

Important Information for the Penrith Community

# Funding







### The Current Situation

In past years Council has consistently delivered balanced budgets. Last year, however, it faced challenges that resulted in adjustments to a number of programs, items of expenditure and funding sources.

Despite making efficiency gains in recent years of more than \$3m annually, current economic and legislative conditions have also continued to have restricting effects on Council's ability to meet existing and emerging community priorities. These conditions include the general global economic downturn and cost shifting from other levels of government.

Although Council has been able to identify significant savings, in the order of \$500,000, during early work on the 2011-12 budget, long term financial modelling indicates that future budgets will have an average deficit of \$1.3m over the next five years just to maintain existing service levels.

The practice of identifying one-off savings to balance budgets is unsustainable and would impact heavily on the delivery of programs and services our community has come to expect.

Alongside the 48 services and hundreds of parks, sporting fields and community facilities currently provided, there are other priority projects the Community would like to see as part of the City's future growth.

This information booklet outlines a number of community identified priorities, which are currently unfunded (further information is available at <a href="https://www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture">www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture</a>). Ten year delivery programs and costs for these works have been developed and are outlined in each section.

Council understands the community's expectations for buildings, parks and infrastructure that meet modern standards. We also believe that as a community we are entitled to continued acceptable levels of service.

A Special Rate Variation, phased in over a four year period, is considered by Council to be a reasonable and responsible balance between the outcomes that will be delivered for the City and the cost to the community.

# Previous Community Consultation

With 185,000 people living in the Penrith Local Government Area, Penrith City Council is recognised as one of the largest councils in NSW and an important Regional City. Our community is diverse and we know that different groups in our community have different needs and expectations.

Council has been surveying residents every two years (since 2003) to identify and prioritise community expectations in relation to, amongst other things, the provision of community facilities, services, infrastructure, traffic services and planning and development.

In the 2009 survey, the community's top ten priorities included the condition of public toilets, encouraging local industry and jobs and maintenance of footpaths and litter removal.

The independent survey also rated Penrith City Council with a mean satisfaction score of 7.2 for overall performance (out of a score of 10); comfortably above the NSW average of 6 and the state metropolitan average of 5.9.

For more detailed information on previous community consultation please visit Council's website www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au.



# Maintaining Existing Assets and Service Levels

Penrith Council delivers a range of services to the community including the maintenance of parks and sporting fields, libraries, childcare centres, building assets, public amenities and continue existing environmental programs.

Council also supports the Penrith Business Alliance to attract essential economic development and jobs growth to the City of Penrith.

A 2009 customer survey revealed that 87% of Penrith City residents were satisfied with Council's performance with nearly three quarters providing a 'high' satisfaction rating.

### **Parks**

"(We want) places for children to play safely in the future... play equipment in parks with shade and seating"

Penrith Plans for our Future (PLANS) November 2003

"70% of respondents ranked the need for parks, nature reserves and playgrounds to be improved as very or somewhat important"

Community Attitudes & Aspirations Survey of Penrith City Residents (PLANS) 2002

"Not enough facilities, equipment not adequate or maintained properly"

**Customer Survey 2009** 

Council looks after 1240 hectares of open space and spends \$13.35m each year on their maintenance and upkeep. Park assets can include: playground equipment, fencing, lighting, irrigation systems, signage, park furniture, seating and playing surfaces. These assets are found throughout the City in ovals, parks, playgrounds and in passive open spaces such as reserves and gardens.

85% of the following range of assets are in good condition, however significant renewal is required:

- Playgrounds
- Sporting fields (including goal posts and lighting)
- Cricket wickets, (run up surfaces, sight screens and nets)
- Netball courts
- Irrigation systems
- Seating, bins, fencing and signage, landscaping and gardening.

We require an additional \$600,000 per year to upgrade existing playgrounds and sportsgrounds to comply with Australian Standards – e.g. floodlights and playgrounds, and to renew water efficient irrigation systems.

## **Buildings**

"Community venues should be upgraded and maintained"

Penrith Plans for our Future (PLANS) November 2003

"They are dated and old looking ... need more maintenance and updating"

**Customer Survey Report 2009** 

Council looks after 224 buildings and spends \$3.2m per year on their maintenance and upkeep. Buildings which are constructed and maintained by Council are used by residents and visitors to our City. They include, amongst other things, facilities to host conferences, cultural and social events and provide childcare, emergency services and educational facilities.

It is essential that these assets are maintained to remain safe, usable and provide a much needed service to the community.

Building assets can include: libraries, neighbourhood centres, childcare centres, bushfire brigade halls, youth centres, swimming pools, the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Penrith Regional Gallery.

More than 60% of the City's assets are rated as being in 'good' condition, meaning that they are serviceable, however many require significant renewal.

For example, a recent Neighbourhood Facilities Management Services Review has recommended upgrades to Council's Neighbourhood Centres and Community Halls to bring them up to contemporary standards maximising their use and benefit to the community.

Other work on the City's assets will include heritage site buildings, early childhood centres and senior citizen centres.

# "They are dated and old looking .... need more maintenance and updating"



We require an additional \$500,000 per year to renew and upgrade our buildings.

# Public Amenity/Toilet Replacement Program

"Toilets need maintaining ...not enough public toilets" Customer Survey 2009

"(we want) ... clean, safe toilets"

Penrith and St Marys Our City Centres Visioning Process Report 2005

The condition of public toilets continues to rate as high importance and low satisfaction in Council's community surveys. Over the past three years it has been rated with the lowest satisfaction rating.

The Public Amenity Program was adopted by Council in 2008-09, however the Program had limited funding. Twenty one toilet blocks throughout the City were identified as needing to be replaced.

By June this year a number of toilets facilities will have been rebuilt and these include Werrington Lakes, Weir Reserve and Fowler Reserve

This leaves a further 17 toilet blocks to be replaced including the following areas:

Kokoda Park, St Marys; Factory Road, Regentville; Penrith Cemetery, Penrith; St Marys Cemetery, St Marys; Rance Oval, Werrington; Jamison Park West, Penrith; Sales Park, Luddenham; Tench Reserve, Penrith; Mulgoa Park, Mulgoa.

We require an additional \$90,000 per year to complete the public amenity replacement program.

## Public Domain Maintenance

"Too much rubbish around shopping centres and railway"

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"I regularly go around the river and the litter is smelly. Need for more public bins especially near schools and alleyways."

Penrith City Council Community Survey 2009

"Too much rubbish around shopping centres and railway"

Penrith City Council Community Survey 2009

The Public Domain Maintenance Service provides high levels of maintenance across the City. Once seen as just an unsightly issue, litter has now been recognised as a significant environmental problem. Common litter items include chip and confectionary wrappers, glass pieces, fast-food packaging, soft drink bottles and cigarette butts. Of these, cigarette butts are the most common, making up 50% of litter items in NSW.

We require an additional \$360,000 per year to enhance service levels required for St Marys and Penrith City Centres, City gateways and high activity City locations, precincts and industrial areas and to address the emerging issue of litter throughout the Council area.

## Neighbourhood Renewal

The Neighbourhood Renewal Program has been actively engaged with residents in a large range of established areas across the City.

Working to identify community strengths, the Program creates and revitalises places and spaces to reflect the community's local identity. This makes public spaces more appealing for use by a broad range of community members.

Engagement and participation of residents at this local level informs Council of issues and identifies solutions which are appropriate to that particular community.

To date five Neighbourhood Action Plans have been endorsed in Penrith City. However funding gaps mean that not all initiatives can be delivered and so additional funding is required to deliver a range of infrastructure including:

Pedestrian safety in key locations in South St Marys, Oxley Park and Kingswood, including traffic calming devices and pedestrian refuges

Bus shelters and seating in areas used by older residents in Kingswood Park, Cranebrook and Kingswood

Enhanced lighting in Londonderry, particularly near bus stops, will address resident concerns for young people and older residents using public transport.

There will be a number of additional Neighbourhood Action plans to be developed in the next 4 years and some infrastructure priorities from these will also be implemented by the additional resources.



We require an additional \$300,000 per year to successfully revitalise and connect indentified communities in the Neighbourhood Renewal Program

## **Shared Pathways**

"No separation between cycle ways and pathways, this is dangerous."

"Cyclists on roads (because they) obviously have nowhere else to ride."

#### **Customer Survey 2009**

There is a growing demand from the community for a broader network of shared off road pathways that will provide a dual service for both pedestrians and cyclists.

This network would also encourage active movement around the City and further help to connect communities.

Following a recent audit of shared path and cycling infrastructure, the need for significant new works and modification and improvement of existing infrastructure was identified. The audit identified a number of priorities that would encourage the uptake of cycling and walking.

Key improvements would include: Connections with the City Centres of Penrith and St Marys, providing good access to railway stations and routes that are as direct as possible.

"Cyclists on roads .... have nowhere else to ride."

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"I want it to be known as a City of excellence in administration, layout, employment and facilities." Penrith and St Marys Visioning Process 2005

"Penrith has become more sophisticated, not a country lass anymore".

Penrith and St Marys Visioning Process 2005

"Liven up the Main Street (St Marys)"

Penrith and St Marys Visioning Process 2005

The St Marys and Penrith City Centres are the heart of our City. The renewal programs for these important assets will help stimulate visitor and business activity and enliven the centres.

The improvements will also help encourage economic growth and support new investment in the City by giving each centre its own unique identity.

The program will help cultivate a sense of place particularly recognising the growing importance of both centres and the regional role of our City.

The City Centres renewal works will action the Penrith City Centre Vision outcomes and delivers those works identified in the adopted City Centre Strategy and the St Marys Town Centre Strategy.

Focusing on high activity streets (eg: Lower High Street, Station Street and Riley Streets in Penrith and Queen Street in St Marys), the Penrith and St Marys City Centres renewal will provide:

- Quality public park infrastructure at Memory Park in Penrith and Coachmans Park in St
- Quality street furniture new seats, signs, bins, fences and bollards
- Quality street poles, colourful banners and improved lighting
- Shaded streets
- Quality footpaths and kerbs
- Opportunity for public art and special place
- Facilitate kerbside dining and promotion of a night time economy
- Attract visitors and stimulate business.

For further information on these and other projects please visit Council's website

www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture

Artist impression High Street, Penrith Artist impression Memory Park, Penrith city centre Artist impression Coachman's Park, St Marys Artist impression Riley Street, Penrith

# How will this proposal affect my rates?

That depends upon the land value of your property. However to minimise the impact on our community it is proposed to phase in increases over the next four years. The percentages and the proposed average rate increases would be:

2011 - 12	6.3%	(includes rate peg of 2.8%)
2012 - 13	6.0%	(includes assumed IPART rate peg of 3%)*
2013 - 14	5.5%	(includes assumed IPART rate peg of 3%)*
2014 - 15	5.0%	(includes assumed IPART rate peg of 3%)*

Average rate increase for urban residential properties (excl domestic waste charges & incl stormwater levy introduced in 2012-13)

Land Value	Current Rate	2011 - 12 Increase from previous year	2012 - 13 Increase from previous year**	2013 - 14 Increase from previous year	2014 - 15 Increase from previous year	Total Increase from 2010 - 11 to 2014 - 15
\$200,000	\$755.84	\$48.68	\$40.38	\$45.09	\$43.25	\$177.40
\$250,000	\$850.32	\$54.77	\$42.30	\$50.73	\$48.65	\$196.45
\$300,000	\$1,133.76	\$73.02	\$48.07	\$67.64	\$64.87	\$253.60
\$400,000	\$1,511.68	\$97.36	\$55.76	\$90.19	\$86.49	\$329.80
\$700,000	\$2,645.44	\$170.38	\$78.82	\$157.83	\$151.38	\$558.41
\$900,000	\$3,401.28	\$219.06	\$94.20	\$202.92	\$194.62	\$710.81

#### Average rate increase for rural properties

Land Value	Current Rate	2011 - 12 Increase from previous year	2012 - 13 Increase from previous year**	2013 - 14 Increase from previous year	2014 - 15 Increase from previous year	Total Increase from 2010 -11 to 2014 -15
\$400,000	\$1,511.68	\$97.36	\$30.76	\$90.19	\$86.49	\$304.80
\$500,000	\$1,889.60	\$121.70	\$38.44	\$112.74	\$108.13	\$381.01
\$600,000	\$2,267.52	\$146.04	\$46.13	\$135.28	\$129.76	\$457.21
\$700,000	\$2,645.44	\$170.38	\$53.82	\$157.83	\$151.38	\$533.41
\$900,000	\$3,401.28	\$219.06	\$69.20	\$202.92	\$194.63	\$685.81

<sup>\*</sup> In past years the Department of Local Government has announced a percentage increase in rates - rate-pegging. From 2011 - 2012 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal will be making this announcement. It is assumed that the future increases will be an average of 3.0%.

For almost 90% of residential ratepayers the total increase, phased in over 4 years, would be no more than \$254. This includes \$118 to pay for the priorities outlined in this brochure. The remainder will cover increased costs due to inflation. For more information go to <a href="https://www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture">www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture</a>

Total funds raised over the special rate variation will be \$15.2m (includes IPART rate-peg):

	2011 - 12	2012 - 13	2013 - 14	2014 - 15
Proposed Increase	6.3%	6.0%	5.5%	5.0%
Annual Increase In Dollar Terms	\$4.8 m	\$1.5 m	\$4.5 m	\$4.4 m

<sup>\*\*</sup> The 2012-13 amount is reduced as Council's 2002- 03 Special Rate Variation ends.

# Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is a Special Rate Variation?

Each year IPART sets a maximum percentage amount that councils can increase their rates (known as the 'rate peg') Councils can then assess whether that rate peg is sufficient to maintain services and infrastructure or they can request a rise above the rate peg limit. This is known as a Special Rate Variation (SRV).

#### What is the proposed rate increase?

Council is proposing to request an increase in rates over the next four years. The percentage and the average dollar rate increase would be:

2011 - 12	6.3% (includes rate peg of 2.	8%)
2012 - 13	6.0% *	
2013 - 14	5.5% *	
2014 - 15	5.0% *	

<sup>\*</sup>Assumes IPART rate-peg of 3.0%

For almost 90% of residential ratepayers the total increase, phased in over 4 years, would be no more than \$254. This includes \$118 to pay for the priorities outlined in this brochure. The remainder will cover increased costs due to inflation.

#### What happens after four years?

After four years the total rate base will have been raised to a sustainable level. The Special Rate Variation will end and rates will be increased by the IPART ratepeg only.

#### How much extra money will be raised?

Total funds raised over the Special Rate Variation will be \$15.2m (includes IPART rate-peg):

	2011- 12	2012- 13	2013- 14	2014- 15
Proposed Increase	6.3%	6.0%	5.5%	5.0%
Annual Increase In Dollar Terms	\$4.8m	\$1.5m	\$4.5m	\$4.4m

# Will future funding be evenly distributed across the City?

As a result of previous extensive community consultation and investigations by management in consultation with Councillors, a number of unfunded priorities have been identified in Council's Delivery Program. These are spread across the Penrith Local Government Area and include maintaining existing service levels and City Centre upgrades for Penrith and St Marys and:

Maintaining existing assets and service levels Parks asset renewal Building asset renewal Public amenity replacement program Enhanced public domain maintenance Neighbourhood renewal Enhancement to shared pathways program Talking with business and commercial organisations, the community, sporting associations and other interest groups will ensure a City-wide delivery program for these proposed works.

#### Why is there a need for further funding?

Penrith is both a Regional City and a growth area and as a result, this places many demands on our capacity to maintain existing standards. The community is diverse and different groups have a range of needs and wants.

As economic challenges have arisen from development downturn, unexpected superannuation contributions and the global financial crisis, Council has risen to these challenges by making one-off expenditure cuts and realising significant efficiency gains (valued at around \$3-4m annually) to balance recent budgets.

Despite making annual efficiency gains in recent years, long term financial modelling shows that an ongoing deficit of \$1.3m is forecast over the next five years to maintain existing service levels.

Council has been able to identify significant savings, in the order of \$500,000, during early work on the 2011-12 budget.

However the continuing practice of identifying one-off savings to balance each year's budget is unsustainable and would impact heavily on the delivery of programs and services our community has come to expect.

#### What about rural property owners?

There is significant work planned for regional facilities that service the rural communities such as the Ripples Leisure Centre, Penrith Pool, Child Care Centres, Civic Centre and Queen Street Centre, Libraries, Baby Health Centre, St Marys Cultural precinct, University of the Third Age, Senior citizen centres, The Joan Sutherland Centre and the Penrith Regional Gallery. Council also undertakes maintenance of rural fire service buildings.

The Building Asset Renewal program includes all of Council's building assets including neighbourhood centres, halls, public toilets and canteens at sporting fields. This is about maintaining these important public assets for the future and ensuring that they meet the community's expectations and service standards.

There is a strong focus on preventative maintenance so buildings can continue to deliver required services. Many of these buildings are focal points for rural communities. There is also a focus on accessibility and sustainability with renewal works.

Specific examples of some of the buildings on the program include Castlereagh Hall, Mulgoa Hall, Berkshire Park Hall, and Londonderry Neighbourhood Centre. There are also public toilets and canteens at many of these locations.

#### Are roads included in the Infrastructure Program?

No. Over recent years Council has actively committed increased allocations to these asset program budgets (roads, bridges etc).

The current level of road maintenance in Penrith City is appropriate and in fact is above average for most Councils.

The annual program would see all roads in the City completed within the next 13-15 years at the current level of funding. A fully reconstructed road would have an expected life span of 30-40 years.

So it is considered that the commitment Council made some years ago to increase the maintenance standards for roads, bridges is adequate.

# What is the timeline for deciding on the way forward?

At the end of 2010 Council talked to business and commercial organisations and made contact with sporting associations and other interest groups to arrange consultative opportunities with their members.

A survey will be conducted with the community in February 2011 and a continuous program of information is planned to include; letters to residents, online discussions, public exhibition of information, engagement with the community through shopping centres and City markets and a schedule of media information disseminated through the Council newspaper page, advertisements and media releases.

The application, demonstrating community support for a rate increase, is required to be lodged with IPART at the end of March.

#### What happens if we don't get extra funding?

Council will have to look at extending the delivery of community identified projects over much longer periods of time.

Current levels of service will also be affected and the community and Council will have to decide which current services may not be viable.

The community will have the opportunity to discuss and comment on this further when Council's Operational Plan is exhibited for public comment in April 2011.

#### How can I get more information?

Visit www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture

## **Have Your Say**

Online surveys, discussion forums, feedback opportunities and further information on all proposed works will be available at www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture

**Timetable** 

#### February 11 - March 13

Information will be available at the Civic Centre, Penrith and St Marys Libraries and other key locations

#### February 12 - March 13

Council staff including members of Council's senior management team will be meeting the community at several shopping centres throughout the City:

For dates and locations please visit the website www.ourfuture.com.au/fundingourfuture

#### **Saturday 12 February**

Council staff will be attending the Kingswood Family Fun Day, Wainwright Park Kingswood.

#### Wednesday 23 February & Wednesday 23 March

Council staff including members of Council's senior management team will be meeting the community at the Penrith Markets, Penrith Paceway.

#### Saturday 5 March

Council staff including members of Council's senior management team will be meeting the community at the Hawkesbury Harvest Farmer's Markets outside Penrith Plaza near the Penrith Library.

Please send your comments to;

Funding our Future Penrith City Council P.O. Box 60 Penrith 2751

Email: fundingourfuture@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au Phone: (02) 4732 7650

Details of further opportunities to make comment and lodge submissions will be advertised in local newspapers.

Thankyou for valuable input into this important community decision.



ENGLISH If you do not understand this, please contact the Telephone Interpreting

Service on 131 450 and ask them to contact Penrith City Council on your behalf on (02) 4732 7777. Or come to the Council offices and ask for an

interpreter.

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们代您拨打 (02) 4732 7777 联系 Penrith 市议会。您也可以亲自到市议会来

并要求获得口译服务。

GREEK Αν δεν μπορείτε να το διαβάσετε αυτό, τηλεφωνήστε στην Τηλεφωνική

Υπηρεσία Διερμηνέων στο 131 450 και ζητήστε τους να επικοινωνήσουν με το Δήμο Penrith (Penrith City Council) για λογαριασμό σας στον αριθμό

(02) 4732 7777, ή ελάτε στη Δημαρχία και ζητήστε διερμηνέα.

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ITALIAN Se non riuscite a leggere questo, contattate il servizio telefonico di inter-

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VIETNAMESE Nếu quý vị không thể đọc được thông tin này, xin liên lạc Dịch Vụ Thông

Dịch Qua Điện Thoại ở số 131 450 và yêu cấu họ thay mặt quý vị liên lạc với Hội Đồng Thành Phố Penrith ở số (02) 4732 7777. Hoặc hãy tới Hội

Đồng và yêu cầu có thông dịch viên.

