

PART B
ITEM 7.1

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

PHASE ONE

MAY TO DECEMBER 2013

Community Engagement Program – Phase One
Special Rate Variation Application

PART B
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Phase One – May to December 2013	Timeframe	Comment
Community Satisfaction Survey 2013	May/June 2013	Independent phone survey of 400 adult householders
Media Release (Mayor) [18094/2013]	28 July 2013	“Residents provided with opportunity to Have Your Say on council services”
Media Coverage [19216/2013]	8 August 2013	Guardian News newspaper – news item “Nambucca: It’s all about the roads”
Media Release (General Manager) [26155/2013]	18 October 2013	“Nambucca Council invites the community to have their say on a proposed rate increase”
Media Coverage [26815/2013]	24 October 2013	Guardian News newspaper – news item “Council to test community’s appetite to fix things”
Public Notice [26821/2013]	22 October 2013	“Nambucca Council invites the community to have their say on a proposed rate increase”
Public Notice [26900/2013]	25 October 2013	Copy emailed to Tourism Association, Macksville & Nambucca Libraries and Bowraville, Macksville & Nambucca Chambers of Commerce
Public Notice [27314/2013]	31 October 2013	Copy emailed to all staff
Council Website [27316/2013]	31 October 2013	Details of community engagement strategy and impact on ratepayers accessible on website (Front page)
Media Coverage [27325/2013]	31 October 2013	Guardian News newspaper – news item “Have your say on rate rise”
Media Coverage [27325/2013]	31 October 2013	Guardian News newspaper – Council Public Notice 22 Oct 2013
Public Forum [28177/2013]	4 November 2013	Venue – Nambucca Heads Attendance – Council #7 Bellingen Shire Council #1 and Community Nil
Media Coverage [28045/2013]	6 November 2013	Midcoast Observer newspaper – news item “Nambucca Council asks permission for rate increase”
Media Coverage [28222/2013]	7 November 2013	Guardian News newspaper – Council Public Notice 22 Oct 2013
Council Website	7 November 2013	Copy of Public Forum PowerPoint presentation accessible on website

Community Notice [28232/2013]	7 November 2013	Email sent to Scotts Head PC Onliners (approximately 40 on distribution list)
Public Forum [28429/2013]	7 November 2013	Venue – Scotts Head Attendance – Council #5 and Community #8
Public Forum [28834/2013]	11 November 2013	Venue – Bowraville Attendance – Council #6 and Community #4
Community Flyer [32475/2013]	11 November 2013	Valla Beach Community Association hand delivered flyer to 980 homes in the Valla area
Public Forum [29044/2013]	14 November 2013	Venue – Macksville Attendance – Council #6 and Community #3 (including the President of the Macksville Chamber of Commerce)
Public Forum [29396/2013]	18 November 2013	Venue – Valla Beach Attendance – Council #6 and Community #16
Council Website [31821/2013]	12 December 2013	Copy of Council Meeting Report 11 December 2013 accessible on website
Media Release (General Manager) [31945/2013]	13 December 2013	“Council to consult on proposed rate increase”
Media Coverage [32415/2013]	18 December 2013	Midcoast Observer newspaper – news item “Public to get say on hike in rates”
Media Coverage [32534/2013]	19 December 2013	Nambucca Guardian newspaper – news item “Rate increase on the table”

The community engagement activities resulted in:

- 400 householders polled in an independent Community Satisfaction Survey
- 3 media releases
- 6 newspaper stories
- 2 newspaper public notices
- Email to council staff
- Email to Tourist Association (1), Libraries (2) and Chambers of Commerce (3)
- 139 page views on the Special Rate Variation section on Council’s website (1 October – 31 December)
- A letter box drop of Community Flyer to 980 residences in the Valla/Valla Beach areas
- Community email distributed to 40 addresses
- 5 public forums held
- 31 residents attended public forums
- PowerPoint presentation developed for community forums and website
- Several radio interviews conducted by Mayor and General Manager
- 5 submissions received (1 in support and 4 objections)

MEDIA RELEASE

NAMBUCCA SHIRE COUNCIL

RESIDENTS PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITY TO 'HAVE YOUR SAY' ON COUNCIL SERVICES

The result of the 2013 Community Satisfaction Survey has shown that improving road infrastructure is still the highest priority of our residents.

The telephone survey, carried out by Jetty Research, randomly surveyed 400 adult householders and covered a wide age and geographic range. The survey asked residents which services and facilities they valued and how satisfied they were with the levels of service Council is currently delivering.

Mayor Rhonda Hoban acknowledged that "beaches in the Nambucca Shire are popular among off-road enthusiasts and recreational users with 4WD vehicles being used to gain access to specific beach locations. The survey therefore sought community views on the level of 4WD vehicular access and compliance monitoring by the Council."

Of the 27 council services and facilities measured, 16 (59%) had a mean satisfaction score of three or above. The top-ranked services included water supply and sewage collection and treatment (each with a satisfaction rating of 4.27 out of a possible 5), libraries (4.22), the Council pool at Macksville (4.16) and garbage/recyclables (4.07).

In contrast 11 services (41%) had a mean score of below "par". These included sealed and unsealed roads (which each had a satisfaction rating of 2.41), climate change planning (2.42), economic development (2.49) and youth activities and services (2.52).

In terms of importance, water supply had the highest mean rating at 4.79, followed by sewage collection/treatment (4.69), sealed roads (4.68), beaches (4.60) and garbage/recyclables (4.59).

45% of respondents had visited Council's administration centre during the previous six months, with the largest proportion of these (48%) choosing to pay their rates in person. Of those visiting the centre, 84% were satisfied with the service they received.

Satisfaction with frontline service levels was generally high. However there was some dissatisfaction with responses to written communication which in turn resulted in lower overall satisfaction scores. "Better customer service has been identified as a priority for council with an improvement plan currently being developed. The new Organisation Structure adopted by Council in 2012 also incorporated the establishment of a Customer and Business Services Unit," said Mayor Hoban.

When asked how they would like to see a hypothetical \$5 million general use grant spent, the largest proportion of respondents (57%) chose road improvements.

55% of respondents believed Council should allow four wheel drive access to selected Council beaches. However there was also solid support for further monitoring of 4WDs on beaches, presumably to enforce the permit system and ensure 4WDs are only accessing the designated areas.

There is also evidence of a significant shift away from "lowest rates" and towards "best roads" which suggests that ratepayers are increasingly prepared to support a special rate variation specifically targeted towards improving road infrastructure.

Mayor Hoban said that "the NSW Government Local Government Infrastructure Audit report (June 2013) confirmed that there is a large local government infrastructure backlog in NSW and councils face a real and significant challenge in terms of maintaining and renewing the infrastructure that is critical to our communities. It was therefore encouraging to see a level of support for a further special rate variation."

The findings from the latest community survey are being shared with our community by posting the survey results on the Council's web site.

**MICHAEL COULTER
GENERAL MANAGER**

28 JULY 2013

MEDIA RELEASE

NAMBUCCA SHIRE COUNCIL

Nambucca Council invites the community to have their say on a proposed rate increase

Nambucca Shire Council resolved in September to seek community feedback on a proposal to apply for a Special Rate Variation for 2014/15.

Like many councils in New South Wales, Council is facing real and significant challenges to increase spending on the maintenance of its infrastructure and to reduce the infrastructure backlog. The infrastructure backlog in NSW as at 30 June 2012 was estimated to be \$7.4 billion with roads and related assets totalling \$4.5 billion.

The Mid North Coast region had the second largest total reported backlog of \$738 million or \$3,000 per capita. Nambucca Shire's backlog therefore equates to \$58 million.

General Manager, Michael Coulter said "the financial sustainability of local government is a key driver for the future. Council has therefore identified two special rate variation options specifically targeted towards improving road and bridge infrastructure."

The options are to increase the ordinary rates by a one-off 6% in 2014/15 or to increase the ordinary rates by 6% in both the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years. The yearly percentage increases are inclusive of a projected rate peg limit of 3%.

The cumulative impact of the multiple two year option would result in the average Farmland rate increasing by \$326 (18.7%), average Residential rate increasing by \$114 (12.6%) and the average Business rate increasing by \$216 (15.2%).

The extra 3% variation would enable council to directly invest an additional \$275,000 in 2014/15 on asset renewal and \$580,000 annually from 2015/16. Alternatively the extra rate income could finance new loan borrowings of around \$4 million.

General Manager, Michael Coulter said that "the 'do nothing' option and leave next year's increase to the estimated rate pegging amount of 3% would also be put to the community. However this option does not address Council's long term financial sustainability."

The 2013 Community Satisfaction Survey highlighted that roads and bridges required the greatest attention and resources. "The survey also indicated that an increasing number of ratepayers were prepared to pay more to fix the problem," Mr Coulter said.

It is vital that the community have an opportunity to express their views and therefore a number of public forums will be held in November. Further details will be provided through the media and information will be available on the Council's website. The community will also be able to make submissions up to the end of November.

A decision to proceed with an application will be made by Council at its meeting to be held on 11 December 2013. There will then be further consultation with all ratepayers in relation to the preferred rating option.

**MICHAEL COULTER
GENERAL MANAGER**

DATE 18 October 2013

PUBLIC NOTICE

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It is vital that the community have an opportunity to express their views and therefore the following public forums will be held in November.

Monday 4 November	Nambucca Heads Entertainment Centre	Commencing 7.30pm
Thursday 7 November	Scotts Head Surf Life Saving Club	Commencing 7.30pm
Monday 11 November	Bowraville Grants Hall	Commencing 7.30pm
Thursday 14 November	Macksville Council Chambers	Commencing 7.30pm
Monday 18 November	Valla Beach Community Hall	Commencing 7.30pm

Further information is available on the Council's website and the community will also be able to make submissions up to 4.00pm on Friday 29 November 2013.

A decision to proceed with an application will be made by Council at its meeting to be held on 11 December 2013. There will then be further consultation with all ratepayers in relation to the preferred rating option.

**MICHAEL COULTER
GENERAL MANAGER**

DATE 22 October 2013

Insert Week 28 October
Insert Week 4 November