

City of Canterbury

City of Cultural Diversity

Memo

TO: Mayor and All Councillors
DATE: 1 July 2013
FILE NO: C-117-4
SUBJECT: 2013 Rates and Services Review
Outputs from Project Steering Group Meeting 12 June 2013

The first meeting of our 2013 Rates and Services Review Project Steering Group was held on 12 June 2013. There was good discussion and useful insight was gained into a number of important issues in relation to this project. A list of the members of the Steering Group, the briefing note provided to them, and outputs from the meeting are attached. The next meeting of the Steering Group is likely to be in late August.

We are now recruiting for the Deliberative Working Group (DWG) based on this information, and expect the first meeting of the DWG to be in the fourth week of July. We have also started planning other broader engagement activities. As a first step, a brochure to be included in rates notices about the program is also attached for your information.

If you require further details about the program, please let me know.

Jim Montague PSM
GENERAL MANAGER

2013 Rates and Services Review - Project Steering Group

Cr Brian Robson, Mayor, City of Canterbury

Mr Jim Montague, General Manager, City of Canterbury

Mr Andy Sammut, Director Corporate Services, City of Canterbury

Mr Nizar Hoblos - CEO, Lebanese Muslim Association

Ms Liz Messih – CEO, Canterbury City Community Centre

Ms Jacquie Cheetham - Manager, Canterbury Earlwood Caring Association Ltd

Ms Pauline Gallagher - Director, Riverwood Community Centre

Ms Michelle Baldock - Board Member, Croydon Park Business Chamber

Mr Michael Fung - Board Member, Chinese Australia Society Services



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**SUSTAINABLE
CANTERBURY**

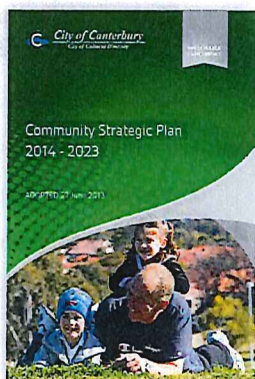
2013 RATES AND SERVICES REVIEW

Council is experiencing a rise in demand for services, which are becoming increasingly costly to provide. In addition, there is a growing need to spend more money on essential community assets like roads, footpaths, drains, parks and other facilities.

In order to address these issues, and to ensure Council's financial sustainability Council will over the next six (6) months be undertaking a review of services and priorities and exploring means to increase revenue. Input from our community is invited and indeed essential for the review to be successful.

Working to achieve our community's vision

We are working with our community to achieve the future vision described in the recently adopted Community Strategic Plan.



We provide a wide range of services and infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, cycle ways, drains, aquatic centres, libraries, community centres, and parks, sporting fields and natural reserves.

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.

Options for changes in the range and level of services Council provides, and the means to fund these services need to be explored.

Rates and Services Review

You are invited to participate in a review of services to determine the appropriate levels of services and infrastructure; whether all current services should be provided, and if not, which ones should be discontinued.

Through a wide range of activities, we will seek to inform and provide opportunities for feedback to as many people as possible.

Get involved

Read the Community Strategic Plan to get to know the community's vision, and the Council Delivery Program to understand the range and level of services being delivered, and the resources needed.

Obtain information and provide feedback via:

Email: council@canterbury.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au
Call: 9789 9300
Post: PO Box 77 CAMPSIE 2194
Visit: Customer Service Centre, Campsie,
Libraries in Campsie, Earlwood,
Lakemba and Riverwood

Income and cost forecasts 2014-2017

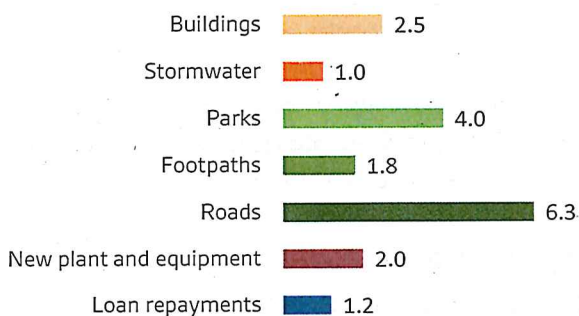
\$ million	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Income	100.8	105.2	109.0	112.9
Costs	103.2	114.4	118.3	122.6
Deficit	(2.4)	(9.2)	(9.3)	(9.7)

The table above outlines the forecasted income, costs and deficit over the next five years **if we do nothing**. The adopted budget for 2013-14 does not include the up-to-date costs of improving infrastructure, and uses our savings to cover the deficit.

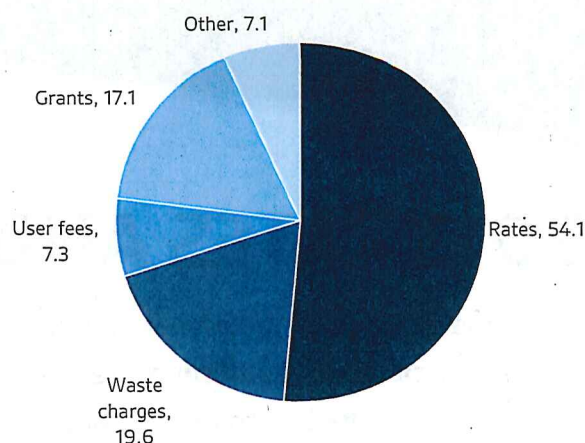
From 2014-15 onward other options are needed.

You can see the costs of delivering services, and of improving infrastructure in the graphs below. The forecasts include increases for inflation and savings through efficiencies, and up-to-date costs of improving infrastructure.

Cost of improving infrastructure 2014-15 (Total \$18.8 million)

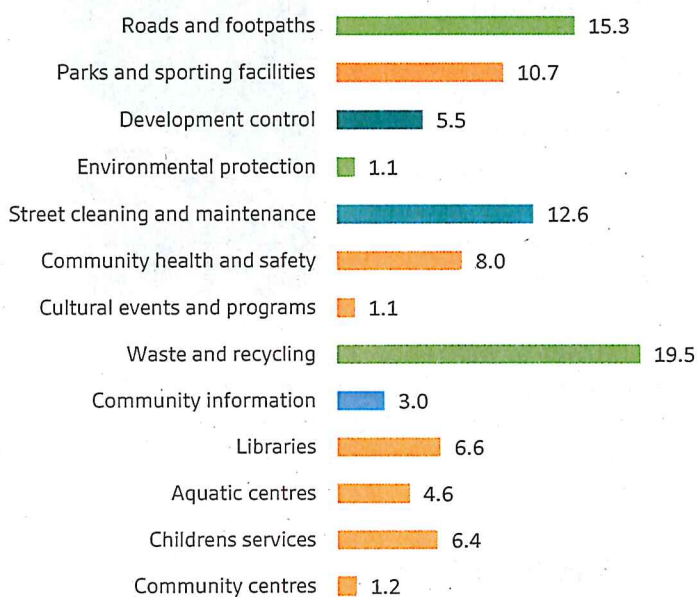


Sources of Income 2014-15 (Total \$105.2 million)



Property rates are the major source of Council's income. Grants, waste charges and user fees, and other income make up the balance of Council's total income.

Cost of delivering services 2014-15 (Total \$95.6 million)



Briefing Note – 2013 Rates and Services Review Engagement Program

Introduction

Despite working hard to manage our expenses and maximise revenue in recent years, council has now acknowledged that it has insufficient revenues to continue to deliver the diverse range and current level of services it currently does. As a result options for changes in the range and levels of service, and increases in the property rate over and above the rate cap, are necessary. It is considered that under the current circumstances changes just in service levels or just increases in the property rate will not be sufficient – a mix of both is required.

Council has endorsed a proposal to apply to IPART for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) in early 2014 ready to commence in the 2014-15 financial year. The details of this application have not yet been determined. To be successful in our application we must undertake program of engagement to involve our community in determining the range and level of services, and the level and timing of Special Rate Variations they are willing to support.

Purpose of the engagement program

The engagement program is intended to gain broad community support for Special Rate Variations to commence in July 2014. Through engaging the community in a collaborative decision making process around the SRVs, we aim to determine

- appropriate levels of service for our services and infrastructure;
- whether or not some services should continue to be provided, and if not, which ones should cease;
- the size and timing of the special rate.

The SRV engagement must also satisfy the expectations that IPART has for SRV applications, and thus maximise the likelihood the application will be successful.

Key elements

The key elements of the engagement program are:

1. A Project Steering Group, formed to guide all aspects of the process of engagement.
2. A Deliberative Working Group, a randomly selected representative sample of the Canterbury community, with which a series of conversations will be conducted about the challenges facing council and the ways in which they could be resolved
3. Engagement of the broader community whereby the conversations with the Deliberative Working Group can be made as publicly available as possible, and feedback can be gathered. This may include a statistically valid survey towards the end of the process.
4. Council and organisation support

Project Steering Group

The Project Steering Group (PSG) provides governance – guiding all aspects of the collaborative decision making process. Whilst the members of the group must have an appreciation of the content – the challenges facing council and the ways in which they could be resolved – process is their focus. The PSG is to comprise the Mayor, General Manager, the Director Corporate Services, and five or so community leaders. The PSG is likely to meet about four times over the duration of the project (May 2013 – March 2014).

Deliberative Working Group

The Deliberative Working Group (DWG) is a randomly selected representative group from the Canterbury community. It is with this group that the conversations about the challenges facing council, and the ways in which they could be resolved are explored. The intent is that the conversations that are held with this group are representative of the kind of conversation that could be held with any group of stakeholders in the future. This group will question, test and probe, and will provide an opportunity for council to enquire of them, in a way that more thoughtfully and thoroughly examines the problem and solution than can be done with the whole community.

The group will comprise up to 25 randomly selected people representative of stakeholders in Canterbury City. The DWG is likely to meet about six times over the duration of the project. People interested in having a say about the issues will be invited to talk to the members of the DWG.

Engagement of the Broader Community

Alongside the conversations with the DWG are activities to engage the broader Canterbury community, in order to make these conversations as publicly available as possible, and to gather feedback.

The means by which this is done effectively will be guided by the PSG. Channels such as viewing galleries in our community centres and libraries, our website, a blogging website such as Bang the Table or such, could be used. Any point at which council currently touches community members will be used if possible. This will also include information in rates notices; newspaper articles and council column; early learning centres and other children's services, business events, festivals, and our advisory committees. A telephone survey is also planned to confirm outcomes of the process in late November 2013.

Council and Organisation Support

Council support will be vital to the success of this project. Councillors will be informed of both process and content, so they can encourage members of the community to participate in the most appropriate way. This appropriate participation may be giving feedback to members of the DWG, or participating in engagement activities. The Mayor will play an important role in the functioning of the PSG.

Support from the organisation will include participation in the PSG by the General Manager and Director Corporate Services, and key staff involved in the conversations with the DWG.

At every DWG at the least the Executive, Group Manager – Finance, and Group Manager – Corporate and Economic Development must participate. Other staff will be called upon to participate depending on the meeting topics, including Assets and Forward Planning, Urban Planning, and staff involved in the delivery of various services.

TIMING

An application must be submitted to IPART by the end of March 2014. Advice to IPART of the intention to submit the application is to be provided by December 2013.

Engagement activities must take place over the period May – December 2013. In particular information must be ready to be included in rates notices by the end of June 2013.

The timetable is outlined schematically on the following page.

2013

2014

May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

Project Steering Group meetings



Deliberative Working Group meetings



Broader Engagement



Discuss process
with IPART

Advise IPART of
intention to apply



Submit
Application





2013 Rates and Services Review Outputs from Project Steering Group Meeting 12 June 2013

Attended by

Cr Brian Robson, Mayor, City of Canterbury

Mr Jim Montague, General Manager, City of Canterbury

Mr Andy Sammut, Director Corporate Services, City of Canterbury

Ms Michelle Baldock, Board Member, Croydon Park Business Chamber

Ms Jacque Cheetham, Manager, Canterbury Earlwood Caring Association

Mr Michael Fung, Board Member, Chinese Australia Society Services

Mr Nizar Hoblos, CEO, Lebanese Muslim Association

Ms Liz Messih, CEO, Canterbury City Community Centre

Mr David Coleman, Manager – Corporate and Economic Development, City of Canterbury

Mr Glenn McMahon, Group Manager Finance, City of Canterbury

Apologies

Ms Pauline Gallagher, Director, Riverwood Community Centre

Key discussion points

Characteristics of a good engagement process

- Be up-front about the decision that has to be made— say it like it is. Then be honest and transparent the whole way through the process.
- Explain not just what people will gain, but what they will lose as a consequence of not doing it.
- As part of the project, explore not just levels of service, but the type of community we want to live in. What sort of Canterbury do we want? Link the conversation to the future vision for the City. Also balance economic and social perspectives.
- Awareness is an important hurdle – we need effective ways to get the information out there; a media strategy to communicate the issues.
- In the Deliberative Working Group we need people who are interested in the outcome. We need to find ways to connect with those who might start out as being disinterested gain their interest. Face to face contact, speaking to people directly, is one of the best ways to do this. Also Avoid leading questions, first ask people to talk about themselves, and what is important to them, and then connect with those things.
- Consider the five p's of marketing – product – what are we 'selling'?, promotion – how do we get the information out?, price – what is the impact / benefit?, place – where will we put information, and people – what kind of people are impacted?
- Some people will not be comfortable in a meeting such as this one – how do we include these? We also need to represent the interests of children, but at this stage we are not sure how to do this.

Characteristics of the Deliberative Working Group**Diversity:**

- Frail aged
- From different cultural backgrounds
- Home owners or mortgagees, and renters
- Property owners – residential and commercial, and perhaps property managers
- Parents and adults with no kids
- Newly arrived
- People who work locally and those who commute out of the City to work
- Geographical spread – from different suburbs across the City
- A mix of women and men
- Diversity of income
- Diversity of kinds of employment, unemployed
- People that use different services eg. pools, libraries, children's services
- People that don't have a barrow to push, independent, etc.

Summary of DWG characteristics:

Users of council services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads / footpaths / bikepaths • Parks / gardens / sporting fields / bushland • Community facilities / libraries / childrens services / aquatic centres • Programs for children / youth / seniors / disability / CALD 	Demographics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Home owner / mortgagee / renter • Cultural background • Men and women • Income • Suburb / Ward • Work locally / work outside City / unemployed / business operator • Time living in City • Occupation
Ratepayers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential property owner • Business property owner 	

Other considerations for the Deliberative working group

- Access – the meetings need to be where people can get to them. We may need to consider providing cab-vouchers, or perhaps even a community bus to collect and return participants.
- It might be worth considering an alternative venue to the Administration Centre.
- We should also consider a variety of times and days to allow people to attend – perhaps the best way is to consult the group about the optimum meeting time?
- If we want 25 consistent members, perhaps we should consider recruiting 30 in the first instance.
- We need to ask for commitment to a series of meetings up front, as part of the recruitment process.

Broader engagement

Ways to distribute information and gather feedback

- Email networks – eg. sporting clubs, volunteer associations, business networks
- Advertisements
- Ethnic press
- Face to face
- Social media
- Blogging website
- Information in libraries
- Community newsletters - local community centres, school newsletters, sporting club news, shopping centre posters
- Visits and presentations to existing community groups eg. parents and friends, chambers of commerce, and others that are conducted in council community centres
- Information in post-offices and banks, train stations, and local businesses
- Information at key events eg. information stall at Haldon Street
- Any gathering we can find eg. Harmony Day (this is past, but future events like it)
- Community forums around Canterbury
- Via council's advisory committees

Characteristics

- It needs to be a conversation – posters and information need to point to a way of obtaining information and also providing feedback.
- Use fact sheets, outlining things that might be of interest.
- Communications may be at a number of different levels.

