



MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 9 JUNE 2021

1. Opening

The Public Forum commenced at 5.33pm.

Council's Service Manager of Business and Innovation, Martin Darcy, presented Council with the NSW Local Government Excellence Award for Supporting Local Enterprise that QPRC recently won. This award recognises the success of the treasure Trail campaign for economic recovery that was instigated and developed by the Business and Innovation Branch of Council.

2. Presentations relating to listed Items on the Council Agenda

The following presenters were heard:

	Name	Item no	Item description	For/Against
1	Mr John Putt	8.2	2005/DEV-0433.A - Modification to Continue Use as a Reception Centre - 41 Molonglo Street, Bungendore	For
2	Mr Ian McNamee	8.6	Stronger Country Community Grant Proposed Projects	For
3	Mr Stephen Moore	8.6	Stronger Country Community Grant Proposed Projects	For

3. Petitions

There were no petitions submitted.

4. 'Questions on Notice' from the Public

Responses to the following 'Questions on Notice' received up to 19 May 2021 were provided and tabled at the meeting (see attached for responses):

Nos	Received from	In relation to:
1-10	Simon Condon	QPRC Climate Action Plan
11-18	Greg Buckman	QPRC Draft Operational Plan 2021-22
19-21	Katrina Willis	Ellerton Drive Extension
22	Katrina Willis	Bushfire prone land

5. Presentations by Invitation from the CEO

There were no presentations.

6. Closure

As there were no further matters, the Public Forum closed at 5.50pm.



ATTACHMENT TO MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 9 June 2021

‘Questions on Notice’ from the Public

Responses to the following ‘Questions on Notice’ received up to *Wednesday 2 June 2021* were provided and tabled at the meeting.

Questions submitted by: Simon Condon

QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations 2020 to 2030

- 1. In the *QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations*, it says: ‘Council is committed to develop annual public reports on its progress implementing the plans’ and ‘Council has also developed a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that it plans to report against annually as part of the policy’. When will the first annual report on *QPRC’s Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations* be released? What are the KPIs that Council has developed for it?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

Council will release its first annual report on both the Community and Council Operations Climate Change Action Plans in October 2021 for the 2020/2021 financial year. The delay of 3 months post financial year is required to ensure appropriate data collection particularly for the last quarter of the financial year. Following in the footsteps of the first report, Council will report on the progress of the plans annually after the completion of each financial year up until the completion of the plans in 2030.

KPIs currently listed in our Operational Sustainability Policy which will be reported against include:

- Energy emissions
- Transport emissions
- Waste emissions
- Water consumption

Council may however include additional KPIs later.

- 2. Action CO 7.1.2 of the *QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations*, says that Council will, in the short term, ‘review emissions and renewable energy targets and consider adopting 100% renewable energy and net zero greenhouse gas emission targets for Council operations by or before 2050’? When will this review take place?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

At this stage Council will review its emissions reduction and renewable energy targets in 2024/2025 following on from Council’s current 2025 30% emissions reduction target.

3. **Action CO 7.1.7 of the QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations, says that Council will, on an ongoing basis, ‘source some or all its energy from renewables’. What proportion of Council’s energy supply is currently sourced from renewable energy?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

Council owns 17 behind the meter solar systems, and one combined solar and battery system in addition to a number of solar powered street lighting. In total these systems generate and store (battery) over 700 megawatt hours of renewable electricity a year. This equates to roughly 7% of Council’s total electricity consumption.

Council is also considering a renewable energy purchase power agreement for its large market sites and street lighting.

4. **Actions CO 7.4.1 and CO 7.4.2 of the QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations say that, in the short term, Council will upgrade minor and main road street lights to LED technology. What proportion of QPRC’s minor and main road street lights have been upgraded to LED in the 12 months since Council adopted the plan in May 2020?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

The majority of the LED upgrades to minor and main roads street lighting (95%) have now been completed. Some small areas are still remain, however we expect this to be completed in the coming months.

5. **There are 52 actions in the QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Council Operations. How many of these have been progressed or actioned in the 12 months since Council adopted the plan in May 2020?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

16 actions have been completed or are being progressed since the adoption of the plan in May 2020. A list of these projects will be provided in the annual report.

QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Community 2020 to 2030

6. **In the QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Community, it says: ‘Council is committed to develop annual public reports on its progress implementing the plans’. When will the first annual report on QPRC’s Climate Change Action Plan: Community be released?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

See response to Question 1

7. **There are 79 actions in the QPRC Climate Change Action Plan: Community. How many of these have been progressed or actioned in the 12 months since Council adopted the plan in May 2020?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

20 actions have been completed or are being progressed since the adoption of the plan in May 2020. A list of these projects will be provided in the annual report.

8. **With respect to renewable energy, action CU 6.1.4 of the *Climate Change Action Plan: Community* says QPRC will ‘encourage the community to install solar PV’, while action CU 6.1.7 says it will ‘investigate opportunities for council and the community to collaborate on a local community renewable energy project’, and action CU 6.1.8 says it will ‘investigate bulk buys for solar PV and solar hot water’. What progress has been made on each of these since the plan was adopted in May last year?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

Council has been educating and providing information to the community on the benefits of renewable energy systems through a variety of mediums such as Council’s sustainability newsletter, sustainability mailing list and environmental events. Similarly, Council has provided preliminary advice to several communities and sustainability groups who are looking to facilitate community energy projects. Council still remains open to approaches and assessing proposals to collaborate on community energy projects and/or providing professional advice.

Council will continue to work on these actions throughout the ongoing implementation of the *2020-2030 Community Climate Change Action Plan*.

9. **With respect to energy efficiency, action CU 6.1.1 of the *Climate Change Action Plan: Community* says QPRC will ‘encourage the community to become more energy efficient’, while action CU 6.1.6 says it will ‘encourage or help to provide energy audits for households’. What progress has been made on each of these since the plan was adopted in May last year?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

Council has been educating and providing information to the community on the benefits of energy efficiency (reduced GHG emissions, cost savings) through a variety of mediums such as Council’s sustainability newsletter, sustainability mailing list and environmental events.

Council will continue to work with energy agencies encouraging household audits, and will continue on these actions throughout the ongoing implementation of the *2020-2030 Community Climate Change Action Plan*.

10. **With respect to transport, action CU 6.2.9 of the *Climate Change Action Plan: Community* says QPRC will ‘provide better local and inter-city bus services’, while action CU 6.2.11 says it will ‘subsidise [a] bus service between Braidwood and Canberra’. What progress has been made on each of these since the plan was adopted in May last year?**

Response: Natural and Built Character

No action to date. Council will continue to work with the NSW and ACT Governments in line with respective Transport Strategies and the QPRC MoU with ACT on public transport connectivity and availability. .

Questions submitted by: Greg Buckman

QPRC Draft Operational Plan 2021-22: general rates and water charges

11. Why are the base amount and ad valorem rates for residential rate payers in Queanbeyan urban, residential Bungendore and residential Braidwood different to each other?

Response: Organisation Capability

Each of the former councils had different rating structures. The structures were harmonised through a community reference panel and community engagement in 2019/20. The rate structure follows a principles based approach with subcategorisation for local communities with unique characteristics and different levels of infrastructure and services. The ad valorem amount is set to recover the cost of infrastructure and the base amount is set to recover the cost of services and operations. The rates yield by category and sub-category is consistent with the prior year rates yield.

In this way, all properties within a subcategory pay a proportionate share toward the cost of infrastructure based on their land value, and the base charge is used to set a pricing difference for the type, quality and scope of services provided in those localities.

12. Is QPRC planning to make the base amount and ad valorem rates for residential rate payers in Queanbeyan urban, residential Bungendore and residential Braidwood the same as well as across other similar rate paying categories in the LGA? If so, when is this planned for?

Response: Organisation Capability

No. The purpose of the rates harmonisation process that QPRC completed in the prior year (2019-20) was to create a fair and equitable rating structure and included comprehensive analysis of options and an extensive community engagement process to decide on the preferred rate structure, which is now in place.

The equity principle was considered in two ways:

1. Ratepayers who have more access to, make more use of and benefit more from services should pay a higher rate.
2. Ratepayers who have less capacity to pay rates should pay a lower rate.

Council will continue to seek feedback every year as part of the Revenue Policy review, and it is expected that the Revenue Policy will continue to change and develop over time to meet the needs of ratepayers. However, Council is not expecting to entirely reconsider the underlying principles and basis for the current rates structure – meaning that we would expect the current subcategorisation to stay in place for some time.

13. Why are the water access charge (for, say, a 20mm pipe), and the cost per litre, for residential rate payers in Queanbeyan urban, residential Bungendore and residential Braidwood different to each other?

Response: Organisation Capability

Council has not yet completed the harmonisation process for water and sewer annual charges, and this process will be informed by the completion of the *Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy* for the Queanbeyan network, that takes into account the current and future operational costs of the network, and the future infrastructure renewal requirements.

The similar strategy work for the Palerang water and sewer networks has been completed, and has been used to inform the annual charges for the Palerang communities water.

Ultimately, Council collects revenue from water and sewer properties to fund the cost of infrastructure provided to keep those water and sewer infrastructure networks operating.

- 14. Is QPRC planning to make the water access charge and price per litre for residential rate payers in Queanbeyan urban, residential Bungendore and residential Braidwood the same as well as across other similar rate paying categories in the LGA? If so, when is this planned for?**

Response: Organisation Capability

The harmonisation (not equalisation) of water and sewer charges will take into account the cost of owning and operating the different water and sewer networks, and the cost drivers for water and sewer services are different across the different networks in the towns Council will consider the options from an informed position once the *Queanbeyan Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan* is complete, and prices will be set to ensure the required income is collected.

It should be noted that water for the Queanbeyan urban area, including Jerrabomberra and Googong, is purchased from ICON Water via agreement, so the charge per KL is largely dependent on the cost it is purchased from ICON.

QPRC Draft Operational Plan 2021-22: infrastructure and environment special rates, QPRC rates comparison and operating result forward estimate

- 15. The QPRC Draft Revenue Policy 2021-22 says that Council plans to introduce a new environment special rate from 1 July 2022, if approved by IPART. How much additional environment spending will QPRC be undertaking with the extra revenue that the special rate will earn?**

Response: Organisation Capability

At its meeting on 26 May, Council resolved to defer the consideration of the Enviro Care Special Rate Variation until after the September 2021 election. This matter will be considered by the new Council. The proposal put to Council on 26 May would have raised an additional \$1.5m per year to be spent on maintenance, improvements and collaboration projects related to environmental management.

- 16. The QPRC Draft Revenue Policy 2021-22 says that Council plans to introduce a new infrastructure special rate from 1 July 2023, subject to the endorsement of the new Council. What will be the maximum and minimum percentage cost impact of this measure? What is the maximum and minimum amount it is likely to generate?**

Response: Organisation Capability

The value of the proposed levy has not yet been considered as the NSW Government is yet to formally consider the new Bill. The NSW Government has proposed a new Bill to clarify that special rates may be levied to co-fund or contribute to infrastructure or services being jointly provided with another level of government, and may support development. Income from this special rate will not form part of a council's general income under the rate peg and would not require a Special Rate Variation, or require IPART approval. Once legislated, Council will consider new projects that would qualify for a special rate, and engage with ratepayers on any proposal. Community consultation would take place as part of Council's annual community engagement process and would seek to discuss anticipated benefits of the project and special rate, anticipated total project costs, council's contribution to those costs, the contributions to be made by others, the total special rate being proposed, and how, and for what time period, the rates are to be levied.

17. In 2016, consultants Percy Allan and Associates said that Queanbeyan City Council's average residential rate level was above the median level of other medium sized coastal councils in NSW. How does QPRC's level of residential rates currently compare to these councils?

Response: Organisation Capability

The NSW Office of Local Government publishes comparative data for NSW councils each year. Councils are placed into groups of similar sized councils, with QPRC included in Group 4. The most recent data is from the 2018-19 financial year.

The Your Council website shows the following

Rate type	QPRC result	Group average
Avg Ordinary Residential Rate (\$)	1,137.1	1,128.1
Avg Ordinary Business Rate (\$)	4,474.2	3,715.5
Avg Ordinary Farmland Rate (\$)	2,375.7	2,307.9
Avg Ordinary Mining Rate (\$)	12,500	177,269.6

The information can be accessed via <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/comparative-council-information/your-council-website/>

18. What is the forward estimate (across the 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 financial years) of QPRC's net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes? Do these forward estimates include the proposed environmental and infrastructure special rates?

Response: Organisation Capability

The long term financial plan was most recently published in July 2020, and is currently under review. Given the Council's current budget, we expect a negative impact on our previous 10 year forecast. Council is currently considering its options for budget improvement that will impact the results. It will publish the updated long term financial plan in the first quarter of 2021/2022.

The currently published figures for the net consolidated operating result before capital are:

2022 (operating plan)	\$428,310
2023 (long term financial plan)	(\$2,120,000)
2024 (long term financial plan)	\$355,000
2025 (long term financial plan)	\$2,475,000

All of the assumptions are detailed within the long term financial plan, for these results. They do not include the proposed environmental and infrastructure special rates.

Questions submitted by: Katrina Willis

Ellerton Drive Extension

19. Who initiated the review and update of modelling that led to deleting a number of road treatments and upgrades from the Googong Local Planning Agreement?

Response: Community Connections

Council initiated the review of the traffic model covering the Queanbeyan road network.

20. When was the review undertaken and why?

Response: Community Connections

The review was undertaken in 2014 as it had been over five years since the initial Googong and Tralee Traffic Study was undertaken. An update to the traffic model was required to capture new Census data, new development data and new traffic counts from both Queanbeyan and Canberra. A further review is scheduled following the opening of EDE and once South Jerra developments are occupied.

21. Has the updated modelling be published? If so, where can the public read it? If not, will the council now publish the new modelling?

Response: Community Connections

The updated traffic study (South Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan Traffic Analysis) can be found on Council's website <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Building-Development/Planning-Zoning/Planning-Studies-Strategies>

Part 4 of this study looked at the traffic generation from various development in Queanbeyan to calculate the revised contributions.

Bushfire prone land

22. Has the council undertaken a review of bushfire prone land since the bushfire emergency of 2019-20? If so, please provide details. If not, when will this occur?

Response: Community Connections

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* requires councils to record a bush fire prone land map after consulting with the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS). The Commissioner will designate lands to be bush fire prone within an area and, when satisfied that the lands have been recorded on a map, certify the map as the Bush Fire Prone Land map. Councils are required to make these maps available for public inspection.

The former Palerang and Queanbeyan Councils each recorded their bush fire prone land and had their own certified Bushfire Prone Land maps. In consultation with RFS both maps have been reviewed, combined and updated to conform with the most recent RFS mapping requirements. These updates include identifying the new Category 3 Vegetation, which covers grasslands. Previously there were only two vegetation categories and as a consequence of the new category, it means that most land within our LGA is now identified as bushfire prone. The biggest changes are within the area south of Queanbeyan.

The NSW RFS Commissioner certified the new Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council Bush Fire Prone Land map on the 20 April 2021. Bushfire new prone land map is available as a layer in Council's online mapping at: <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Building-Development/Planning-Zoning/Online-Mapping>