

SMART CITIES NEWCASTLE, AUSTRALIA



It takes a strong city to reinvent itself. When the recession forced Newcastle's steel, coal, and copper industries to downsize or close, the city took a creative approach to the problem. Novocastrians (as Newcastle, Australia, residents are known) channeled their artistic energies by developing

Renew Newcastle and Newcastle Now, organizations that take run-down spaces and lend them as pop-ups for makers such as milliners, writers, painters, and furniture designers. By showcasing its craftsmanship, Newcastle has positioned itself as a regional hub of innovation.

Located a hundred miles north of Sydney, Newcastle is Australia's seventh largest city. The revitalization has colored the city with the cultural vibe of Melbourne and Sydney, but with a fraction of their population. "Newcastle has this

sense of discovery about it," says local Rachel Svenson. "There are lots of places to discover just by wandering."

With golden beaches, smart galleries, and organic eateries, Newcastle is drawing both residents and tourists back to the city's center.

—Carrie Miller

Soak up the sun in the Merewether Ocean Baths in Newcastle.



Eat!

ORGANIC? CHECK. LOCAL? CHECK.

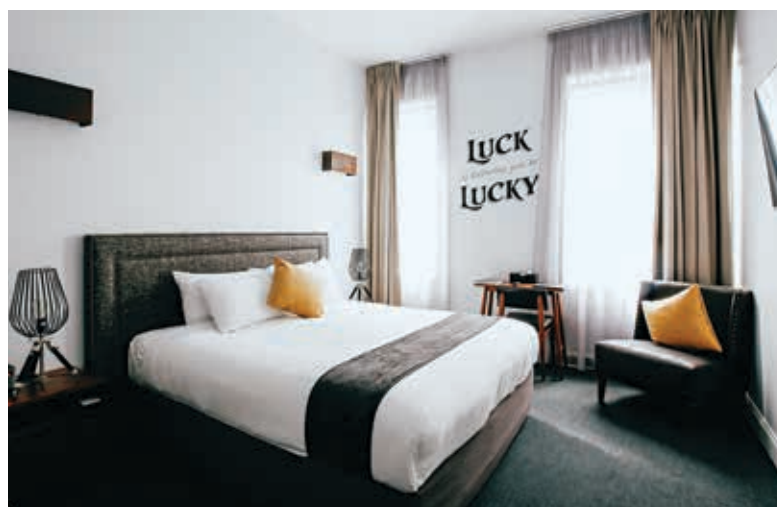
Newcastle's restaurants and cafés reflect Novocastrians' active lifestyles, broad tastes, and laid-back attitudes. The popular **Blue Door** café, located in the historic Fred Ash building, prides itself on "simple food, done well," like spiced butternut pumpkin and ricotta fritters and fried buttermilk chicken burgers. Located in a restored warehouse with timber floors and art deco details, the **Grain Store Craft Beer Café** pairs Australian craft beers with new takes on old favorites: battered barra-mundi, crab burgers, and slow-cooked brisket subs. For those who prefer surf over turf, the waterfront **Merewether Surfhouse** cooks up seafood dishes like yellow fin confit and flathead fillets.



Stay!

LIVE LIKE THE NOVOCASTRIANS

For a beach stay, the **Caves Beachside Hotel** offers an oceanfront collection of suites, villas, and townhouses. **Terraces for Tourists** are designed to help visitors live like locals, with fully furnished apartments and houses set in the historic East End of town, an easy walk from Newcastle's city center. Nestled in the central business district, **the Lucky Hotel** is quirky and affordable, with on-site entertainment like courtyard movie screenings, live music, and poker nights.



From top left: shopping selection at Willows Home Traders, eclectic decor at the Lucky Hotel, and breakfast at the Blue Door café



Play!

BEACHES, BIKES, AND BRIMMING COCKTAILS

With Newcastle's generally sunny weather and long stretches of beaches, residents don't shy away from outdoor activities. The **Bathers Way Coastal Walk** is a three-mile historical and scenic hike, leading from Nobbys Headland past heritage sites that make up Newcastle's history. Or stop by one of **Interbike's** 24-hour, swipe-and-ride bike share terminals, and pedal out to the **Merewether Ocean Baths**, the largest open-air ocean baths, or public pools filled with seawater, in the Southern Hemisphere. Wrap up the day with kayaking or a cocktail in the revived industrial **Honeysuckle area**, now a harborside hot spot of restaurants, bars, and public spaces.

Shop!

PARADISE FOR ETSY ENTHUSIASTS

The Emporium is Renew Newcastle's revamp of a former department store building, packed with distinctive shops like Jodie Louise Millinery, CCY Studio's handmade leather goods, and With Love Bree-Lacey's vintage-inspired clothing. **Darby Street** features more than a hundred independently owned businesses and boutiques, like Cooks Hill Books & Records and fashion destination Abicus, and is also stocked with plenty of eateries to help you fuel up for more shopping. Keep an eye out for Sunday markets at the **Newcastle Showground**, such as the Newcastle Farmers Market and Makers Market, where you can find everything from quilts to produce.

ELISE HASSEY (ALL PHOTOS)