



## 2013 RATES AND SERVICES REVIEW UPDATE

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.

Over the past six months we have involved our community in exploring options for changes in the range and level of services, and the means to fund these. Through a range of activities we have informed and gathered feedback from as many people as possible. This update presents the approach that best reflects what we have heard during this process.

### Exploring the options

We invited a group of community leaders to advise us on the best ways to engage with our diverse community. This group has provided useful insight on the formation of the Community Working Group and the activities needed to ensure broader engagement is effective.

### Community Working Group

We also asked an independent market research company to recruit a group of people to represent the range of different perspectives typical of the Canterbury community. This group was representative in terms of gender, age, location, cultural background, renters and owners, users of council services, ratepayers, residents and business owners, and people having lived a long or short time in the City.

Over a period of four months this group met six times, each for several hours, working through a series of conversations to better understand what council does and how much it costs, what the challenge is and how it might be solved, and to work together to find a solution that the whole group could support.



CITY OF CANTERBURY  
**RATES & SERVICES**

Throughout this time we used our email newsletter, council column, social media such as Facebook and Twitter feed, Canterbury Connects App, posters and

flyers distributed across the city, and emails to our community networks, to invite people to participate in the review. Advertisements were also placed in local English and community language newspapers. Language assistance has been available via our Customer Service Centre.

Contributions were able to be made via [haveyoursaycanterbury.com.au](http://haveyoursaycanterbury.com.au), and feedback forms at Libraries, Childrens Centres, Senior Citizens and Community Centres.

### The challenge

The rise in demand for services, and more up-to-date forecasts of the costs of maintaining and improving our infrastructure have resulted in an estimated shortfall from 2014-15 of approximately \$12.5 million per year.

Our community has told us that their preferred approach to meeting this challenge is to:

- Maintain as many services as possible, including libraries and pools, and especially considering future population increases;
- Combine a range of strategies, including additional income, fee increases, service reductions, borrowing, and rate increases;
- Accept as little infrastructure deterioration as possible;
- Achieve efficiencies in council operations;
- Have a 'middle of the road' rate increase;
- Borrow so that infrastructure maintenance is shared with future generations.

As a result Council is considering the following:

- reductions in services to achieve savings of \$0.5 million per year;
- acceptance of deterioration in infrastructure from a reduction in expenditure on maintenance of \$1.5 million per year;
- increased fees to users of sporting fields and community centres to generate \$0.2 million per year;
- achieving further efficiencies in council operations of \$1.0 million per year;
- borrowing \$36.5 million and repaying this over 30 years to improve infrastructure; and
- a rate increase of 4.6% per year above the rate cap for three years, which from 2017-18 will provide an extra \$8.3 million each year.

We think the rate cap will be 2.9% each year, and in this case the total rate increase will be 7.5% each year for three years. With just the rate cap the average residential rate would increase from \$955 in 2013-14 to \$1,041 in 2016-17. With the extra rate increase the average residential rate will increase to \$1,186 in 2016-17. This is an increase over the three years of \$145, or \$48 each year. The average business rate would increase from \$4,190 in 2013-14 to \$5,205 in 2016-17, an increase of \$1,015, or \$338 each year.



Without a rate increase council would have to consider a range of measures that could reduce services and programs and result in a

deterioration of community assets such as roads, footpaths, parks and community buildings. This is an outcome that Council does not favour.

In order to maintain the current range and levels of service, without increasing fees, borrowing, or accepting any infrastructure deterioration, a total rate increase of 9.2% each year for three years would be required. In this case the average residential rate would increase to \$1,244 in 2016-17, an increase of \$204 over the three years. Our community has said this is too much, and that a more moderate increase is required.

### Next Steps

Council will make a final decision on the size of the rate increase in early February 2014. It must then submit an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a Special Rate Variation at the end of February 2014.

### Get more information or contribute

Obtain more information or contribute via:

**Email:** [council@canterbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@canterbury.nsw.gov.au)

**Website:** [haveyoursaycanterbury.com.au](http://haveyoursaycanterbury.com.au)

**Call:** 9789 9300

**Post:** PO Box 77 CAMPSIE 2194

**Visit:** Customer Service Centre,  
Campsie, Libraries in Campsie,  
Earlwood, Lakemba and  
Riverwood

*Authorised by Jim Montague PSM, General Manager*