



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

For

DELIVERY PLAN

OPERATIONAL PLAN

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION PROPOSAL

Introduction

Guyra Shire Council recently completed a review of the Guyra Shire Council Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2011. A new term of Councillors worked with the community to review the document, resulting in a CSP for 2013-2023. This will help Council, the community and local businesses to better understand what the Guyra Shire Council Local Government Area may look like in 10 years time.

The CSP document contains a comprehensive list of community goals and aspirations. Now that these items have been identified, it is Council's challenge to consider how to prioritise these goals and aspirations while remaining financially sustainable.

As every item in the CSP document cannot be delivered within Council's existing budget, a proposed Special Rate Variation is being considered. Naturally, this will require extended information exchange and consultation with the community. The process will provide the Guyra Shire community, including residents, ratepayers, workers, businesses and agencies, an opportunity to be involved and contribute to the Council's future.

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines Council's intentions for involving the community in a proposed Special Rate Variation.

Why is this Necessary?

In October 2009, the *Local Government Act 1993* was amended to include requirements related to the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) reforms replaced the former Management Plan and Social Plan with an integrated framework, which includes a new requirement to prepare a long term CSP. The CSP and the IPR suite of documents need to be reviewed with every new term of Council.



What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is about involving the community in the decision making processes for the development of long term objectives and strategies that impact the community. Community engagement covers a broad range of activities and can take many forms.

The Division of Local Governments Planning and Reporting manual identifies and defines various levels of community engagement. These are:

- **Inform:** One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.
- **Consult:** Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
- **Involve:** Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.
- **Collaborate:** Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.
- **Empower:** To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

The Planning and Reporting manual also directs that councils should aim to achieve to at least the '**Involve**' level and preferably reach the '**Collaborate**' level with structures established for ongoing engagement.

The following are tactical methods which Council is considering, however are not limited by (but will need to be practicable for the limited timeframe):

Inform

Factsheets

Webpages

Flyer

Emails

Staff Networks

Local Committees

Exhibitions

Community notice board

Newsletters

Target stakeholder letters

Street signs and window displays

Consult

Public submissions
Suggestion boxes
Focus groups/workshops/public meetings
Surveys
Face-to-face
Letterbox drop

Involve

Open meetings
Forums
Online discussion boards

Collaborate

Public participation
Networks and community group coordination
Partnerships
Delegated decisions through Committees and groups

Empower

Involve community in final decision making
Use the community's ideas and solutions

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as someone who may be affected by or have a specific interest in the decision or issue under consideration. It is important to develop a consistent approach to ensure equitable inclusion of all potential stakeholders who reflect the demographics of the community. Not only will this ensure a credible process and equitable representation, but the approach will help to develop community trust in the process.

Who are our Stakeholders?

- Councillors
- Businesses
- Community Groups
- Cultural Groups
- Council Employees
- Environmental Groups
- Individual residents
- State and Federal Government
- Sport and Recreation Groups
- Non-government Agencies and Organisations

Within Attachment 1 is a matrix of identified stakeholders and engagement strategies to be considered.

IPART Timeframe Requirements

Date	Outcome
13 December 2013	Special Rate Variation Notifications Due.
24 February 2014	Special Rate Variation Applications Due.
24 March 2014	Minimum Rate Variation Applications Due.
Mid June 2014	Decisions Announced for Special Variations and Minimum Rates.

Guyra Timeframes

17 th October	Initial Meeting with JRA.
28 th October	Council to consider rate variation report in preparation to inform IPART of Council's Intention.
29 th October	SRV Briefing GSC (KL, PS, MA, HS, DC, JM).
4 th November	Asset and Finance information to JRA in preparation for Councillor Briefing.
6 th November	Councillor and Executive Staff SRV briefing by Jeff Roorda from JRA.
8 th November	Keith Lockyer Meeting with IPART
18 th November	Councillor Briefing Session to discuss IPART recommendations and Community Engagement strategy key dates.
13 th December	Special Rate Variation Intention Notification due at IPART.
20 th January 2014	Council meeting to resolve to publically exhibit and seek submissions on Delivery Plan, Operational Plan.
24 th February 2014	Special Rate Variation due at IPART.

Community Engagement Activities

The following table details the activities that will take place throughout Guyra Shire Council's Community Engagement phase.

Level of Engagement	Method	Location	Targeted Stakeholders	Dates / Venues	Responsibility	Cost
Inform	Line managers and supervisors meeting with senior management	CAB, Depot , Kolora, Preschool	Managers and Supervisors	October / November 2013 Depot BBQ, 29 Oct Manex, 13 Nov Consultative, Nov HSR Meeting, 21 Nov	Senior Management Peter Stewart, Keith Lockyer	Complete
Consult	Run workshops for the elected Council to discuss rating scenarios, service levels, etc.	Council Chambers	Councillors	6 November 2013	JRA	Complete
Inform Consult Involve Collaborate	Develop Special Rate Variation Portal on the www.myguyra.com website.		Public	Online	Heather Sills	Complete
Inform	Letter to all ratepayers advising of proposal for rate variation and ways they can contribute to the process	All GSC LGA postcodes	Ratepayers	November 2013	Heather Sills John Mc	Complete.
Inform	Provide information to the Business Breakfast	Rafters Restaurant	Business owners and managers	19 November 2013	Mayor and General Manager	Attended Breakfast & Discussed.
Inform	Staff meetings and notices in the staff newsletter	Depot and Council Chambers	Staff	20 November	Heather Sills John Mc	Complete
Inform	Briefing for media & distribution of media releases	Mayor's Office	Media	26 November	General Manager, Mayor	Complete
Inform	Briefing meeting with Adam Marshall MP (State) Barnaby Joyce (Federal) Sen John Williams (Federal)	Guyra, Armidale, Tamworth, Inverell	State & Federal MP	Meeting request to be sent 18 November 2013	Executive Assistant	Invited stakeholders to meeting 18 th Dec

Involve	Community Consultation meetings		Community members	Tingha 25 November Ebor 4 December	Senior Managers, Council Committee Members and Councillors	Complete
Collaborate	Present to the following Council Committees – Sports Council HACC Healthy Highlanders Steering Guyra MPS Lamb and Potato Festival	Council Meeting Rooms		27 November 12 December 6 December	Senior Managers and Council Committee Members: Cr Heagney Cr McArdle Cr Hietbrink	Complete
Inform	Information for collection at Council's Customer Service Centre	CAB		November – January	Heather Sills John Mc	Complete
Inform	Two week static display at Council CAB / Library. Also possible to move displays to community events.	Library CAB	Community members	December / January 2014	Heather Sills John Mc	Dashboards finalised display to be complete 13/12 Complete
Inform	Discuss with representatives of the following groups: Guyra Lions Guyra Rotary Sporting Clubs TCAI Ben Lomond Landcare Ebor Progress Association Church Groups CWA NSW Farmers Federation		Community groups	November / December	Senior Management and Councillors	Complete Invited to reference Group meeting 18 December 2013.
Inform	Run radio ads calling for submissions. Seek interviews with ABC Regional, 2NZ, and Local FM stations in Inverell and Armidale.	NA	Radio listeners	December	Executive Assistant	Complete adds ran in January 2014 on 2nz (Inverell & Tingha) 2ad (Guyra Armidale) FM100.3 (Guyra Armidale)
Inform	eNewsletters to subscribed members	NA	eNewsletter subscribers	November – December 2013	Heather Sills John Mc	Complete, sent December and January.

Inform	Print advertising which references website for information, submissions and community forums	NA	Newspaper readers, website	November / December	Heather Sills John Mc	Complete advertisement placed in the Guyra Argus.
Consult	Social networking Facebook, and Twitter to give information and receive feedback	NA	Youth, Social Media users	October 2013	Heather Sills	Complete
Consult	Letterbox survey drop, distribution with bulk mail out newsletter.	NA	Residents	2nd Half November	John Mc Heather Sills	Complete
Consult	Telephone Survey 300 people	NA	Residents	November 2013	John Mc Heather Sills	\$15,000.00 Quote received is cost prohibitive will seek to survey participants in public places i.e Shopping centre, Library, community engagement meetings. Completed survey online and from conducting surveys in the community.
Consult	Online survey myguyra.com		Residents	November 2013	Heather Sills	Complete
Collaborate	Public Forum to have your say and speak to public submissions	Council Chambers	Residents	December / January Guyra	GM, CFIO, Mayor	Complete Forum held 18 th January
Empower	Acknowledge contribution in forward	NA	Residents and stakeholders which participated in engagement	Early January	Mayor, GM	Ongoing
Empower	Launch	Council Chambers	Residents	April 2014	Mayor	Ongoing