

Canada Bay 2012 Citizens' Panel Final Report

Executive Summary
(Including overall Findings / Recommendations)

Executive Summary

- ❖ The panel examined Council services in detail, many of which we were not previously aware. We found that services currently meet the community's diverse needs and expectations.
- ❖ The panel recognised a significant shortfall in funding for long-term maintenance and renewal of infrastructure, e.g. roads, storm water drains and seawalls, which will impact future generations if unaddressed.
- ❖ We were able to identify a number of reductions to services, including:
 - ❖ Frequency of street cleansing
 - ❖ Frequency of park mowing
 - ❖ Expenditure on events
 - ❖ Elimination of expenditure on the Sister City program
- ❖ The panel found some new sources of revenue:
 - ❖ Limited use of parking meters
 - ❖ User-pays services for non-residents of Canada Bay
 - ❖ Increased opportunity for commercial activity in public spaces
- ❖ We recommend that Council maintain their focus on efficient operations and find new ones.

Executive Summary

- ❖ After new revenue and cost savings, the panel reluctantly decided that raising rates was necessary to address Council's remaining significant funding shortfall and still meet community expectations in regard to providing services, taking into account the following:
 - ❖ Raising the minimum rate.
 - ❖ A rates increase of up to 9% could be tolerated after consideration of the panel's other recommendations.
 - ❖ Minimising the impact on those least able to pay.
- ❖ The panel also believes that the Council needs a fundamental rethink of transparency and communication.

Engaged City – Recommendations








Key Aims

#1 : Transparency in all council activities


#2 : Services remain relevant to Canada Bay's changing needs

#3 : Regular consultation with Citizens


Engaged City Summary

Priority Services by Function of Future Plan 20 Financial Analysis	Level
Building Certification & Compliance	
Community Advocacy / Community Engagement & Capacity Building	
Community Planning	
Management of Council's Communications & Public Relations	
Sister City Program	
Provision, Management & Operation of Buildings	
Strategic Planning	


Building Certification & Compliance

Service:	Development, Construction & Occupational Certificates
Recommended Level:	 Higher level of service
Detail:	Engage with the applicants to discuss issues and provide thorough feedback regarding any failure to meet required standards.
Funding:	Collaborate with surrounding councils to share staff (Decrease overheads & direct expenses) Increase application fees if possible to deliver a better level of service (Increase direct income)


Community Advocacy, Engagement & Capacity Building

Service:	Provision of community information on services and facilities in relevant community languages and through a variety of means, as well as facilitating community consultation and engagement
Recommended Level:	 Similar level of service
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*We would like to see citizens provided with clearer instructions and guidelines on who to approach and how to approach council for any and all queries*Creation of a “Go-To” source of information, a “one-stop shop”*Provide clarity to citizens as to what are Local issues, State issues and Federal issues
Funding:	Use of existing outlets such as the libraries and website (No additional overheads) Also See: Vibrant City – recommendations under ‘Civic & Community Event Program [B]’

Community Planning

Service:	Undertake community strategic plans and profiles, such as developer contribution plans.
Recommended Level:	 Similar level of service
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*More audit or control of the information regarding what is on the Contributions 'wish list'*More consideration of maintenance of the subject development or the contributed asset*Engage in more proactive planning and transparency*Citizens Panels for significant development as well as decisions on developer contribution plans
Funding:	Investigate options to increase levies for new development (Increase direct income)

Management of Council's Communication & Public Relations

Service:	Corporate communications, such as management and promotion of council business, producing associated point of sale products, producing media releases and communication materials.
Recommended Level:	 Similar level of service
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*We would like the council to review its communications approach*Explore alternative and more cost effective means of communication*Implementing a 'paperless plan'.*We propose that all council notices distributed in hard copy are printed in black and white*Ask individual households if they would prefer hard or soft copy communication*Multi-purpose mailouts, e.g at the same time as council rates*Sponsored mail-outs, adverts from local businesses
Funding:	Money saved can be injected into other services of council (Reduce direct expenses)


For example...




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Please visit our page for more information on how these savings are being put to use.


Sister City Program

Service:	Sister City Program
Recommended Level:	 Elimination of expenditure
Detail:	*Apply for grants to subsidise expenses, rather than allow for it in council budgets
Funding:	Money saved can be injected into other services of council (Reduce direct expenses)

Provision, Management & Operation of Buildings

Service:	Provision of council office buildings, depot and SES buildings, community halls, multipurpose community centres and toilet blocks
Recommended Level:	 Lower level of service
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*We recommend that all building be reviewed in terms of their feasibility and upkeep expenses*Any unused spaces in libraries, community centres etc. that are costing the council to maintain should be leased out for non-for-profit services such as occasional care.*Unused and degrading buildings with little or no income potential should be reviewed in terms of their highest and best use. For example, former Concord West library site should be considered for sale, or turned into a profitable space such as an early childhood care and education centre.
Funding:	Maintenance of unused buildings reduced (Decreased overheads) Generate more services for citizens using existing spaces (Minimal increase to overheads)

Statutory Planning*

Service:	Managing development (*Whilst this function is covered by the 'Liveable' city, we wish to focus specifically on community engagement regarding Development Control Plans, Land Use Planning, Local Environment Plans and Development Applications)
Recommended Level:	 Higher level of service, to improve <i>Satisfaction</i> for 'Managing Development' under CoCB Community Survey 2012 ♠
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Engage with the applicants to discuss issues and provide thorough feedback regarding any failure to meet required standards.* Provide more and various types of consultation with applicants, such as face to face and on-site consultation* Land value increases due to zoning changes should be paid back to council in the form of a levy
Funding:	Collaborate with surrounding councils to share staff (Decrease overheads) Increase application fees if possible to deliver a better level of service (Increase direct income)

Statutory Planning continued...

New Ideas:

- *Provide new and various methods of consultation, such as face to face and on-site meetings for development applications
- *Citizens Panels for significant development projects
- *Offer constructive and useful feedback on why decisions have been made regarding projects. For example if a DA is rejected, an 'engaged' council would listen to the applicant's needs and offer alternative solutions that suit both parties
- *Council ought to provide, or at least guide citizens towards, independent information or an ombudsman that will advise people of their rights concerning development.
- *All consultation and feedback to be in up-front, simplified language.
- *Make details of section 94 contributions and voluntary planning agreements publically available and easy to access
- *Aim toward a one-stop-shop model adopted by other councils for DAs up to \$50,000
- *Actively approach interest groups such as the 'Access Committee' and 'BayBUG' for relevant input






Vibrant City – Recommendations

Key Aims


#1 : Reflect the quality of Canada Bay through services we provide

#2 : Identify future needs of the community and make preparations


Vibrant City Summary

Priority Services by Function of Future Plan 20 Financial Analysis	Level
Civic & Community Event Programs [A]	
Civic & Community Event Programs [B]	
Library Service	
Provision, Management & Operation of Non-Infrastructure Assets	
Provision of Services & Facilities for Families	


Civic & Community Event Program [A]

Service:	Produce and manage community events (Ferragosto and Concord Carnival)
Recommended Level:	 Lower level of service, to reflect low <i>Importance</i> for 'Local festivals and events' in CoCB Community Survey 2012 ♠
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Community events such as Ferragosto should be re-evaluated in terms of their feasibility. We suggest a change of location to limit traffic redirection costs, for example.*Community events ought to target a wider spread of demographic interest*We recommend that the council reconsider its current obligation and financial outlay to events such as Ferragosto.
Funding:	Reduce expenditure on festivals/events with low satisfaction and importance (Decrease direct costs) ♠


Civic & Community Event Program [B]

Service:	Produce and manage community events, and provide temporary customer service functions and Council information at council sponsored community events
Recommended Level:	 Higher level of service, to increase <i>Satisfaction</i> for 'Local festivals and events' in CoCB Community Survey 2012 ♠
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Make space available for markets for arts, crafts, cultural foods, collectibles, op shops, books, fashion etc.*Prefer rotation of locations throughout Canada Bay to avoid regular traffic disruptions*Council to have regular customer service stall to raise awareness of community services and events, provide assistance for local issues, notify residents of upcoming development and planning*Provides exposure for many small businesses, interest groups and cultures without restriction to any specific area or demographic*Stall spaces to be leased out with discounts offered to residents or businesses from LGA
Funding:	Work with external market operator and earn income from Council space (Increase direct income)


Library Service

Service:	Existing services such as book loans, internet and computer access, youth and children's programs are to be promoted and continued. New programs to be introduced to create more outreach into the community and to utilise existing space without the need for more overheads.
Recommended Level:	 Higher level of service, to improve <i>Importance</i> of 'Library services' in CoCB Community Survey 2012 ♠
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Provide more teen-aged youth services such as tutoring and work experience agencies*Utilise unoccupied space for introduction of new programs with little or no added overheads*Outreach via school newsletters asking parents and students what services they need*Training programs targeted at seniors in things like social networking, Skype, and computer use.
Funding:	Introduce membership fees for residents outside of Canada Bay LGA (Increased direct income) This concept can be applied to other council-provided services, not just libraries

Provision, Management & Operation of Non-Infrastructure Assets




Service:	Plant & Equipment Maintenance, Operation and Renewal
Recommended Level:	 Similar level of service
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Eliminate any unnecessary expenses incurred by poor management of council equipment*Review council's policy on handling and allocating inventory of supplies*Council to be more stringent in following up distribution and use of equipment*Conduct a feasibility study that aims to improve efficiency in staff numbers* [*Overlap into Human Resources: Engaged City]
Funding:	Direct expenses saved by an overall improvement in efficiency and security can be injected into other services of the council (Reduced overheads and direct expenses)

Provision of Services and Facilities for Families*

Service:	Services for young people; to provide a safe, friendly and fun environment for high-school children ages 12-18. It can be a place to hang out, make new friends, chat to youth workers and/or counsellors about any issues that the young person may be concerned about. (*Whilst this function is covered by the 'Healthy' city, we consider there to be significant overlap)
Recommended Level:	 New higher level of service, to improve <i>Importance</i> and <i>Satisfaction</i> for 'Services and facilities for teenagers and young people' in 2012 Survey ♠
Detail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide more Teenaged youth services such as tutoring and work experience Spaces within existing facilities, libraries, and community centres to be utilised *Youth volunteers may be sought, those who are currently studying at TAFE and need work experience *Create Youth Events, blue light discos, and film festivals (if funding available)
Funding:	Lease out space at libraries and community centres to a tutoring agency (Direct income) OR Introduce a new tutoring service out of these spaces to generate revenue (Direct income) *In both instances, it would be a 'user pays' system.

Healthy City - Recommendations

Healthy City Summary

Service	Detail	ServiceLevel	Funding
Provision of Parks and Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mowing schedule Grass maintenance 		n/a
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park and playgrounds (funding) Community gardens 		Cafes, sponsorship
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground maintenance Craft/Food markets Events 		Markets, event charges
Provision, management and operation of Recreation Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporting grounds Swimming pools and Golf courses 		Sponsorship, increased charges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting and Watering systems 		n/a
Services, programs and facilities for Children, Families and Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School holiday programs Parenting programs Seniors' bus trips 		Increased charges for some services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of events and programs Early Childhood education and care Utilisation of Library premises 		n/a

Provision of Parks and Playgrounds

Decrease some services

Push passive open space mowing schedule out from every 2 weeks to every **2.5 weeks in Summer, and every 3.5 weeks in Winter**

Consider **planting out some areas of grass with native plants** to minimise ongoing maintenance costs.

Provision of Parks and Playgrounds

Maintain current service level, look to alternate funding sources

Look into further opportunities for generating funds to offset park management costs by **establishing cafes at Timbrell Park and Drummoyne Park** (capitalising on foreshore areas), and increasing the **mobile cafe van at Cintra Park** to include weekend service.

Look into **sponsorship of parks and playgrounds by local businesses**, with the addition of an advertisement strip to the bottom of existing park signage to acknowledge their sponsorship.

Consider **sponsorship of Community Gardens at Chiswick and Concord** by a not for profit organisation like Circle of Learning: <http://www.circlesoflearning.org.au/>

Provision of Parks and Playgrounds

New initiatives

Continue to **maintain playgrounds** in line with Playfix inspection recommendations. Be transparent about these by **distributing information about repair schedules and timeframes** to citizens on a regular basis (eg. update in local paper or Bayside Brief).

Work with external operator to investigate user pays community events in Council-owned locations, e.g. a **'Movie in the Park'** event, school holiday activities

Provision, management and operation of Recreation Facilities

Maintain current service level, look to alternate funding sources and increasing charges for some services 

Look into **sponsorship of ovals and sporting grounds by local businesses**, with the addition of signage around grandstands and on scoreboards to acknowledge their contribution.

Consider **increasing charges for entry to swimming pools and golf courses.**

Provision, management and operation of Recreation and Public Facilities

New initiatives

Continue to **install 'green' and energy saving lighting, motion sensors and watering systems** to minimise costs – replacing existing infrastructure where appropriate, and including these measures on all new developments.

Services, programs and facilities for Children, Families and Seniors

Maintain current service level, look to increase charges for some services 

Consider **increasing the cost of school holiday programs** to cover expenses.

Consider **charging for parenting programs/ training sessions.**

Consider **increasing the cost of Senior's bus trips.**

Services, programs and facilities for Children, Families and Seniors

New initiatives

Events and programs need to be further promoted to increase community awareness about their existence. Consider utilising school/early childhood services' newsletters/email systems, advertising in local newspapers and utilising library email database.



Certainty needs to be provided to community based **early childhood services** around rental lease agreements. Services need to be consulted and engaged with on **an individual basis**. The aim should be to preserve the fabric of community based early childhood services.

Consider what else can be done to **address the shortage of early childhood education and care** in the local area.

Consider **holding more programs in Five Dock and Concord Libraries** to further promote the use of these facilities.

Green City – Recommendations

Green City Summary

Service	Detail	ServiceLevel	Funding
Household organic waste program (in conjunction with proposed Community Gardens as outlined below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council to investigate ways to reduce organic waste going to landfill, particularly for residents without gardens.		User Pays, Savings from waste deposits
Provision of Management and Operation of Recreation Facilities (Golf Courses & Sporting Grounds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work toward equalising the subsidy for sport and recreation based on a per-user basis.		n/a

Household organic waste program

New Initiatives

Council to investigate ways to reduce organic waste going to landfill, particularly for residents without gardens.

Examples include:

- Providing in-home size composting bins & fermenting materials (such as Bokashi bucket and grain), collection & refuse services.
- Using compost for Community Gardens & home garden initiatives/cooperatives.
- Liaising with schools to initiate or increase gardening education.

Example funding model:

- No Cost to Council/User Pays: Council to charge on a cost-recovery basis.
- Savings from waste deposits can reduce the Waste Levy and compensate the costs of the program
- Costs example: \$70 for one Bokashi bucket (410mm H x 310 mm W x 300mm D – for 19 litres of waste) \$8 for 1 kg /1.5 litres of organic grain

Liveable City - Recommendations




Liveable City

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Look at long-term reduction in asset management and renewal by reviewing Development and Control Plans and Local Environment Plan.
- * Look at promoting energy efficiency within new developments
- * Look at land zoning to maximise flexibility for future uses
- * Review of parking signs / permits. i.e. look at increased parking restrictions during peak weekend times in areas of congestion - IE around Cintra Park during netball competition on a Saturday to allow traffic flow to and from and past the site.
- * Ability for non-residents to purchase parking permits for metered or restricted areas IE: ferry terminal.
- * Reduction of service in animal management.

Moving City - Recommendations

Moving City Summary

Service	Detail	ServiceLevel	Funding
Community Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Council Bus • Provision of bus trips • Investigate advertising on the Council bus 		n/a
Provision, management and operation of roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridges • Road Pavement, Road Surface • Traffic Facilities • Kerb and Gutter • Roadside Assets • Structures 		Savings from other areas, rate rise, parking meters
Provision, management and operation of roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Applications Administration • Footpaths and Cycleways • Car Parks • Representation and Consultation 		Watch spending against the budget

Overview

General Comments

Survey results indicated that maintenance of roads and footpaths are regarded as **very important**, but have **lower satisfaction**. Both of these items are in the “Opportunities for improvement” quadrant, indicating that more attention should be given to these areas.

In the last few years, the maintenance of the “Public Roads” asset class has been **underfunded**. The **overall condition** of these assets has **deteriorated** as a result. In 2010-11 the funding deficit was nearly **\$2.3m** [1]

Types of Recommendations

The Panel has found no room for direct cost reduction in this area.

1. Source: *Financial Report 2010/11, City of Canada Bay*, Special Schedule No.7 – Condition of Public Works

Community Transport

Investigate efficiencies

Investigate possible efficiencies to the Council Bus service to reduce the cost to Council.
Consider a **volunteer driver program** to reduce the need for the bus service.

Investigate advertising on the Council Bus

Keep to Budget

We note that, despite the overall trend of underspending, the maintenance for Footpaths and Cycleways was over budget for 2010/11. Given the deficit of funding for all other public roads assets, Council should be careful not to over spend against the budget.

Provision, management and operation of roads

Funding the Maintenance Deficit 👍





Use of **parking meters** in strategic locations, provided:

- The meters are **clearly labelled** with the intended target of the raised funds
- The meters are **not placed in positions where they may affect the viability of local businesses**

Potential **rate rise** to cover black hole in maintenance funding, so bridges, roads and road-related assets can be maintained to a satisfactory condition. The **reason** for any rate rise must be **clearly communicated** to the residents and business owners of Canada Bay.

Prosperous City - Recommendations

Prosperous City Summary

Service	Detail	Funding Level	Funding Source
Commercial Precinct Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath Cleaning/Sweeping • Kerb & Gutter Sweeping • Bin Servicing 		Saving
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of Canada Bay Area • Increase digital promotion of local attractions • Promotion of sporting & other event facilities 		Potentially money saved from Commercial Precinct Maintenance
Place Management – emerging precincts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging precincts are defined as Rhodes and Parramatta Rd 		N/A
Place Management – Established Commercial Precincts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging investments • Maintaining Town, Village & Neighbourhood centres • Parking Controls • Encouraging employment • Promotion of Annual Street Fairs 		Additional funding required

Commercial Precinct Maintenance

Proposed Service Reductions

Great North Road, Five Dock

Reduction in Kerb & Gutter sweeping from daily to every second day

Majors Bay Road, Concord

Reduction in Kerb & Gutter sweeping from daily to every second day

Victoria Avenue, Concord West

Reduction in Kerb & Gutter sweeping from daily to every second day

Tourism

Proposed Alterations to Services

Revamp website to make access to tourism information easier, including signposting and links in associated pages

Increase social media presence in target markets (next page)

Provide encouragement to local business to increase services to tourism hotspots

Actively promote council-owned facilities such as Drummoyne Pavilion and Waterfront Parks for functions, both within the LGA and in neighbouring LGAs

Potential Funding Sources

Money saved from Commercial Precinct Maintenance

Increasing Parking Meters in tourism hotspots

Increased fees & levies for sporting associations

Tourism

Sport & Leisure

Golf Courses, Bay Run, Cintra Park, Concord Oval

Waterways

Wharves & Jetties, Picnic Areas, Waterfront Restaurants, Parks & Wedding Venues

Targets for
Tourism
Promotion

Heritage

Kokoda Trail, Nurses Museum, Rivendell Hall

Industrial

Rhodes, Mortlake

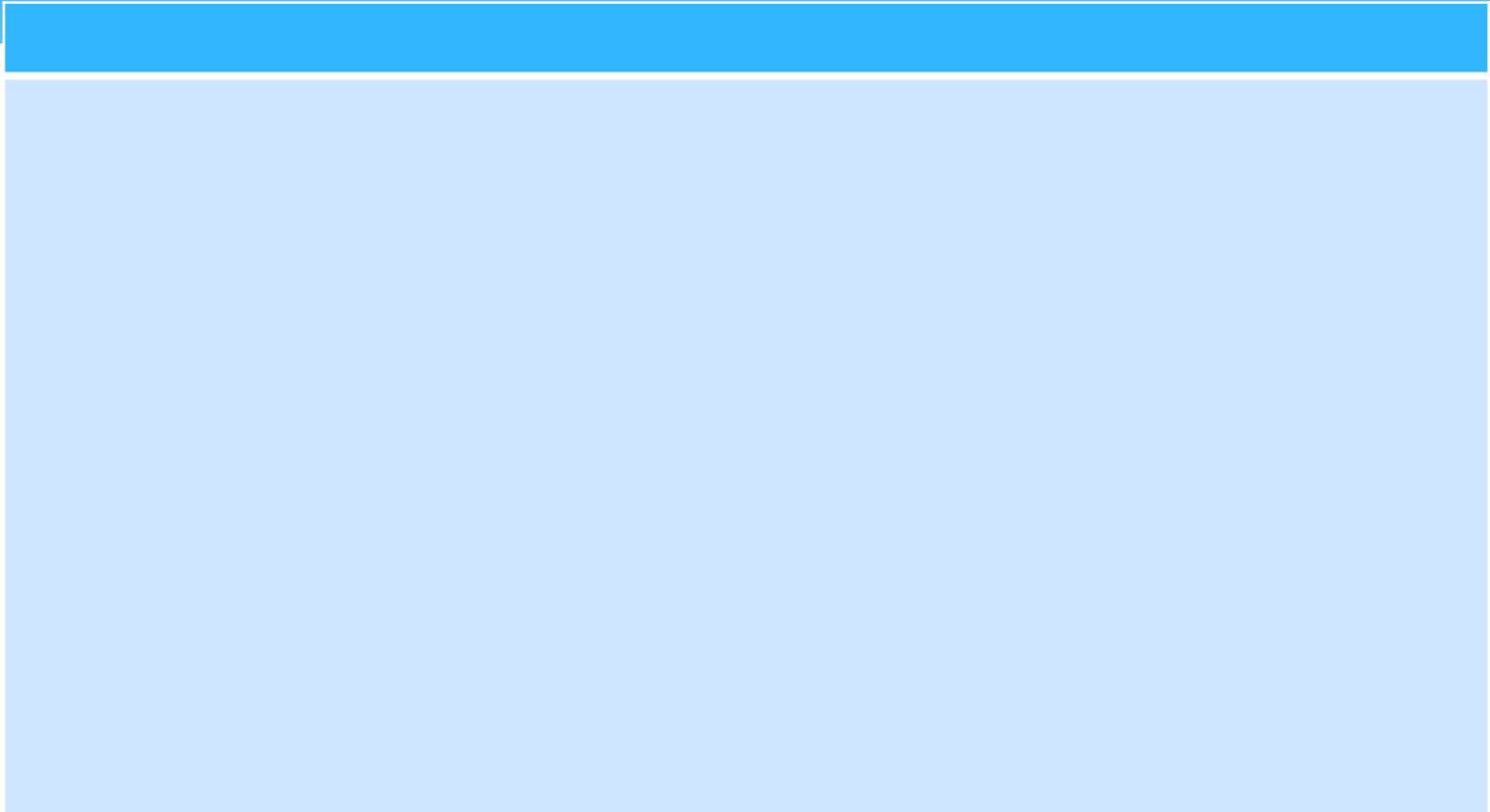
Place Management – Established Precincts

Proposed Alterations to Services

Increase resourcing for Place Management, with priority as follows:

1. Tier 3 – Neighbourhood Centres
2. Tier 2 – Village Centres
3. Tier 1 – Town Centres

Appendix 1 – Additional Notes



Background

- ❖ During April 2012, Canada Bay Council issued 1500 invitations to residents asking for participation in a Citizen's Panel
- ❖ From those who responded 36 panel members were randomly selected that statistically reflected the demographic of Canada Bay
- ❖ The panel met for five Saturdays during the period of May to July 2012
- ❖ The panel were asked specifically to consider:
 - the priority services for Council to deliver;
 - the level of those services; and
 - agree the preferred funding sources for each of their preferences

Background

Work Undertaken

- ❖ To assist with the task, the Panel were provided with a comprehensive list of all services currently provided (along with income/ costs associated with each service listed)
- ❖ Members of the council executive and staff attended various meetings and were available for questions
- ❖ A secure online forum was provided on the Councils website to enable additional information to be provided to panellists and for additional ideas / issues to be discussed
- ❖ In addition, members of the community were invited to attend the meetings on two occasions to address the panel in relation to their specific needs and requests.

Disclaimer

When reading the previous findings and recommendations it should be noted that;

- a) this was not an audit
- b) that the panellists have relied on representations and information supplied by council
- c) these findings relate to the information as it was available during May to July 2012
- d) That whilst some panellists have special knowledge in particular areas their engagement in this process has been in their capacity as ordinary citizens of the Canada Bay council area
- e) The panel agreed that 75% agreement to any matter was to be considered a consensus