  - Rather not say

4. And what is your gender? *

  - Male
  - Female
  - Transgender/Intersex/Other
  - Rather not say

5. To start things off, how often have you come into Newcastle city centre during the past 6 months?

*  
  - Never
  - Once
  - Twice
6. And which of the following activities you have undertaken in the city centre in the past six months? (Please tick any that apply).

*  
☐ Lived in the city centre  
☐ Studied at a city centre-based education institution  
☐ Visited the city centre for shopping  
☐ Visited the city centre for leisure activities such as the cinema or dining  
☐ Worked at a city centre-based company/business  
☐ Visited the city centre for meetings relating to my work  
☐ Run a business in the city centre  
☐ Visited the city centre beaches  
☐ Visited the city centre parks  
☐ Visited the city centre to study (such as at the city centre library)  
☐ Other  

7. Thinking about the future of Newcastle, is there anything you would personally like to see change in the future to make the Newcastle city centre a better place to live, work or visit? (Please tick any that apply, or add as "other")

*  
☐ More jobs in the city centre  
☐ More educational opportunities in the city centre  
☐ Improved roads and traffic flow  
☐ More green/open space  
☐ More community facilities (schools, health care, aged care etc.)  
☐ More dining/entertainment/retail options  
☐ More housing  
☐ Less housing  
☐ Better walking and cycling connections between the city centre and surrounding suburbs, and between the city centre and the harbour front  
☐ Improved public transport  
☐ More local events and celebrations  
☐ Additional cultural facilities  
☐ Additional sporting facilities  
☐ Other (please say what)  

8. And if you were talking to someone new to Newcastle, what would you tell them are the best things about the city centre as it is now? (Please tick any that apply, or add as "other")

*  
☐ Community feel/spirit  
☐ Existing open/green space
☐ Community facilities (education, health etc.)
☐ Type of housing
☐ Public transport access
☐ Diversity of the community (cultural/socio-economic etc.)
☐ Affordable housing
☐ Local beaches/beach culture
☐ Surrounding natural assets/beauty
☐ Close to everything
☐ Retail and entertainment options
☐ Local events and celebrations
☐ Other (please say what) 

9. Prior to this survey, had you heard about the State Government’s plans for urban renewal of the city centre, including the areas around Wickham, Civic and Newcastle Stations?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Based on feedback from the community, Newcastle City Council and city renewal experts, UrbanGrowth NSW has identified five objectives for urban transformation of the city centre. These objectives can be found here.

10. Apart from these five objectives, are there any others you think are important for the future of Newcastle?

We would now like to ask you some questions which require you to understand a little more about UrbanGrowth NSW’s ideas for urban transformation of the city centre. Please click here to read this material.

11. Looking now at the four different opportunities shown, are there any you particularly like?

☐ Opportunity 1 - Greenway
☐ Opportunity 2 - Harbour West City
☐ Opportunity 3 - Harbour Play City
☐ Opportunity 4 - Harbour Entertainment City
☐ None of them

12. Can you briefly explain why? (If you have ticked more than one, please let us know which opportunity/ies you are commenting on.)
13. And are there any of the opportunities you particularly dislike?

☐ Opportunity 1 - Greenway
☐ Opportunity 2 - Harbour West City
☐ Opportunity 3 - Harbour Play City
☐ Opportunity 4 - Harbour Entertainment City
☐ None of them

14. And again, can you briefly explain why? (If you have ticked more than one, please let us know which opportunity/ies you are commenting on.)


15. The website also includes information about three potential outcomes as a result of urban transformation: these are the creation of a Civic Link, the revitalisation of Hunter Street and the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the city’s East End.

We would like you to now think about these and tell me your views on each potential outcome.

Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW’s idea of a Civic Link from the Civic Precinct to the harbour?

*  
☐ Strongly supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Neutral
☐ Somewhat opposed
☐ Strongly opposed

16. Briefly, why do you feel this?


17. And do you have any other ideas on future uses for the city centre?
18. Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW’s idea to revitalise Hunter Street?

*  
- Strongly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Neutral
- Somewhat opposed
- Strongly opposed

19. Briefly, why do you feel this?


20. And do you have any other ideas on future uses for this site?


21. Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW’s idea of an Entertainment Precinct in the city’s East End?

*  
- Strongly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Neutral
- Somewhat opposed
- Strongly opposed

22. And briefly, why do you feel this?


23. And do you have any other ideas on future uses for this site?
24. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements relating to the Newcastle city centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment living will lower the value of property in surrounding suburbs *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restoration of heritage buildings and items is very important to me *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The city centre is largely fine as it is *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban renewal can improve the area by bringing in more jobs, shops, public facilities and housing *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban renewal can have good outcomes for existing residents if it is planned and delivered well *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not appropriate to build more apartments in the city centre *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The height of commercial and apartment buildings in Honeysuckle is appropriate for the city centre *</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Do you have any final comments or suggestions you wanted to make about the revitalisation of the Newcastle city centre?

26. Before we finish, just a few demographic questions.

What is the main language spoken in your home?

* ☐ English
☐ Other (please say what)

27. Which of the following best describes your household?

* ☐ I live with family members
28. What type of home do you live in?

*  
- Separate (i.e. detached) house
- Semi-detached house, terrace, villa or townhouse
- Apartment / unit
- Declined
- Other (please say what)

29. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home? *

- Yes
- No
- Declined

30. Do you belong to any local groups in the community?

- Parents and Friends Group
- Local sports club or surf club
- Probus, Rotary or similar
- Community interest group (please specify within "other")
- Business group, Chamber of Commerce or other
- Other
Appendix 2: Background materials

(N.B. What follows is the hard copy equivalent of the material showed in hot links attached to the online survey. It is provided to enable context for those reading this report who have not otherwise seen the Objectives, Opportunities and Outcomes provided by UrbanGrowth NSW.)
The Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program

The Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program has been established to deliver the NSW Government’s $4.65 billion commitment to revitalise the city. The Program aims to bring people back to the city centre by strengthening connections between the city and the waterfront, creating employment opportunities, providing more public space and amenity, and delivering better transport.

The NSW Government has made a number of announcements relating to the transformation of Newcastle, including:

- A new multi-modal transport interchange at Wickham
- Light rail between the Wickham interchange and Pacific Park
- The activation of Hunter and Scott Streets linked to the delivery of light rail
- The revitalisation of land in the heavy rail corridor, the delivery of housing, and the delivery of improved public domain, including parks, entertainment precincts and public spaces.

About UrbanGrowth NSW

UrbanGrowth NSW is the NSW Government’s urban transformation delivery organisation. UrbanGrowth NSW’s ambition is to transform city living so that it is more vibrant, connected, and healthy for all, for now and for many years to come.

UrbanGrowth NSW is coordinating the Program, working closely with NSW Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW, Hunter Development Corporation and Newcastle City Council.
Program Vision and Objectives

Our vision for the revitalisation of the city centre has been informed by feedback from the community, Newcastle City Council, government agencies and city renewal experts.

Our vision is an activated city centre and waterfront that attracts people, new enterprises and tourism. Over time, we see great opportunities to build on the strengths of the city centre to encourage innovative and enterprising industries to thrive. In the longer term, we see an opportunity to strengthen Newcastle’s position on the regional, national and international stage, with a view to stronger ties with the Asia Pacific.

Our thinking is underpinned by five objectives which we believe will drive success for urban transformation.

1. **BRING PEOPLE BACK TO THE CITY CENTRE**
   Reimagine the city centre as an enhanced destination, supported by new employment, educational and housing opportunities and public domain, that will attract people.

2. **CONNECT THE CITY TO ITS WATERFRONT**
   Unite the city centre and the harbour to improve the experience of being in and moving around the city.

3. **HELP GROW NEW JOBS IN THE CITY CENTRE**
   Invest in initiatives that create jobs, with a focus on innovative industries, higher education and initiatives to encourage a range of businesses to the city centre.

4. **CREATE GREAT PLACES LINKED TO NEW TRANSPORT**
   Integrate urban transformation with new, efficient transport to activate Hunter and Scott Streets and return them to thriving main streets.

5. **CREATING ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND COMMUNITY ASSETS**
   Leave a positive legacy for the people of Newcastle. Ensure that new public domain and community facilities can be maintained to a high standard into the future.
Urban Transformation Opportunities

To realise the program vision and objectives, UrbanGrowth NSW has prepared a series of opportunities for community comment. These opportunities draw on feedback from the community, Council and city renewal experts to date.

Some people expressed the view that the land should be retained as a heavy rail corridor, some people felt it should be mainly green space, while others wanted the area to become an active recreational and cultural hub complete with pop-up stalls, fresh produce outlets and cafes. Some people also expressed a view that some of the land should be used for enterprises that stimulate the economy and attract investment to the city centre.

Generally feedback has supported:

- Hunter Street being reinstated as a thriving main street where people want to shop and enjoy cultural and leisure activities
- More job opportunities in the city centre
- Improved connections between the city centre and the waterfront
- Active recreation areas along the waterfront
- Respectful preservation and repurposing of heritage buildings.
1 – GREENWAY

Green space could be established from Worth Place to Watt Street in the heavy-rail corridor. This would be permanently greaekned. Also included here is the opportunity for some mixed-use development and an additional pedestrian access to the parkland on the eastern side of Hunter Street near Darby Street. The development could be a mix of retail, commercial and residential to support the arts-based revival of this area through the new University and Law Courts.

The former Newcastle Railway Station would be maintained in its current state.

This meets the revitalising Newcastle objective of Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport.

2 – HARBOUR WEST CITY

Green space could be established along the rail corridor from Newcastle to Watt Street with a new Civic Link from the city to the waterfront around the current Civic Station site. This link would provide direct access to the harbour from the University, City Hall, Civic Theatre and Law Courts. Market Street could also be extended across the rail corridor to provide access between the city centre and the waterfront.

Included here is some mixed-use development to stimulate economic activity west of Civic. New housing options would support increased activity generated by the new University and Law Court precinct. This would be a mix of retail, commercial and residential.

The former Newcastle Railway Station would be maintained to ensure it doesn’t deteriorate.

This meets the revitalising Newcastle objective of Connecting the City to its Waterfront, Helping Grow Jobs in the City Centre and Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport.
3 – HARBOUR PLAY CITY

Building on the opportunities outlined in Harbour West City, the Play City would feature a regional playground, revitalisation of Hunter Street and potentially the relocation of the bus terminal to the West End.

The regional playground could see land around the former Newcastle Railway Station redeveloped with a major playground attraction as well as a range of recreational features (a splash park for example). This proposal would reinvigorate the bus terminal, possibly to an area between Market and Angas Streets.

To ensure adequate car parking is provided for the anticipated increased activity in the area, Wharf Road could be realigned and additional car parking created.

Harbour Play City proposes revitalisation of Hunter Street by providing opportunities for mixed-use development along the eastern side of Hunter Street between Crown and Perkins Streets. This could provide some accommodation to support the University nearby, as well as retail and commercial space to generate economic stimulus for the city centre.

Additional access between the city centre and waterfront could be created at Perkera Street and Newcastle Street.

The former Newcastle railway station would be partially redeveloped to expand the opportunities for its reuse, creating potential for housing activity and enterprise. The heritage integrity of the Station would be fully respected. Refurbishment would open the Station up for access between Bolton Street and the waterfront.

This meets the Revitalising Newcastle objectives of 'Bringing People back to the City Centre, Connecting the City to its Waterfront, Helping Grow Jobs in the City Centre, Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport and Creating Economically Sustainable Public Domain and Community Assets.'

4 – HARBOUR ENTERTAINMENT CITY

Repurposing the Newcastle Railway Station to a half-way destination would be the feature of a Harbour Entertainment City. The Station would become the central piece of the city’s play and entertainment precinct, and would accommodate enterprises and activities that attract visitors and stimulate the economy. This also has the potential to become a significant southern destination. The community has expressed a willingness to support a heritage-oriented Hunter Valley production. Refurbishment would fully respect the heritage integrity of the Station.

The area around the Station could also become a dedicated entertainment hub that could be programmed for pop-up and permanent entertainment. It could be a thriving hub of arts and culture. Community feedback has suggested an area like this where activities ranging from giant games of chess and volleyball to movie, live music and concert could be hosted.

An enterprise adjacent to the station site is also a possibility.

Potential mixed-use development could be provided on the eastern side of Hunter Street between Perkins and Wolfe Streets to encourage further activity in the city centre.

This meets the Revitalising Newcastle objectives of 'Bringing People back to the City Centre, Connecting the City to its Waterfront, Helping Grow Jobs in the City Centre, Creating Great Places Linked to New Transport and Creating Economically Sustainable Public Domain and Community Assets.'
Potential Outcomes

Working with feedback from the community, business and industry, Newcastle City Council, city renewal experts, and Government agencies, UrbanGrowth NSW has identified three potential outcomes that could be delivered as a result of the revitalisation of the city centre.

CIVIC LINK

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TODAY

This area is the civic heart of Newcastle. It includes Civic Park, City Hall, Civic Theatre and Newcastle Museum. New investment in the area includes the $94 million future law courts and $95 million University of Newcastle New Space campus.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN HERE

- Create new open space and walking and cycle ways that link Newcastle’s civic buildings to the waterfront
- Open up views to the harbour from the civic area
- Create an enhanced civic destination, linked to the new light rail.

Figure 6: Civic Link before and after
HUNTER STREET ACTIVATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TODAY
Hunter Street features some of Newcastle’s best heritage buildings and offers a mix of shops, cafes, restaurants and other local businesses. Once Newcastle’s main street, Hunter Street has experienced a decline in recent years.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN HERE
- Reinstate Hunter Street as Newcastle’s ‘main street’ with light rail, shop front improvements and upgrades
- Maintain and celebrate heritage buildings along Hunter Street
- Create linkages from Hunter Street to the harbour
- Attract new investment and create jobs with a lively main street.

Figure 7: Hunter Street revitalisation before and after
ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TODAY
The heritage-listed Newcastle Station is a valued part of the city centre. The building and its surrounds could be adaptively reused for a community or commercial use.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN HERE
- Create spaces to play, relax and reconnect with the Harbour, with recreation activities for all ages and abilities
- Create a regional playspace – a regional tourist attraction and local asset close to transport, cafes and the water
- Adaptively reuse Newcastle Station as the precinct’s centrepiece, to ensure its heritage values are maintained and accommodate enterprises and activities to attract visitors and stimulate the economy
- Create a dedicated entertainment hub around Newcastle Station with pop-up and permanent entertainment.

Figure 6: Entertainment Precinct (Newcastle Station) before and after

Figure 9: Entertainment Precinct (regional playspace) before and after