

CLAUSE 1A – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

FILE: R2-13

ATTACHMENT: YES (PAGE 15)

AUTHOR: *Special Projects Officer, Angela Shepherd*

Background

Council has resolved to prepare a Special Rate Variation (SRV) application for 2013/14. What this application will look like will depend on community consultations and Council will make their final decision in late November 2012. In order to effectively engage with the community, Council must have a Community Engagement Strategy in place.

The Strategy aims to outline the methods of engagement, how information will be made available to the community and how the community can input into the process. This paper seeks Council's adoption of the draft Community Engagement Strategy for the 2012 Special Rate Variation application process.

The engagement strategy aims to consult, inform and involve the Cobar community to determine service levels required by the community, to determine their priorities given the option for a special rate variation and their preferences for a SRV.

Issues

It is important that the Cobar community understands why a SRV application is being made, how they can input their priorities and preferences and what a SRV means for them. A series of community meetings across the Shire are proposed, as well as targeted meetings with the mining industry. It is proposed that a series of Fact Sheets be developed as background information and that a survey is developed to allow the community to input into the prioritisation of Council's services.

There are a number of key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

- Cobar ratepayers– their preferences and priorities are critical in informing debate and the final outcome of any application. The ratepayers need to be kept informed and have access to information so they can confidently input into the process.
- Councillors – make the final decision on what the SRV application will look like – the quantum, the distribution of funds and how the burden is spread across rating categories. This decision is based on what the community has said. Councillors need to be involved in the community consultation process.
- IPART – makes the final determination, based on the application provided. IPART staff prepare the information Council provides for the IPART Board to make the decision.
- Council staff – prepare the preliminary and background information, organise the community consultation, answer questions and provide information to the public as needed and as per the Community Engagement Strategy, and prepare the application, based on Council's decision.

The data and information collected during the community forums will be collated and used for discussion at the final focus group meeting in late November 2012. This group will refine the position that will go to Council for the November Council meeting. At this time, Council will determine the type of application (if any) that Cobar Shire will make to IPART in early 2013.

Financial Implications

There is no specific budget allocation for a SRV application, however the proposed Community Engagement Strategy can be undertaken within current budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the attached Community Engagement Strategy for the 2012 Special Rate Variation application process.

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MOTION: That Council takes no further action Community Engagement Strategy for the 2012 Special Rate Variation application process.

Clr Yench/

LAPSED

The motion LAPSED for the want of a SECONDER.

256.10.2012 RESOLVED: That Council adopts the attached Community Engagement Strategy for the 2012 Special Rate Variation application process

Clr Kings/Clr Marsden

CARRIED

Councillor Yench requested a division.

For

Clr Brady

Clr Harrison

Clr Kings

Clr Marsden

Clr Maxwell

Clr Smith

Clr Wilson

Against

Clr Yench
