



Rates Harmonisation Community Reference Panel

Terms of Reference

Purpose

This Community Reference Panel will provide feedback and advice to Council in the development of a new, harmonised rates structure for Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council.

QPRC must harmonise the two rating structures that are currently in place, and Council seeks to collaborate with a group of ratepayers who will provide feedback and advice to Council in the development of a new, equitable rating structure.

Council will inform and involve the Panel, providing detailed information about the fundamental principles that underpin the development of a new rating strategy, information about the rates modelling and analysis that has been undertaken, and the key decision points that require more detailed discussion. The Panel will ultimately recommend a preferred rating structure for consideration by Council and the broader community.

Accountability

The Community Reference Panel will have an advisory role to Council. The Panel recommendations will be provided to a Council workshop (preliminary feedback) and to a subsequent Council meeting. The recommendation will inform Council's decision for the preferred rating structure.

Membership

The Community Reference Panel will have approximately 10- 12 members selected through an expression of interest process and appointed by Council. The Panel will represent a range of ratepayer groups, including:

- Business ratepayers
- Residential ratepayers
- Farmland ratepayers
- Former Palerang Council ratepayers
- Former Queanbeyan City Council ratepayers.

Resources

Community Reference Panel members will be supported by Council staff who will provide background briefings, analysis and reporting of rate structure options. Staff will facilitate the panel workshops and record the Panel recommendations report.

Panel Meetings and Workshops

Council staff will meet with Panel members in small groups to provide background information and answer questions during November and December. These sessions will be held at times and places that suit individual panel members. The purpose of these sessions will be to provide background information and analysis reports, and to answer member questions about Council's preferred rates structure options.

It is anticipated that the community reference panel will meet up to three times between 20 January and 14 February 2020 and meetings will be held on weekday evenings in Bungendore; however this will be guided by the panel members. These workshops will be held as required.

Panellist responsibilities

- Adopt a constructive and cooperative approach and respect views of all Panel members.
- Commit to attending workshops and actively participate in all discussions. If unable to attend, inform Council staff as early as possible so workshop times can be adjusted if possible.
- Review and consider material provided as pre-reading for the Panel meetings. Staff will provide assistance and briefings, answer questions and provide additional information as requested by panel members to assist this process.
- Respect the position they hold with regard to access to information, and not use this position in any way for individual personal gain.
- Maintain a level of confidentiality in regards to information provided and ideas discussed by other Panel members.
- Comply with the minimum standards set out in the QPRC Code of Conduct 2019.

Council responsibilities

- Adopt a constructive and cooperative approach and respect and listen to the views and recommendations of the panel members.
- Ensure a high level of organisational support for community panel activities and fairly reporting panel outcomes
- Provide feedback to the panel on how their contributions have been incorporated or used to inform Council's decisions.

Rates Harmonisation Community Engagement Plan

Timeframes	Responsibility	Community Engagement Activity
27 Nov 19	Council	Resolve community engagement strategy, preferred options and terms of reference for community reference panel.
28 Nov 19 to 14 Feb 20	Community Reference Panel	Community Reference Panel activity: • One on one and small groups: detailed review of preferred options (Inform) • Group workshops: consult and collaborate

28 Nov 19 to 14 Feb 20	Council	Community engagement activity: • Website – Background information
26 Feb 20	Community Reference Panel	Report to Council – Community Reference Panel recommendations
26 Feb 20	Council	Resolve preferred rate structure for community consultation
27 Feb 20 to 9 Apr 20	Council	6 weeks community engagement activity: • Community meetings • Drop in / pop-up stalls • Social media • Council website • Your Voice website (survey – comments sought)
22 Apr 20	Council	Report to Council – results of community engagement
22 Apr 20	Council	Endorse Draft Revenue Policy for public exhibition (28 days)
24 Jun 20	Council	Adopt Revenue Policy
25 Jun 20 to 11 Jul 20	Council	Close the loop activity – Your Voice website: provide update on adopted policy