

MEDIA RELEASE

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Quality of Life report shows mixed results

A new study released by Newcastle City Council and the Australia Institute paints a mixed picture on the quality of life in Newcastle.

The Sustainable Community Indicators Report uses a set of 14 characteristics to measure quality of life and provide a guide map to preserving and improving quality of life in Newcastle.

The indicator series will help measure Newcastle's progress toward becoming a sustainable community. The indicators include unemployment levels, housing availability, cleanliness of beaches, air pollution and the quality of community spaces. The characteristics were evaluated using existing data to provide a picture of Newcastle's performance.

The Newcastle report shows that Newcastle is becoming a more sustainable community in terms of unemployment, adult education enrolments and cleanliness of beaches.

However, the report shows declining sustainability in the areas of public transport, availability of appropriate housing, resource consumption and cleanliness of streets and commercial areas.

Lord Mayor JOHN TATE says the ongoing indicators project will help Council make better decisions for the future.

"You don't plan a journey without having some idea of where you are going and where you are. This project provides us with a snapshot of where we are so we can plan our journey to a sustainable future."

Dr Clive Hamilton of The Australia Institute says the study builds on the Institute's Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) which expands the range of measures designed to track community progress from the more narrowly focused traditional economic indicators, notably GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

"The GPI reveals that when factors like unemployment, crime, traffic congestion and air pollution are included, national prosperity in the broadest sense, has been static or declining since the 1970s."

"As long as decision makers are fixated on GDP they will lose sight of the things that really affect the quality of life of Australians."

The project is part of Newcastle City Council's commitment to developing a sustainable community, which recognises the need to balance social, economic and environmental factors to enhance quality of life for today's generation and for the future.

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