

Case study: Smart, liveable and sustainable Newcastle

COUNCIL NAME

City of Newcastle

WEB ADDRESS

www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

SIZE

187 square kilometres

POPULATION

155,411

Overview

City of Newcastle's community strategic plan, Newcastle 2030, reflects the community's vision as a leading lifestyle city that is smart, liveable and sustainable. Incorporating the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Council's guiding principles include considering the long term and cumulative effects of actions on future generations and to consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development. These principles are embedded and reflected in Council's annual reporting framework and flow into strategic plans such as the 2020 Carbon and Water Management Action Plan, Smart City Strategy and the Newcastle Environmental Management Strategy along with many other plans and policies.

Background

The creation of the award winning 14-step ClimateCam Delivery framework formed the basis of our 2020 Carbon and Water Management Action Plan and guided our education and advocacy for climate mitigation with businesses, schools and the community. Focusing on continuous evaluation and improvement, in 2015 Newcastle became a United Nations City and the following year a delegation of the Lord Mayor, a Councillor and staff representative attended the Habitat III conference. This led to Council adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have been integrated into Council's 2018 Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Implementation

The SDGs are embedded into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and the Annual 'Our Budget' document to deliver coordinated and strategic sustainability action in a visible and accountable way. This provides a clear and consistent manner for the community to track Council's progress in delivering actions and meeting goals.

The development and delivery of clear, deliverable and practical actions in our environmental strategies and plans such as the Environmental Management Strategy and 2020 Carbon and Water Management Action Plan has provided Council with the strategic direction and framework to deliver important carbon reduction projects, programs and policies and maintain the confidence of the community that we are addressing their concerns with management of the environment and impacts from climate change.

Key to this framework is collaboration and partnerships and Council maintains strong connections with all levels of government, neighbouring councils, business, research, industry and the community to encourage active participation in environmental initiatives. In 2018/19 Council invested over \$20m in projects focused on improving the environment with a further \$36m committed in 2019/20.

Outcomes

Since January 2018 City of Newcastle has:

- Endorsed the Newcastle 2030 CSP, which states that Council has adopted the SDGs and New Urban Agenda as cornerstones for our planning' and continued to implement and drive awareness of the SDGs.

- Delivered over \$10m in smart city projects with a strong focus on energy and transport. Projects have included: internet of things sensors and predictive modelling from CSIRO to reduce air-conditioning loads on buildings; a network of skycameras to predict cloud impact on solar output; an E-transit hub with solar carpark, battery storage, 3 public electric vehicle EV charge stations and an e-bike rack; additional rooftop photovoltaics; replacement of Council fleet with electric vehicles and installation of over 150 smart poles.
- Undertaken a Council-wide street lighting upgrade to LED on residential roads, replacing over 5000 lights at a cost of \$3m. This project will save council over \$240,000 a year, reduce consumption by 1.3GWh and help Council achieve its 2020 carbon emission target.
- Designed and constructed a 5MW solar farm on an old landfill cell. The \$8.2m project will provide council over 7.5GWh of renewable energy, equivalent to over 60% of Council's total electricity usage, exceeding Council's 2020 carbon emission target.
- Continued improvement of Council's online utility monitoring system tracking electricity, gas and water usage and developed new dashboards to communicate and report on Council's 9 rooftop Solar PV systems.
- Planted over one thousand street trees and approximately 100,000 native plants.



Key Learnings

Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into strategic documents and plans is ensuring a focus on and awareness of Council's sustainability commitments to meet the community vision. Next steps in the ongoing sustainability journey will be to complete the integration of SDGs into the Annual Report, building our reporting framework to gather evidence on how we are delivering against the SDGs; deliver further key emission reduction projects such as the Organics processing facility and achieving 100% renewable electricity.

Contact

Name: Adam Clarke

Position: Program Coordinator - City Innovation and Sustainability

Phone: (02) 4974 2550

Email: aclarke@ncc.nsw.gov.au

This project was the 2019 winner of the Local Sustainability Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards