

Engagement Outcomes Report: Drafts of Council's key strategic documents 2019-29

Overview

The public exhibition of Council's draft Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents for 2019-29 was held from 15 May to 11 June 2019 inclusive. The following documents were included in the exhibition:

- Draft Operational Plan and Budget 2019/20;
- Draft Fees and Charges FY2019/20;
- Draft updated Long Term Financial Plan 2019-29; and
- Draft revised Delivery Program 2018-22.

The documents were available on Your Say Inner West (YSIW – yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au), where submissions were taken via a survey. Council received 31 submissions during the public exhibition period, which are summarised in the *Summary of submissions* section of this report.

Purpose

In line with Council's Community Engagement Framework, the goal of this engagement was to consult the public by seeking feedback on the documents prior to finalisation and adoption. The 28 day public exhibition also satisfied statutory requirements determined in the Local Government Act s405(3) for the adoption of these documents.

Notification of the public exhibition

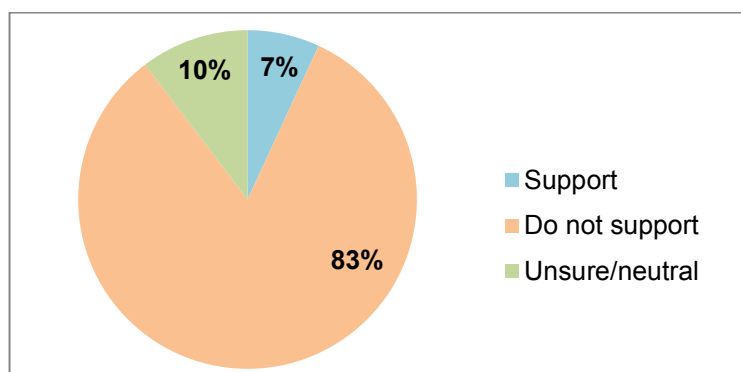
The public exhibition was promoted via Council's official channels, detailed in the table below.

| Channel | Date(s) |
|--|---|
| Posters and hard copies for inspection at Ashfield, Leichhardt and Petersham service centres | Duration of exhibition period |
| Inner West Council website news/announcement (initially appearing on the homepage) | 17 May 2019 |
| YSIW homepage | Duration of exhibition period |
| YSIW monthly e-newsletter | 30 May 2019 |
| Social media | Facebook - 17 May 2019 Twitter - 19 May 2019 |
| Inner West Courier (both City and West editions) - YSIW feature project in Council Column | 4 June 2019 |
| Notifications / YSIW hyperlinks on Council's 'Corporate Planning, Performance and Budget' and 'Fees and Charges' sections of the website | Duration of exhibition period |

The exhibition was supplemented by more specific notifications to customers of some services (e.g. signs at aquatic centres; childcare customers).

Summary of submissions

During the exhibition period the Your Say Inner West project page received 860 visits, and 31 submissions were received. Internal feedback from relevant staff was also considered during the exhibition.



A large proportion of respondents indicated they did not support the draft documents. However upon reading the associated comments it was apparent most non-supportive comments fit into one of two categories:

- Dissatisfaction with Council's financial position in a general sense; or
- Dissatisfaction with a proposed increase / change for a specific fee or charge.

Key issues and themes from submissions are summarised in the following table.

| Theme / Issue | Summary of comments raised in submissions | Staff comments | Amendment required? |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Disapproval of financial deficit | <p>The comments received on this theme covered a number of sub-topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deficit in Council's budget; • Council's plans to address the deficit; • Use of reserve funds for services; • Increase in staff costs; • Outsourcing of Services; and • Relationship between budget and the amalgamation of former councils. | <p>A number of options to address the deficit were recommended to Council in the draft budget papers on 14 May 2019. Some or all of these will need to be considered and progressed to realise the savings required to return the budget to balance or surplus.</p> <p>In order to deliver savings, Council will be required to consider options for efficiencies over the short, medium and long terms.</p> | No |
| Detail of financial information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items should be listed separately and not bulked. • Insufficient information / detail about overheads costs and distribution. • Insufficient detail about budget carryovers. | Noted. | No |



INNER WEST COUNCIL

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|---|--|--|---------------------|
| Increased Children and Family Services fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The childcare fee increases are reasonable. The service that our family has been using for 7 years is fantastic. Do not support. If you have more than one child in care the costs add up very quickly. Fee increases are unaffordable – twice inflation, are above the government's Childcare Subsidy Scheme cap of \$110, and not everyone's salaries increase with CPI. Increased fee should only be charged to new students. Fee increases are not in line with service quality. | Increased fees largely relate to room hire and higher costs associated with onboarding educators and do not impact child care daily rates. Increased fees in venue hire and other discretionary activities will help to keep overall fees down. | No |
| Changes to sporting grounds hire fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four year phased implementation of fee changes is not clear. Moving to an hourly rate for ground hire makes it much more expensive for our club which will put up registration fees for junior players. There needs to be another rate for junior ground used for cricket, some grounds are not feasible for senior use. Proposed fees will increase seasonal hire fees 3-fold which is unsustainable for community sporting clubs. | <p>It is proposed to harmonise the fees and charges across the Inner West to ensure equity. It is proposed that there is no net change in overall income (other than CPI). To ensure fairness for individual clubs who may face increased fees, it is proposed to phase the changes in fees and charges over four years.</p> <p>The sporting grounds are subsidised by Council. The expenditure on sporting grounds is over \$1.6 million per annum on turf maintenance, linemarking and seasonal changeover. The income from sporting grounds is currently \$515,000.</p> <p>Notwithstanding if it is junior or senior sport, Council has to maintain the grounds, at a subsidised rate.</p> <p>Amendment: Fees and Charges have been updated to clarify four year phasing of fee changes.</p> | Yes |
| Synthetic playing fields | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council should not spend \$2m on plastic grass when that money could be spent on infrastructure for Globe Wilkins Preschool. Synthetic grounds only suit a few sports and are too hot to use during the day in summer. Soccer clubs should only be allowed to play on synthetic grass from now on. | <p>The matter of synthetic sporting grounds is out of scope for this engagement as it has been considered in a separate engagement.</p> <p>Council's adopted Recreation Needs Study: A Healthier Inner West identifies an action to investigate the feasibility of synthetic surfaces, particularly to increase the capacity of the field in hours of usage.</p> <p>Council recently endorsed Tempe Reserve as the preferred location for a synthetic turf field.</p> | No |



INNER WEST COUNCIL

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|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------|
| Key performance indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest improvement of KPIs –customer service, environment, engagement and in general. | <p>Suggestions for KPIs improvements have been noted.</p> <p>In 2019/20 Council will conduct a comprehensive review of its KPIs to improve performance indicators and reporting across the organisation.</p> | No |
| Trees and environment | <p>Trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no overarching plan to significantly improve the tree canopy in the Inner West and no measurable goals for improvement Every week, permission is given for applicants to remove at least two trees, with no requirement for replacement The plan to decrease the timing of tree approvals suggests that it will be easier to obtain permission in future If the cost of a tree pruning or removal permit was cheaper or free then I think that there would an increase in compliance <p>Environment / stormwater</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there funding in this budget for gross pollutant traps (GPTs)? | <p>Trees</p> <p>Council plants over 900 trees per year. This is an identified KPI in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.</p> <p>The current Delivery Program includes development of a comprehensive Urban Forest Policy and Street Tree Master Plan for the Inner West which will guide Council's approach for the future.</p> <p>Council is also currently reviewing the Tree DCP which outlines canopy targets for new developments.</p> <p>Council will conduct a comprehensive review of its KPIs in the coming year.</p> <p>Environment / stormwater</p> <p>Yes. The four year capital program provides for the investigation, design and installation of up to three new GPT installations. In addition the operating budget provides for the ongoing maintenance and cleaning of existing installations.</p> | No |



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| Community and culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are International Women's Day and Business Breakfasts still funded for increasing attendance? Is there funding for a Women's Officer? Concern about strategies and programs for seniors and disadvantaged – e.g. healthy ageing, Meals on Wheels. | <p>Council is committed to promoting International Women's Day (IWD). Council has foreseen the increase in attendance for IWD events and over the past two years increased the budget accordingly. Council will continue to fund, promote and host events for IWD.</p> <p>In response to feedback, Council has expanded the Women's Business Breakfast initiative to be more inclusive and reach more women in business than those that just attended the breakfast event. The Women in Business Program is a series of educational workshops that bring women in business together in a supportive environment to access new information, learn new silks to enhance and grow their business. Networking is a key component. Three to four of these targeted events for women are conducted annually with 73 attendees at the most recent event.</p> <p>Council has a dedicated Workforce and Diversity Manager position to increase the level of diversity and inclusiveness within Council. The responsibility is to develop and implement strategies and programs to increase diversity levels in target groups and to reduce barriers at work. The position works closely with other Council specialist staff. Some actions to date relating specifically to women have included targeted mentoring and leadership development programs/ workshops, high performance leadership program at all levels, Women in STEM work experience program with local schools, and International Women's Day activities and events.</p> <p>Council has a number of ongoing programs and activities to support healthy ageing, including more than 80 separate programs each day.</p> <p>In 2019/20 Council will plan and provide services and infrastructure for a changing and ageing population. This Delivery Program and Operational Plan include the development of a ten year Healthy Ageing Strategic Service Plan and develop a four year Healthy Ageing Action Plan. These plans will succeed the earlier Leichhardt Healthy Ageing Strategy.</p> | No |



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| Engagement process | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requests for further transparency and community engagement about the budget.• Budget should be presented more transparently to enable comment – e.g. items should be listed individually and not bulked. | <p>Requests for further engagement have been noted.</p> <p>Further engagement, including a public information session was held for the 2018/19 Operational Plan and Budget, but this was not continued for 2019/20 due to high cost and very poor attendance. Council will continue to review its engagement for key IP&R documents in line with community expectations, legislative requirements and the adopted Community Engagement Framework.</p> <p>Council will soon begin review of its suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents in greater detail, including the Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy.</p> | No |