

## 2013 Rates and Services Review

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### What is the Rates and Services Review?

The Rates and Services Review is involving our community in exploring the options for changes in the range and level of service Council provides, and the means to fund these.

Through a range of activities we have informed and gathered feedback from as many people as possible. We are now providing information and seeking more feedback on the preferred option that best reflects what we have heard so far.

### How can I get involved?

Obtain information and 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 in Campsie, or Libraries in Campsie, Earlwood, Lakemba and Riverwood

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.

### **What is the preferred option?**

Our community has told us that their preferred approach to 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.

### **What does the preferred option mean for rates and services?**

Council is considering the following parts to the preferred option:

- 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 7.5% per year including the rate cap for three years, which from 2017-18 will provide an extra \$8.3 million each year.

### **What will be the impact on business rates?**

With just the rate cap the average business rate will increase from \$4,190 in 2013-14 to \$4,565 in 2016-17. With the extra rate increase the average business rate will increase to \$5,205 in 2016-17. This is an increase of over the three years of \$639, or \$213 each year.

### **What will be the impact on residential rates?**

With just the rate cap the average residential rate will increase from \$955 in 2013-14 to \$1,041 per year in 2016-17. With the extra rate increase the average residential rate will increase to \$1,186 in 2016-17. This is an increase of over the three years of \$145, or \$48 each year.

### **What if we didn't reduce services?**

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. So far our community has said this is too much, and that a more moderate increase is required.

### **What is the impact of not increasing rates at all?**

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.

### **Why are we undertaking this 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.

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.

### **What is the Community Working Group?**

The Community Working Group is a central element of the 2013 Rates and Services Review. The group is a randomly selected representative sample of the Canterbury community. It is with this group that the conversations about the challenge facing council, and the ways in which they could be resolved have been explored. These conversations have then been broadcast to the wider community for their information and feedback.

### **What did the Community Working Group do?**

The group met with council staff to discuss and form answers to the following key questions:

- What do we believe the challenge to be?
- Having heard multiple perspectives, what is our new definition of the challenge?
- What possible strategies are available to us?
- What do we value as a community? What level of service is desirable? What are our priorities? What are the criteria for a good solution?
- What options meet the criteria?
- Which option **best** meets our criteria and what does it look like in detail?

The group questioned, tested and probed, and provided an opportunity for council to enquire of them, in a way that thoughtfully and thoroughly examines the problem and possible solutions. The conversations held with this group were representative of the kind of conversation that could be held with any group of stakeholders in the future of Canterbury Council.

### **Who was in the Community Working Group?**

The group comprised 25 randomly selected people representative of stakeholders in Canterbury City - users of council services, residential ratepayers, and business ratepayers, and was representative of the demographics of the City of Canterbury in terms of age, gender, housing tenure, cultural background, and locality.

### **How often did the Community Working Group meet?**

The group met six times between July and November 2013, about once a month. Each meeting covered one of the key questions, each meeting building on the next. Outputs from each meeting are available from the Community Working Group Library.

### **Can I join the Community Working Group?**

As the Community Working group is a representative sample of the people of the City of Canterbury, its members were selected randomly to ensure the demographic characteristics matched that of the City as much as possible. The work of the group is also now substantially complete. You can still participate in the review, however, by contributing to the conversations here on this site.

### **How big is the issue?**

From 2014-15 onwards council faces a deficit (not enough income to cover expenses) of more than \$12.5 million per year.

### **How much does council spend each year?**

In 2014-15 council expects to spend a total of \$117.7 million – \$95.6 million on delivering services and \$22.1 million on improving infrastructure.

### **How much income does council get each year?**

In 2014-15 we expect to get \$105.2 million.