

ATTACHMENT 2 – SUMMARISED COMMENTS TO THE EXHIBITION

Survey Responses

Top rated decisions of interest to individuals

Survey respondents were asked to rank which types of decisions they were most interested in, with top ten issues listed in priority order below:

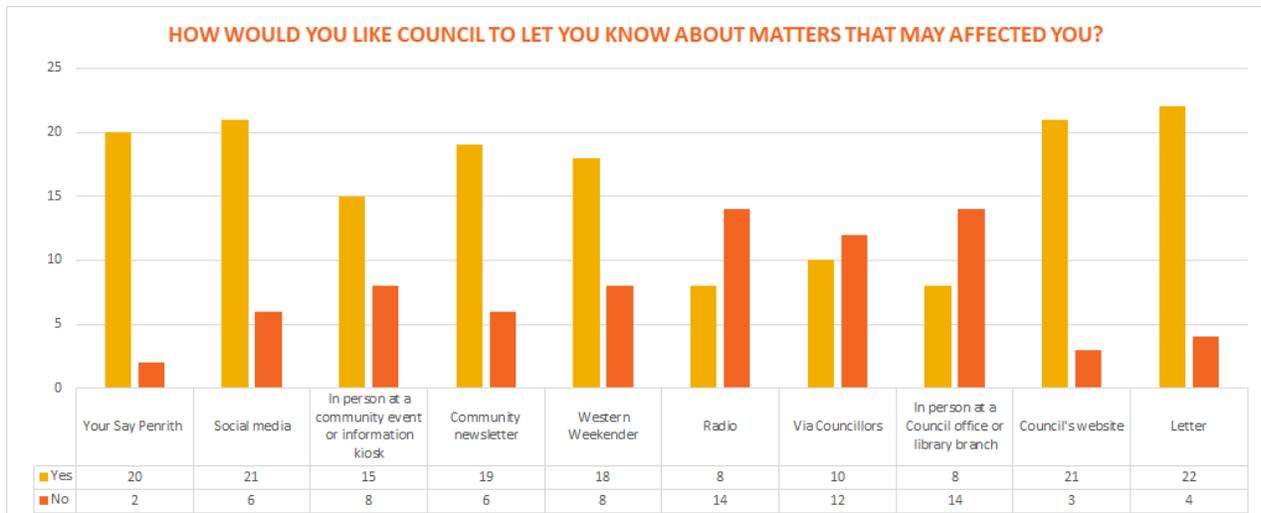
1. My local area
2. Long-term vision planning for Penrith City
3. New development / planning proposals
4. Land use planning
5. Environment and sustainability
6. Community assets i.e. buildings, roads, footpaths
7. Recreation, sport and open space
8. Budget and rates
9. State and Federal Government projects

The Community Engagement Strategy (CES) outlines how the community can expect to be involved in Council's decision-making processes, as well as the limitations of involvement. Limitations exist where the community does not have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to a decision due to risks, predetermined legislative requirements or guidelines and other factors out of Council's control. As part of Section Two of the CES an extensive Community Strategic Plan (CSP) engagement program will be implemented next year to understand the community vision for Penrith. The engagement will ensure the community has an opportunity to inform long-term vision planning for the City and to an extent their local area. The comments to the exhibition will inform the review of the Community Plan to make sure we are meeting our community's needs and expectations around how they prefer to be engaged.

The Community Participation Plan outlines how the community can be involved in planning and development decisions, including long term visions and plans. It is integrated with the CES to ensure that it is linked with Council's broader directions and objectives for community engagement. This approach ensures that the community will have a say in the decisions that interest them. The CES and CPP provide one resource where the community can find information about how to have their say on all of Council's decision-making processes.

Communication preference on decisions that may impact individuals

The community's communication preferences on decisions that may impact individuals are consistent with our existing main methods of communication, with residents most likely to use online sources such as social media, Your Say Penrith or Council's website to access information. Email was repeatedly mentioned as an effective means of communication in the comments, with additional mentions including email notifications with the quarterly rates notices, agreed sms and smartphone applications.



The 'How our community prefers to engage' content on page 12 of the CES has been updated to include community feedback to the exhibition on the preferred methods of engagement.

Engagement challenges

Responses to engagement challenges were split, with collated responses equally expressing feedback on the difficulties and ease of engaging with Council.

Difficulties identified by respondents are summarised below.

- The community is aware Council's decisions are recorded in Business Papers which are available on our website; however, the length, language and structure have been identified as a barrier to understanding Council business. Community engagement was flagged as the ideal opportunity to increase community awareness on Council projects.
- Access to information and awareness of opportunities to engage were identified as a challenge. Comments to address this included engaging widely across the local government area, ongoing prompting of opportunities to engage as residents get caught up in their day-to-day duties and more timely notifications of opportunities to inform a decision.
- Additional comments requested Council place greater weight on the concerns the community raises, improved responses from Councillors to community enquiries and greater direct access to Council project officers.

Respondents indicated they either have not experienced any difficulties commenting on a decision or mentioned it has been easy to get involved in Council decision-making processes, with one respondent commenting they easily access information from Council's website and social media.

Section One of the CES guides the identification of stakeholders, the level of engagement and the community's preferred methods of engagement. Identifying the impacts of a decision on different community groups allows for greater targeted engagement and promotes the planning of 'best fit' engagement programs based on community informed engagement preferences. The CES aims to increase awareness of how the community can expect to be notified and involved in a range of Council's decision-making processes.

Other comments to the draft Community Engagement Strategy (Sections One and Two)

Other comments to the draft CES varied from support of the Strategy to additional feedback on considerations to inform the finalisation of the CES.

Further considerations included:

- Online consultation information and printed content at exhibition sites should be the same.
- Increase engagement on social media platforms
- Greater emphasis on seeking community input during the planning stages of a project
- Western Weekender doesn't reach everyone in the LGA, Council should consider alternative media platforms as a main notification source
- Based on previous experiences, a respondent expressed a concern on whether Council would implement the CES and it would be supported if it was
- Increase exhibition periods to go for a period of 6 – 8 weeks to allow for community groups to support residents who need support to provide informed feedback
- CE consultation should have been promoted to all residents

Comments expressing support of the CES included:

- "It's great you have been asking for feedback for quite a while now. Shows Council is very proactive".
- "It's a start and it has created interest in me to follow"

The CES responds to the feedback by identifying the preferred methods of engagement based on the comments to the exhibition on page 12 and updating the 'Engagement challenges and actions to close the gap' on page 16. Revision of the CES will provide opportunities to record changes to community engagement preferences and identify challenges.

Plan or development types where people would like Council to extend an exhibition period beyond the minimums on pages 23 and 24 of the draft Community Participation Plan

Most respondents didn't suggest extensions to the exhibition period, or didn't comment. Each of the four submitters suggested one of the following:

Comment	Response
A minimum notice period of six months	The minimums exist as a baseline, and the CPP provides flexibility to extend beyond the minimums where necessary. A minimum notification period of six months would significantly extend the duration of planning and development applications and approvals.
A minimum of 28 days for all plans and development	Some plans or development have lower minimum exhibition timeframes due to their scale and existing regulations set by the State.
Any plans or development which relate to the CBD should be extended	It is believed that all persons in Penrith should receive an equal minimum opportunity to comment on all plans or development. The CPP allows exhibition timeframes to be extended where necessary.
Exhibition extended where there is a direct impact on	The CPP includes an option for Council officers to extend exhibition periods and notification areas based on the

road infrastructure in the inner Suburbs	development's impacts. This allows flexibility for consultation and notice to respond to these site-specific considerations.
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As there are no existing maximum exhibition timeframes, the CPP provides Council officers the opportunity to extend exhibition time frames where necessary to meet the community engagement principles and actions set out by the CES. No amendments have been proposed to this section of the CPP in response to this submission.

Top rates Participation Principles

Survey respondents were asked to rank which of the planning participation principles was most important to them. A summary of the 30 responses received is provided below, in order of highest to lowest community preference.

1. The community has a right to be informed about planning matters that affect it.
2. The community will be given opportunities to participate in strategic planning as early as possible to enable community views to be genuinely considered.
3. Members of the community who are affected by proposed major development will be consulted by the proponent before an application for planning approval is made.
4. Planning information will be in plain language, easily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation in planning.
5. Council will encourage effective and on-going partnerships with the community to provide meaningful opportunities for community participation in planning.
6. Community participation will be inclusive, and Council will actively seek views that are representative of the community.
7. Planning decisions will be made in an open and transparent way and the community should be provided with reasons for those decisions (including how community views have been considered).
8. Community participation methods (and the reasons given for planning decisions) should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of the proposed development.

These rankings may not reflect respondents' preferences in an absolute manner, as they do not allow equal prioritisation of principles. To ensure equality of representation and consistency with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, all these principles are included in the CPP.

These responses show that the community feels most strongly about being informed and involved as early as possible in the strategic planning process. In response to this feedback and other responses to the survey, the following engagement principles have been included in the CES on page 7 and CPP on page 20:

1. **CLEAR AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION**
We will provide clear and prompt information about the decision and how you can have your say to give you time to provide informed feedback.
2. **MEANINGFUL AND GENUINE**
We will facilitate genuine opportunities to listen and understand your needs, ideas and concerns so you can inform the outcomes.
3. **INCLUSIVE**
We will do our best to overcome barriers to access to ensure we hear from as many

people as possible, with particular efforts made to identify and hear from underrepresented community groups.

4. WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

Work in respectful partnerships, with the understanding that community and government are responsible for shaping Penrith.

These principles will direct how community engagement is planned and implemented during planning and development processes.

Other comments on the draft Community Participation Plan

A summary of the comments raised in response to this question is provided below:

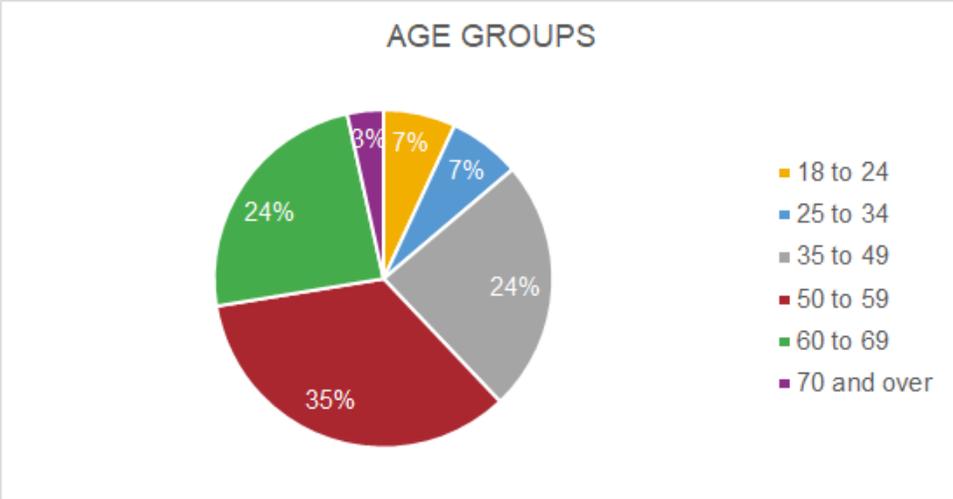
Comment	Response
Need to close the loop and notify the community of planning and development decisions.	The CPP includes a commitment in the Notification section for the community to be notified of planning decisions with a newspaper advertisement. Legislation requires that development decisions be publicly notified, this is included as part of the CPP.
Request for group consultation of community in rural areas. Noted that they found out about the exhibition through community networks and action.	Council will use multiple methods suited to each development or proposal to consult the community and allow people to have their say. Council's engagement principle 3, INCLUSIVE has been included in the CPP to reflect the importance ensuring engagement is appropriate for all in our community.
Responses to the CES and CPP are irrelevant if development is progressing while the document is prepared, without considering community responses to the CES and CPP.	The community responses have been collated and reported to Council within 15 working days after the exhibition period ended. This ensures community responses are considered as soon as possible through existing adopted and legislated Council and State processes. The CES and CPP document will apply to all future development once adopted.
People affected by development should receive notification of development decisions	Legislation requires that development decisions now be publicly notified, and this requirement is identified in the CPP.
One respondent identified that notification should be provided prior to the commencement of construction, demolition or clearing.	For the most part, legislation does not require notification to neighbours when works start on an approved development. Where notification is required, it is the responsibility of the person who has the benefit of the development under State legislation, and is monitored by the Principle Certifying Authority, which may not be Council. Where controls exist, or where Council is undertaking the work, modification of procedures to include notification can be

	investigated. This advice has been noted and will be considered to inform any relevant future commentary Council provides on State policy changes.
People directly affected by proposed development should be given a meaningful opportunity to have their say on proposed development. The approach to communicating about development and listening to feedback should be genuine and empower the community.	The CPP outlines how and when community members can have their say on proposed development. The submissions received are reported to Council and considered in determining whether development should be approved. Council's engagement principle 2. MEANINGFUL AND GENUINE has been included in the CPP to reflect the importance of this.
People with vested interests in an issue seem to be consulted more extensively than the broader community. This, and other practices such as Council's survey process, produce biased consultation results.	A broad range of consultation approaches is intended to capture a diverse range of responses from Penrith's Community. Council's engagement principle 3. INCLUSIVE has been included in the CPP to reflect the importance of this.
Council employees and Councillors should share the same direction on community engagement to ensure consistent and timely responses to the community and priorities.	The following engagement principles have been included in the CPP to reflect the importance of this and inform decisions on planning and development consultation. 1. CLEAR AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION and 4. WORK IN PARTNERSHIP
Including rankings in the engagement survey is an issue, as the community member considers several items equally important.	A statement to respond to this consideration for the rankings system is provided in the section of this report summarising survey responses for the CPP principles to ensure that this is clear to Councillors and the community.
Support for the development of Orchard Hills as an Emerging Centre.	This survey response has been included in the assessment of Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) public exhibition feedback.

These responses show that the community wants to be engaged with on planning and development matters. The CPP has been amended to include community engagement priorities that reflect the community's responses to the survey material, and items for future consideration have been noted.

Demographic information:

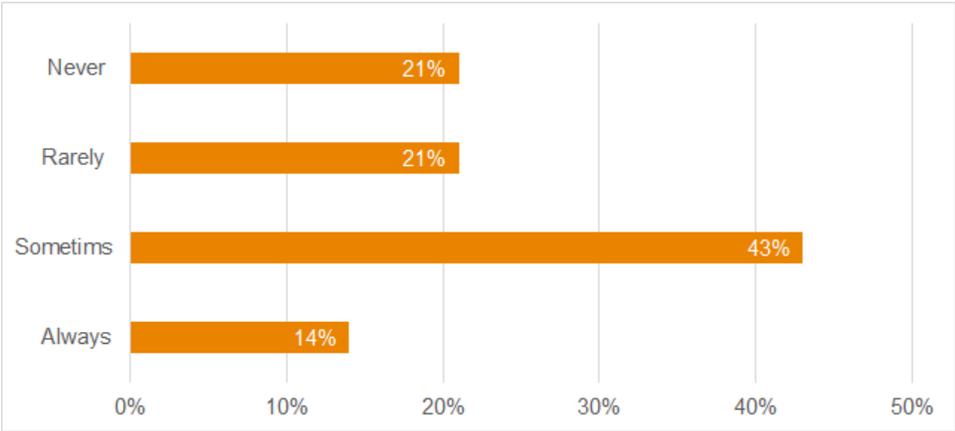
Survey respondents were predominantly between the ages of 35 to 69 years of age.



Other demographic information on respondents included two people identifying as having a disability and three respondents identifying they speak a language other than English. No respondents identified to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Quick Poll

A quick poll question asked if Your Say visitors found it easy to find information about a Council decision and have their say. The graph below provides shows how frequently these 14 people found it easy to find information. This indicates that access needs to be improved, but is a very small sample.



The CES responds to this feedback by incorporating the challenges identified in the feedback to the exhibition in ‘Engagement challenges and actions to close the gap’ on page 16. In addition, Section One of the CES outlines how the community can expect to be engaged in decision processes, raising awareness on the communication and engagement platforms Council currently uses consistently.

Drop in sessions

Council hosted five combined Local Strategic Planning Statement, Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan drop-in sessions for residents which were attended

by 64 people who registered their attendance, and a large number of people who attended but did not register. At these sessions, residents informed us that they are passionate about:

- The need for effective and diverse engagement methods. This was a particular concern for residents in rural areas and older residents.
- Education for the community about what decisions Council makes, what importance these decisions have and how the community can be involved.
- Opportunities to use existing communication methods, like the community newsletter and rates notices, to notify the community about engagement opportunities and Council's decisions.
- Closing the communication loop by giving people an opportunity to both have their say and to be informed of the outcomes of their engagement and Council decisions.
- Younger people want to be involved in decision-making, but often aren't engaged effectively or don't understand how to have their say.
- Documents need to be written in a way that everyone can easily understand.
- The planning system and levels of engagement the community has in planning can be difficult to understand.
- Council could connect more often with local community groups – in person or online.
- Council could incentivise feedback and be more responsive to feedback to encourage community members to participate.

The CES responds to the feedback by identifying the preferred methods of engagement based on the comments to the exhibition on page 12 and including the 'Engagement challenges and actions to close the gap' on page 16. Revision of the CES will provide opportunities to record changes to community engagement preferences and address challenges.

In response to the Community's feedback during the drop-in sessions, the CPP has been amended to include a graphic on page 18. The graphic includes a broad summary of the planning system, what planning and development decisions Council makes or contributes to, and how the community can be involved.

Phone calls

Two separate phone calls were received from residents in Berkshire Park; both calls included discussions about the communication methods used to promote the exhibition of the draft CES and CPP, and the limited access to information Berkshire Park residents experience.

Feedback from both residents included a preference of direct mail to rural residents and online information channels such as social media being flagged as ineffective methods to engage rural residents.

The CES responds to the feedback by identifying the preferred methods of engagement on page 12, challenges were identified in the 'Engagement challenges and actions to close the gap' on page 16 and the feedback will inform how Council engages Berkshire Park and other rural communities in developing the vision for Penrith's future in next year's Community Strategic Plan engagement program.