



## Consultation activity

Activities to inform the community of the proposed rate variation to general income (infrastructure levy) and public consultation for planning the future included:

- Flyer delivered to 46,200 homes with the second quarter rates notice
- Advertisements in the three major newspapers (Hornsby Advocate, Hills News, Northern District Times)
- A large front page article in the Hornsby Advocate
- Prominent signage at five Libraries, Hornsby Aquatic Centre, community centres at Berowra, Cherrybrook, Epping and Pennant Hills as well as five child care centres
- On Council's web site – 20th October to 30th November 2009
- On Bang the Table web site – 20th October to 19th April 2010
- Email notification to
  - 800 community panel members
  - 900 people in bushcare groups
  - 313 people in Over 55's Advocacy group
  - 156 people registered for sustainability notices

The purpose of the information was to alert people to Council's desire to improve the ageing infrastructure and build new facilities to meet the changing needs of the community and encourage community participation in planning for the future of the Shire.

Activities to engage the community about the proposed rate variation to general income (infrastructure levy) and consult for planning the future included:

1. Community engagement study May 2009 (857 residents)
2. Social planning consultations May and June 2009 (950 people)
3. Youth surveys (face to face) at local cinema, dance festival and other events (103 people aged 13 – 17 years)



4. Survey (face to face) of 20 young adults at Hornsby Mall, 29th November 2009
5. Primary school children via hand held devices at four local schools, December 2009
6. Business survey (243 businesses) by email, October 2009
7. Focus groups during September, October and November 2009 (161 attendees)
8. Deliberative community meeting on Saturday 21st November 2009 (40 participants)
9. Feedback via [yoursay@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:yoursay@hornsby.nsw.gov.au), 20th October to 19th April 2010
10. Moderated forums on Bang the Table web site, 20th October to 19th April 2010
11. Creation of infrastructure levy website ([future.hornsby.nsw.gov.au](http://future.hornsby.nsw.gov.au)) to inform, allow feedback and allow nomination of ward-based projects 18th January to 19th April 2010
12. Two community meetings (Berowra 11 March 2010 and Pennant Hills 15 March 2010) (70 participants)

The engagement and consultation activities had a number of purposes. Firstly, to build support for the development of a community strategic plan based on the community's dream/vision for Hornsby while recognising the challenges in delivering that dream/vision. Secondly, to involve people and inform about Council's desire to improve the ageing infrastructure and build new facilities to meet the changing needs of the community. Thirdly, to assist ratepayer understanding of Council's finances and the business case driving the proposed rate variation including the rating options, and fourthly to elicit community preference regarding priority infrastructure projects.

The latter community meetings were focused on the business case driving the proposed rate variation including the rating options and eliciting community preference regarding priority infrastructure projects.

The 21 November 2009 community meeting and focus groups were based on deliberative principles. Deliberative public engagement is a distinctive approach to involving people in decision-making. It is different from other forms of engagement in that it is about giving participants time to consider and discuss an issue in depth before they come to a considered view. As part of the deliberative process participants were provided with nine issues papers discussing key issues facing the Hornsby community in 2009 and a summary paper of 'frequently asked questions' about council rates. This background reading provided a context for informed engagement at each consultation.



## Consultation outcomes

Council has been listening to the views of many residents, and the findings from consultation and engagement about long term planning for the future of the Shire generally indicate that residents of the Hornsby Shire value the characteristics of the area and are very keen to retain those characteristics in the long term, namely the bushland, the sense of space, the sense of community and the ‘village’ atmosphere of the local shops. In essence people describe their quality of life as very positive. At the same time people express concern about the increasing population and trend to medium and high density development and the lack of additional infrastructure to cater for new residents. While people recognise the area is well serviced by public transport they are concerned at the lack of accessibility at many transport nodes and the lack of coordination between rail and bus services.

In response to a question about priority areas for Council to focus its efforts, the comments have generally revolved around restricting and managing the amount of development and coordinating infrastructure to match development. Other comments about priority areas for Council include attracting business and investment opportunities to the Shire, providing facilities for diverse groups within the Shire and engaging the community more.

Residents want to measure achievement towards their preferred future, and some of the measures suggested are:

- Future generations have the same or better conditions
- There are community gardens in every suburb
- The bushland ecology is preserved
- Increase in number of volunteers
- Moving towards self sufficiency for energy needs
- A well used cultural centre/creative centre in the Shire
- Safer communities