

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0 COMMUNITY PLAN (2006 - 2010) SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>3.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND STRATEGIES</b> .....	<b>13</b>
3.1 Issues .....	<b>13</b>
3.2 Planning Districts .....	<b>29</b>
3.3 Target Groups .....	<b>35</b>
<b>4.0 STRATEGIC PLAN</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>APPENDIX A LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>APPENDIX B LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>APPENDIX C GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>APPENDIX D LIST OF PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS</b> .....	<b>73</b>
<b>APPENDIX E LIST OF AGENCIES CONSULTED</b> .....	<b>77</b>
<b>APPENDIX F BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>83</b>
<b>MAP OF PLANNING DISTRICTS</b> .....	<b>97</b>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intent of the Community Plan is to provide a strategic overview of the key community trends and issues that the Newcastle community and Newcastle City Council will need to address to maximise the opportunities of being a sustainable city that people enjoy living in, and will want to live in. It also provides a framework for addressing these issues over a five year period.

Newcastle City Council has engaged in a rigorous consultation process (See Flowchart A page 5) to identify key issues. This document provides a succinct overview of all the trends, issues and strategies, summary of the key issues and strategies for each of the 28 discussion papers and a Strategic Plan for the next 5 years.

**The Community Plan (2006 – 2010) should be read in conjunction with the Community Plan Discussion Papers** which provide all of the detail behind each key issue. These discussion papers are a significant resource in understanding the issues and strategies that have been identified. These are available on <http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/go/communityplan> and at all Newcastle branch Libraries.

In accord with the Community Development Policy, the key roles identified for Newcastle City Council in the Community Plan include:

- Planner
- Capacity builder/facilitator
- Provider of services/facilities
- Advocate
- Partner

The Community Plan will primarily provide guidance to the community, community groups and organisations and the following areas of Council:

- Recreational Services and Planning
- Library and Cultural Services and Planning
- Human Services and Social Planning

The Community Plan is also relevant to areas such as Environmental Services and Planning, Economic Development and the Urban Planning functions of Council.

The Community Plan will 'live' over its five year lifespan. Its actions and implementation will be reviewed annually through ongoing community engagement processes to determine emerging priorities and new issues (See Flowchart B page 6). Priorities will be determined by the level of importance of an issue and the capacity of Council and the community to respond.



## 1.0 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 What is a Community Plan?

This Community Plan will provide strategic direction on addressing key community issues that affect adequate and equitable access to community services for the people of the Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA).

It will provide guidance to Council and other local service providers, as to social, cultural and recreational issues that should be addressed and how over the next five years.

The preparation of Community or Social Plans by Councils became a requirement by the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998. Newcastle City Council has prepared three five year Social Plans and one interim Social Plan over the past 18 years.

This document identifies:

- Key demographic trends impacting on the community
- Key broader community trends, policies and legislation influencing community change
- Key community issues
- Key strategies
- A five year action plan.

A glossary is at Appendix C (See page 71) to describe some of the terms used within this document that are specific to Council.

## 1.2 How will the Community Plan be used?

**The Community Plan will guide the activities of Newcastle City Council, community organisations and government departments.**

The Community Plan (2006 – 2010) is a city wide strategic planning document that is of particular relevance to the sections of Council that deliver social, cultural and recreational services. It sits beside Council's other city wide strategic plans which are the Newcastle Environment Management Plan (NEMP), the Newcastle Urban Strategy (NUS), and the Newcastle Economic Development Strategy (NEDS). It will influence the development of issue and area specific action plans, service plans and Council's annual Management Plan (See Flowchart C page 7). The Community Plan will also determine Council priorities for sponsorship and project funding.

The Community Plan Action Plan (page 45-65) provides a framework for delivering Council's Five Strategic Priorities. Community Plan strategies are grouped under these priorities as follows:

- ESD leadership
- City wide revitalisation
- Healthy lifestyle
- Compassionate community
- Effective and efficient governance.

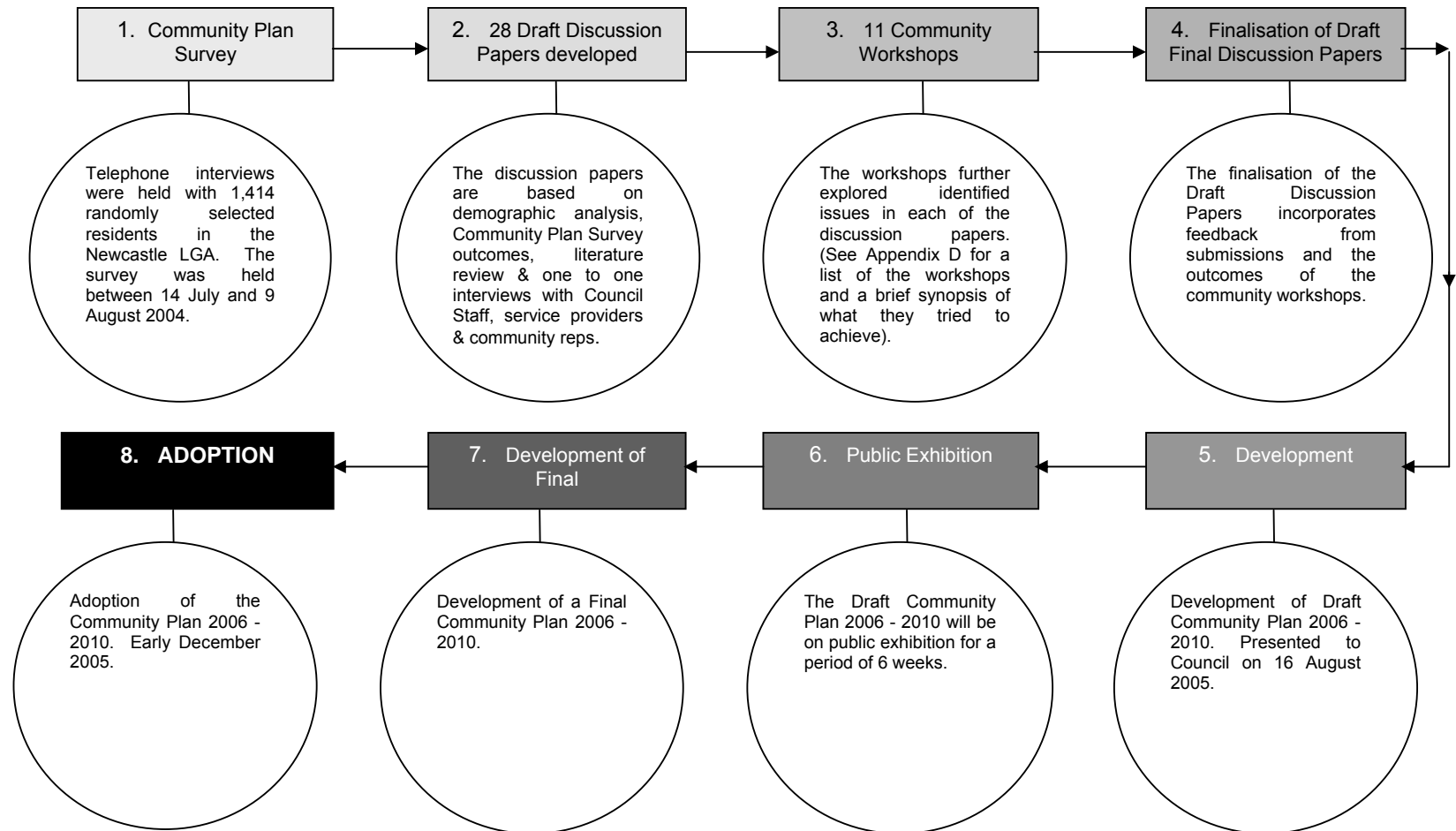
The Community Plan will also be used and implemented by external agencies to determine:

- Funding priorities for grants and sponsorship programs
- Service gaps and priorities
- Opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

The Community Plan provides information for a very wide audience ranging from the broad community and students, to volunteer community groups, community service providers, State and Federal agencies and Council Officers. Sections 1 and 2 are intended to briefly highlight information for the broader community. Section 3 briefly provides information on key issues and strategies, as identified in the 28 discussion papers, for community groups and service providers who will be involved in implementing the Plan. The five year action plan (Section 4) organises the key issues and strategies from Section 3 into a Framework under Council's Five Strategic Objectives and identifies potential action stakeholders. The background discussion papers provide the detailed analysis that is behind the Community Plan and are freely available for use by all members of the community (see page 1).

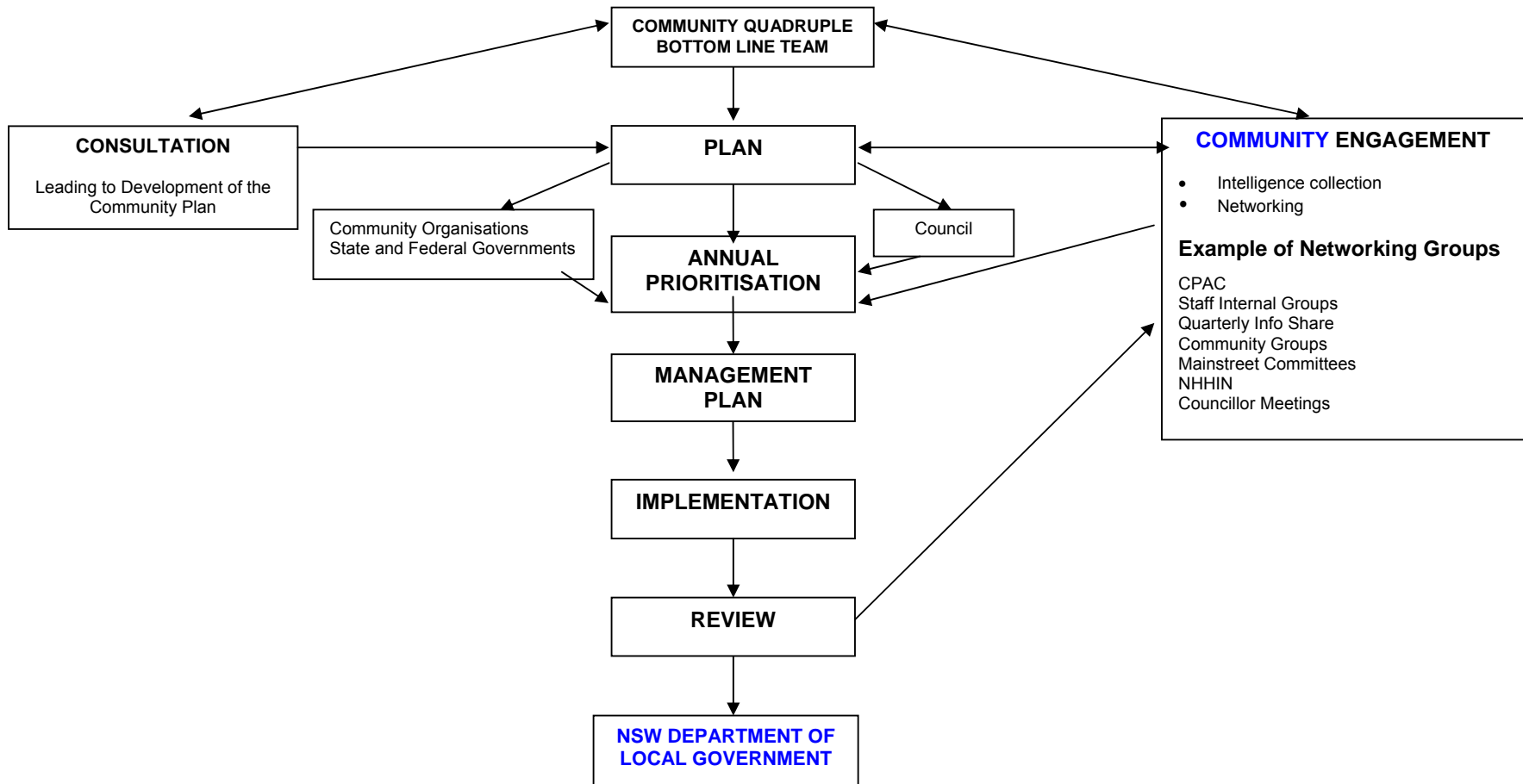
From the Community Plan, priority strategies will be identified and reviewed annually by Council's Community Quadruple Bottom Line Team (responsible for facilitating integrated service planning and delivery across the social, cultural and recreational arms of Council) on advice received from the Community Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC - comprising community representatives, Councillors and Council staff), the Strategic Policy Committee and other relevant internal and external networks. Council also looks to collaboratively address regional issues when opportunities arise.

### 1.3 Flowchart A – Process used to develop the Community Plan

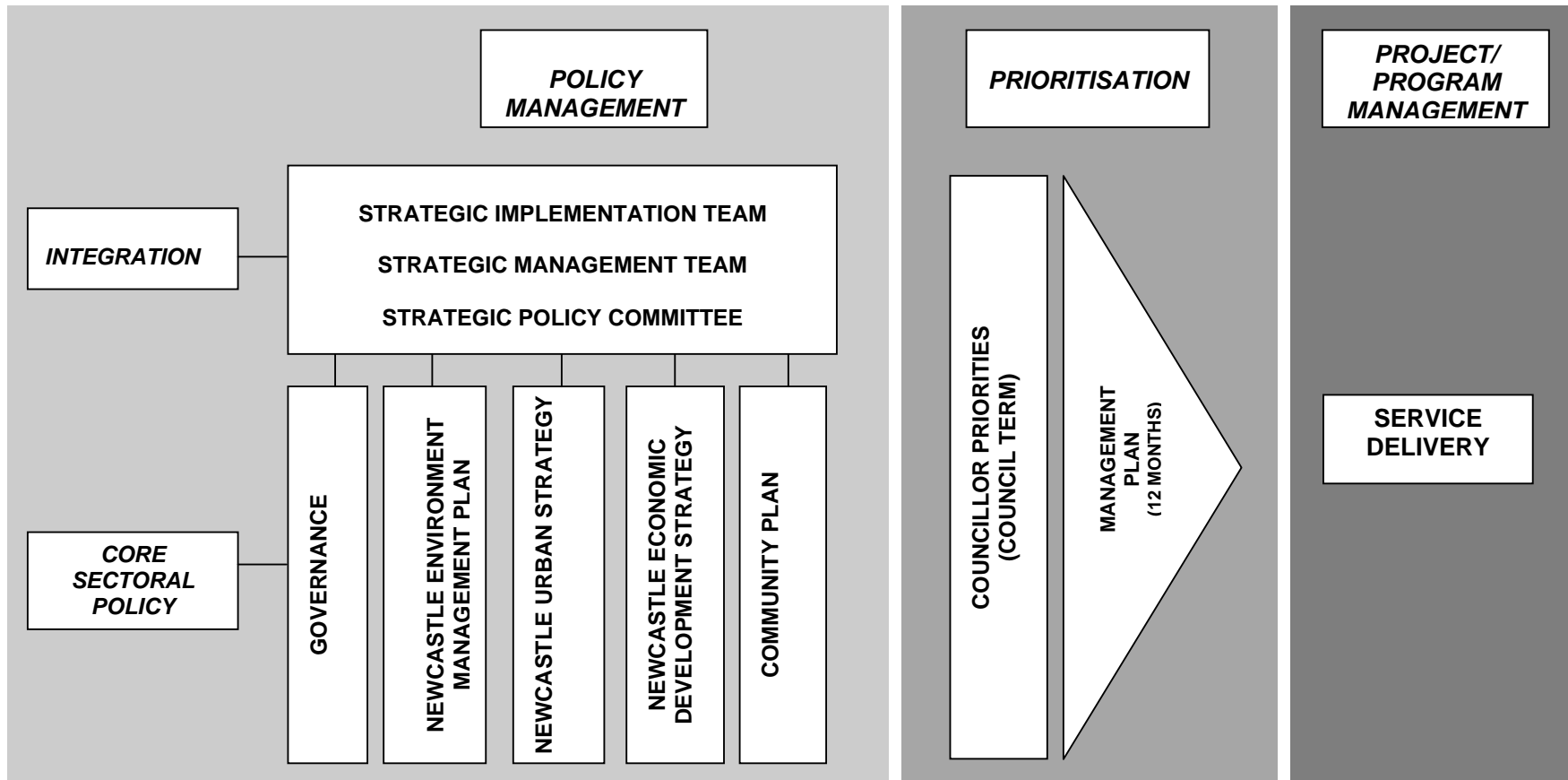


## 1.4 Flowchart B - Process of Implementation

It is intended that the Community Plan will inform Council's Annual Management Plan. Priorities will be reviewed through an ongoing process of community engagement throughout the lifespan of the document.



### 1.5 Flowchart C – From Policy to Action



## 1.6 Key achievements from the Social Plan 2000-2005

The previous Social Plan primarily focused on Council's role in supporting external services and agencies to meet identified needs. Over 95% of the current Social Plan (2000 – 2005) strategies have been actioned. Some key outcomes include:

- Establishment and support for the Newcastle Homelessness Interagency Network which is providing an integrated planning and service response to homelessness in Newcastle. It has also been able to effectively promote housing needs in Newcastle and been able to attract more funds to the area.
- Completion of the Affordable Housing Strategy, Development of a Volunteer Protocol for Council, Updating of the Sustainable Community Indicators.
- Place making and place management initiatives in Mayfield which have succeeded in regenerating the Mainstreet, celebrating the heritage of the area, and brought the business and community sector together to achieve joint outcomes for Mayfield.
- Preparation and implementation of Crime Prevention Plans which have focused on the Inner City and Mayfield. These plans have instigated initiatives such as Nightlink Late Night Transport Service and the Street Party Program.
- Greater capacity of the Woodberry/Beresfield/Tarro area to attract funding due to increased focus on the need for coordinated service planning and community identity.
- Implementation of the Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People which includes the endorsement of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, the ongoing support of the Guraki Committee, the completion of the Aboriginal Heritage Study and the permanent flying of the Aboriginal flag on City Hall.
- Several submissions have been made to various State Government inquiries detailing public transport issues in the Lower Hunter.
- Review and implementation of Councils Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS) and establishment of a Lord Mayoral Working Group on skilled migration.
- Convened the third Australian Learning Community Network National Conference in Newcastle.
- A Community Forum established at Beresfield and "Schools as Communities" project established at Woodberry.
- Annual Youth Forums were convened and several funding applications for youth related projects were successful.

## 2.0 COMMUNITY PLAN (2006 – 2010) SUMMARY

The next four pages summarise the findings of the Community Plan. They provide a picture of Newcastle but not the story. For more details readers are encouraged to read Section 3 and the relevant discussion papers.

### 2.1 Key Demographic Trends

This section highlights the key influences and changes which will affect the lifestyle of the Newcastle community in the short to medium term. It identifies key areas that Council and other agencies will need to address in the next five years. The discussion papers are a significant resource when reading the Community Plan and provide additional background information. These are available at all Newcastle Branch Libraries and at <http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/go/communityplan>.

Key demographic trends for Newcastle and the Lower Hunter are:

- It is anticipated that there will be regional population growth through migration from other parts of Australia. The Lower Hunter as a whole and in particular, Inner Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Port Stephens are expected to experience higher growth rates over the next 30 years.
- Our population is ageing, however, most Seniors will be 'active aged'. Over the next 30 years it is anticipated that Newcastle and Lake Macquarie will have the highest numbers of Seniors. However, the other Lower Hunter Councils will have higher proportions of Seniors within their populations.
- The proportion of smaller household types will increase due to the rise of single parent families, couples without children (including empty nesters) and people living alone.
- The average individual income in the Newcastle LGA will increase due a significant increase in the numbers of high income earners, a 'shuffle' upwards in the lower income brackets and the benefits of superannuation starting to be seen in retiree incomes. However, it is anticipated that the average income will remain lower than the State's average income and will be similar to the Lower Hunter average.
- There is likely to be increasing disparity between the haves and have-nots. People on low to moderate incomes are moving to less expensive suburbs of the Newcastle LGA or out of the Newcastle LGA altogether because of housing affordability reasons.
- Newcastle will continue to have a relatively high proportion of people on Centrelink payments largely due to the proportion of Seniors who were low income earners for most of their working lives.
- The total working age population is expected to increase for all Lower Hunter Local Government Areas, except Lake Macquarie.

**For further information on demographic trends, contact the Social Planning team on (02) 4974 2000.**

## 2.2 Key Social / Economic Trends

**These key social and economic trends have been identified from the background discussion papers which are a significant resource when reading the Community Plan and provide additional background information. These are available at all Newcastle Branch Libraries and at <http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/go/communityplan>.**

The key social and economic trends that are expected to have a major impact on Newcastle over the next 5 years are:

- There will be more mobility of people within Newcastle and people coming into and out of Newcastle.
- People will be increasingly time poor, resulting in less time for organised recreation and community activities.
- There will continue to be a rise in the proportion of casual jobs within the workforce.
- The Newcastle LGA will continue to be the main source of jobs for the Lower Hunter, however, other employment centres will continue to emerge and grow in the region.
- There will be a greater reliance by people on home entertainment.
- People will expect more, including higher service standards and demands when they go out - 'a total experience'.
- There will be fewer people volunteering.
- Virtual communities (chat rooms, internet, emails etc) will become increasingly common and important.
- Community services will be under pressure to move to the edges of Newcastle or outside the LGA due to affordability issues in the city centre and commercial areas.
- Current government policy and programs could lead to increasing intolerance of diversity and difference within community groups.
- There will be increasing reliance on the justice system and other external agencies to resolve conflict.
- There will be increasing costs of maintaining community assets and limited capacity by both Council and the community sector for the development of new community infrastructure.
- There will be heavy community reliance on credit.

## 2.3 Common Key Issues

These key issues have arisen out of the consultation process for the Community Plan as being common issues across target groups, particular planning districts and within the broader issue based areas. All of these key issues are identified in the background discussion papers where additional information is provided. A brief overview for each target group, issue and planning district is noted on pages 13 - 44.

The common key issues are:

- Reduced affordability – for individuals and community organisations.
- Social isolation related to mobility issues.
- Community acceptance of diversity and difference.
- Relatively rapid and constant change, brought about by the impacts of technology and also demographics and workforce shifts.
- Insufficient access to community services, particularly in the areas of mental health, respite care, flexible childcare, community aged care packages, transport, learning, Aboriginal health, parenting support, bulk billing GPs, services for men and domestic violence.
- Changing local demands for recreational, cultural and community service types and service levels will have an impact on the role of Council (and other service providers) in providing and managing facilities.
- Unless new funding sources are identified, funding currently available for recreational, cultural and community services will *at best* remain stable.

## 2.4 Common Key Strategies

In response to the identified key issues, there are common key strategies within the Community Plan that are applicable across target groups, issues and planning districts. All of these key strategies are identified in the background discussion papers where additional information is provided and a brief overview for each target group, issue and planning district is noted on pages 13 - 44 of this document.

Common key strategies across the Community Plan are:

- Develop an integrated service delivery model approach (see glossary) to identify what facilities should be provided by Council.
- Provide multi-purpose facilities able to meet the needs of different groups and different activities.
- Promote and increase the opportunities for people to obtain information, enhance their local networks and connect with each other.
- Support the work of volunteers and encourage more people to volunteer.
- Promote acceptance of diversity and difference.
- Advocate for services the community will need now and in the future.
- Coordinate programs to encourage greater shared use of open space and community facilities.
- Encourage and support actions that help the local workforce and employers to respond to changes within the population, technology and the workforce.