



2013 Rates and Services Review

**Outputs from the
Community Working Group
Meeting 1
1 August 2013**

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Introduction

The first meeting of the group was held on Thursday 1 August 2013 in the Level 2 Function Room, Administration Centre, 137 Beamish Street Campsie. Twenty members of the Canterbury Community participated.

The meeting comprised:

- Welcome and opening remarks from the Mayor and General Manager
- Introductions
- A discussion about the reasons people had volunteered to be part of the group
- A presentation about the 2013 Rates and Services Review. A copy of the presentation is attached to these outputs.
- A discussion about the process of the review and the role of the group
- A quiz about the issue facing council – population growth, ageing infrastructure, increasing service demands, income and expenditure.
- A discussion about the issue and generation of a list of questions for the next meeting.

The outputs from these activities are presented in this document.

Name of the Group

At the meeting the renaming of the group was discussed. It was decided to try out the name **Community Working Group** instead of Deliberative Working Group.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group will be held on Tuesday 20th August 2013. The topic for this meeting will be:

- **The Challenge** – what do we believe the challenge to be?

Reasons people volunteered for the group

The word cloud below shows the reasons people volunteered for the Community Working Group. Larger words are used for reasons that were mentioned more often.

Be involved Contribute Connect
Interested Get better outcomes Curious
Make a difference Know how it works
Improve things Bring creative ideas
Community Participate

What group members love about the City

Group members mentioned a number of things they love about the City, which are listed below in order of priority. The number of stars corresponds to the number of mentions.

- ★★★★★★ Vibrant diversity of cultures, food, products and people
- ★★★★★★ Convenient central location close to everything including the Sydney CBD, M5, railway and airport.
- ★★★★ Access to cheap Asian groceries and all kinds of foods even Bangladeshi, good shopping at centres such as Roselands, Campsie Food Festival.
- ★★★★ Feels comfortable, with a sense of community and acceptance of the diverse cultures
 - ★ Stable, organised and well-run council.
 - ★ Bulldogs and the community focus they provide
 - ★ Clean
 - ★ Canterbury Hospital
 - ★ Quality of Canterbury playing fields
 - ★ Relatively inexpensive housing
 - ★ Green areas

Last interaction with Council

Group members were asked what their last interaction with council was like. Their responses are listed below, grouped into positive experiences, where there is room for improvement, and requests or suggestions.

Positive experiences

- Application for Financial Assistance Grant – the application was wordy but the process was good
- The council's webpage is good.
- Garbage service has been missed (corner property) on a number occasions – but the follow up has been OK
- No negative issues with interaction with council.
- Generally very good – sideline mowing is really appreciated, roads are repaired
- Customer service counter responded quickly
- Mayor is responsive to follow up on issues eg. traffic
- Paths repaired and then replaced too quickly in Belmore Town Centre
- Campsie Food Festival – tweeted about having a good time
- Telephone survey – comprehensive 20-30 minute survey
- Booking Lenard Reserve once per year – this has been a good experience

Room for improvement

- Cleanliness - Lakemba
- Complaint about street parking seems to have fallen on deaf ears
- Bin wasn't collected – took three calls to get it collected
- Rang council asking for a No Standing sign – have heard nothing, seen nothing

Requests or suggestions

- Rydge Lane is a dead-end lane and need to ring regularly to get weeds cut, would like this to be on a regular maintenance schedule
- Urunga Pde, and Turner Street (in the Railway Reserve) – dumped rubbish as regular as once per week and there is need for cameras or other effective surveillance.
- Double parking with private building construction operations – there is a need for speedy effective responses to complaints from residents when this occurs. Without this the culprits assume immunity from consequences and persist to disturb convenience, safety and amenity of residents.
- Knocked down signs need replacing more quickly – how about redesigning more flexible signs.

Ideas for broadcasting group outputs

The group members identified the following ways for outputs from the Community Working Group to be broadcast to the rest of the community.

- It is difficult to engage people – is there fear amongst some? Any approach needs to think about what is going to interest them and overcome the barriers such as fear.
- Social media – start a facebook group, twitter feed
- Information stalls at community events eg. at Haldon Street Festival – hand out flyers “Join the conversation” and collect email addresses
- Publish on council's website
- Publicise in local newspapers (including ethnic newspapers), letters to the editor
- Newsletter with rate notices to residents (quarterly)
- Meeting small groups to spread the word – in person is more effective (ethnic community groups eg. Sri Lankan Community, Sudanese community meeting, P&C groups,)
- Displays and notices on library noticeboards and in shopping centres
- Letter box drops are a waste of time people throw them straight in the bin
- Ethnic media eg. radio, translators
- Email lists
- Publicise in different languages to get attention
- Council app
- Banner opposite 9th Avenue in Campsie – people look at it

Quiz answers

A quiz was part of the meeting, as a way to start talking about the issue facing council. The questions and answers are listed here.

1. What is the population of the City of Canterbury now?
145,000 (page 8 and page 9 of CSP)
2. What proportion of the population of the City of Canterbury were born in countries where English is not the first language?
45% (page 8 of CSP)
3. Has the population grown since 2006?
Yes by 10,000 (page 9 of CSP)
4. What will the population be in ten years' time?
157,000 an increase of 12,000 (page 9 of CSP)
5. Does increased population increase council's income?
Not necessarily. Rates are based on property values, not the number of people. Household sizes in the City of Canterbury have increased since 2006, so the increase in number of properties and total rate income hasn't kept up with the increase in the number of people.
6. How many new high density flats or apartments have been created since 2006?
750 (page 14 of CSP).
7. What are some of the things our community has said are priorities?
Better roads, less traffic congestion, good parks and gardens, balanced development, a cleaner Cooks River, better shopping, a cleaner, safer and greener City. (page 4 of CSP)
8. How many sports grounds does council provide?
27 (page 50 of CSP)
9. How many libraries does council provide?
4 (page 50 of CSP)
10. Is council responsible for providing police, hospitals or schools?
No. The state government provides these.
11. What is the main source of council's income?
Rates (Fact Sheet)
12. What proportion of council's income comes from Rates?
\$54.1 million out of \$105.2 million is 51% (Fact Sheet)

13. How much income does council expect to get from user fees in 2014-15?
\$7.3 million (Fact Sheet)
14. How much total income does council expect to get in 2014-15?
\$105.2 million (Fact Sheet)
15. How much does council expect to spend on services in 2014-15?
\$95.6 million (Fact Sheet)
16. How much does council expect to spend on infrastructure in 2014-15?
\$18.8 million (Fact Sheet)
17. Which services are expected to cost the most in 2014-15?
Waste and recycling - \$19.5 million. (Fact Sheet)
18. What type of infrastructure does council spend the most money on?
Roads \$6.3 million in 2014-15 (Fact Sheet)
19. How much does council expect to spend on loan repayments in 2014-15?
\$1.2 million or 1.1%, which is relatively low for a council of our size. (Fact Sheet)
20. Are loans a way of obtaining additional funds for projects, or a way of completing projects earlier?
Loans are a way of completing projects earlier. They are not a source of funds, because the money has to be repaid at some time. Canterbury uses loans for construction of infrastructure not for delivering services.

Questions for the next meeting

Population and growth

- Will population increase be natural increase or immigration?
- What are the long term benefits to the council by approving multi storey buildings?
- Can we get developers to contribute more to the local area eg. playground improvement, footpaths?

Income

- Are there development and income-generating opportunities along the Cooks River eg. cafes, bars etc.?
- How can council diversify its income streams so it is less reliant on property rates?
- What contributes to 'other' when referring to sources of income in 2014-15
- If the referendum RE direct federal funding gets a YES what is the expected impact on finance levels?
- What if IPART rejects council's submission for increased revenue?

Income from Rates

- How are rates calculated per household?
- Are we charging medium density housing the same rates, after we collect their garbage and they use facilities?
- How much can be raised if rates increase by 1%
- If you increase rates, how much is not too much?
- Do ratepayers value the amenity of the local government area enough to pay more rates?
- What benefits or incentives can be offered to residential ratepayers to encourage them to pay higher rates?

Income from Fees

- What extra services can Council offer on a fee for service basis eg. landscaping advice, garden planning, pest control?
- Are there services that council provides that a pay per use system can be introduced?

Income from Car parking

- What is the cost of car parking?
- Could council build a parking facility and charge for its use?
- Could council impose car parking fees?

Expenses

- What is the proportion of income and spend for all services provided by council?
- What has already been committed?
- Why is council paying \$1.2 million in loan repayments?
- Why does the deficit jump from \$2.4 in 2013-14 to \$9.2 million in 2014-15?
- What is the cost of street-lighting?
- What impact would improved public transport have on road maintenance costs?

Services

- What are council's core functions?
- What services are to be reduced or cut?
- How can you identify what services to reduce?
- Can council cost-shift anything to the State Government? If so, how?
- How can council partner with organisations eg. leagues clubs to gain financial benefit
- What is being planned for an ageing demographic eg. Baby Boomers?
- How can community centres (eg. in Ashbury) be better utilised by the community and perhaps earn an income?
- Would the council provide free tutoring classes for school children by volunteers?

Service efficiency

- Has an audit been undertaken on the use of services run by council eg. pools, libraries, parks etc. and could this save funds?
- Can council run more effectively to cut down the deficit?
- Can any services be outsourced?

Sports fields

- What is the cost of sports grounds and tennis courts, and income from these?
- How much can be raised from charging a fee for the use of sporting grounds?

Waste and Recycling

- How can we encourage collective consumption to reduce the costs of waste and recycling?

Presentation on Rates and Services Review



The challenge

Increases in population over the past five years, and expected in the future, and more up-to-date forecasts of the cost of improving our infrastructure mean we will not have enough income in future years to continue to deliver the same range and level of services.



2013 Rates and Services Review

Involving our community in exploring the options for changes in the range and level of service Council provides, and the means to fund these.

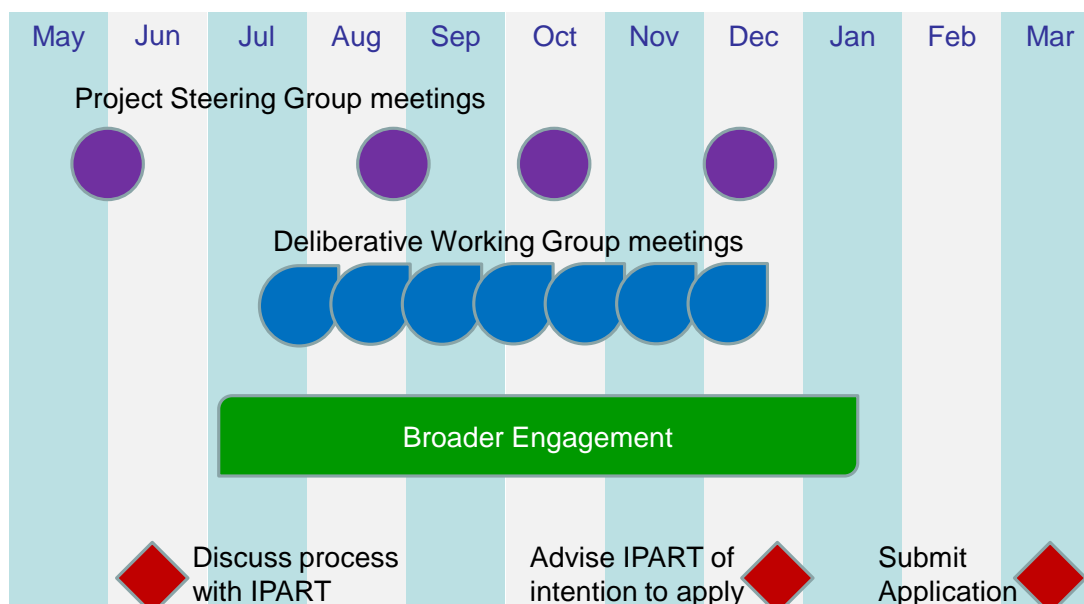


comprises...

- Project Steering Group
 - Determines how best to work with our community
- Deliberative Working Group
 - Randomly selected group of people representative of our community with which we will have a conversation about services and infrastructure, and costs and revenues
- Broader engagement
 - Range of activities to make the conversation as public as possible and collect feedback
- Council and organisational support



Timetable





Key decisions

- Deliberative Working Group
 - Recommend options to council
- Council
 - Do we go to IPART?
 - What changes will be made to services?
- IPART
 - Size and timing of rate increases



Deliberative Working Group

Purpose

- explore:
 - options for changes in the range and level of service Council provides; and
 - the means to fund these.
- recommend:
 - appropriate levels of services and infrastructure;
 - whether all current services should be provided, and if not, which ones should be discontinued; and
 - the size and timing of any increase in rates.



Working Group

- Randomly selected
- Representative of Canterbury community
- Series of conversations to question and explore the issues and possible strategies
- Conversations then made as public as possible



Working Group

- **Conversations:**
 - **The Challenge** – what do we believe the challenge to be?
 - **Strategies** – what are the possible strategies available to us?
 - **Values** – what do we value as a community? What are our priorities? What services and levels of service do we need to achieve these priorities? What are the criteria for a good solution?
 - **Options** – what options meet the criteria?
 - **Preferred option** – which option **best** meets our criteria and what does it look like in detail?



Working Group

- listen to what others have to say
- consider the issues thoughtfully
- contribute your own views to the conversations
- attend all meetings if possible



Future meeting dates

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 2 | 20 August |
| 3 | 11 September |
| 4 | 9 October |
| 5 | 13 November |
| 6 | 26 November |
| 7 | 11 December |