

# Community Engagement Strategy

for the Community Strategic Plan

[hornsby.nsw.gov.au](http://hornsby.nsw.gov.au)



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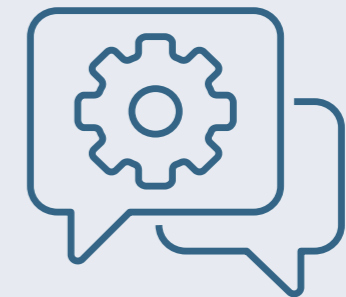
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Council would like to recognise the traditional owners of the lands of Hornsby Shire, the Darug and Guringai Aboriginal people, and pay respect to their elders and their heritage.

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Front Cover image courtesy Claire Miles





## aim

The aim of this strategy is to make sure that Hornsby Shire Council understands what people want and aspire to in the future. We will do this by making sure:

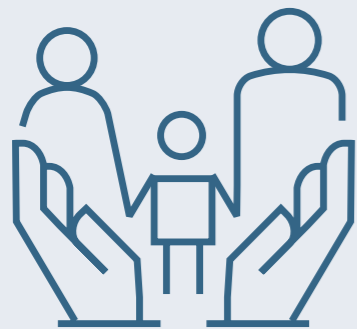
- our communities know about the services we provide
- our communities are aware of the financial implications of providing services
- our communities can have their say through effective consultation
- all groups (who share an interest) and geographical areas in Hornsby local government area are included in opportunities for consultation and engagement.

# what we mean by 'engagement'

When we say 'engage' in this strategy, we use it in the sense of getting involved, so that to engage someone is to attract their attention, make connections with them and work together for a shared purpose.

At Hornsby we define engagement in three ways:

- 1. Provision of information**, which is more than standard information on services and will be provided in a way that can be easily accessed and understood, for example online, hard copy, Twitter and Facebook.
- 2. Consultation**, which allows people to have a say about what they want and need and their views for the future.
- 3. Involvement**, which is the most interactive form of engagement and leads to more empowered individuals and communities. It will include direct participation and working with residents and ratepayers in designing policies for the future.



# what communities have told us about engagement

## 2009

Our residents' survey conducted in June 2009 showed people feel they do not get enough information from us - less than half (45%) feel we keep them very or fairly well informed.

- Only 37% were satisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by the council, although 45% did not express a strong opinion one way or the other.
- Around 60% of all respondents wanted to be more involved in the decisions the council makes that affect their local area, and another 26% say they would depending on the issue in question.
- Of the people who wanted to be more involved the majority would prefer email.
- Residents and other stakeholders also told us that they particularly dislike the lack of coordination from different council departments (in the distribution of leaflets for instance)

Council acted on the feedback by taking a more active approach including:

- Appointing a person into a marketing role
- Developing a stronger social media presence
- Being responsive to comments on social media
- Growing the monthly e-news database
- Developing and embedding a stronger and more consistent brand presence in all communications



37%

Satisfied with opportunities for participation in local decision-making



Majority of people wanting to be involved prefer email

## 2015

In 2015 Council engaged Straight Talk Consultants to review past community consultations and develop and implement research to ascertain the effectiveness of Council's communications. The results showed that we are improving with 72% of the community having seen Council's brand or logo recently.

Overall people from the CALD community were more positive about their interactions with Council, whereas younger people felt Council was large, faceless and unresponsive. Those who identified themselves as 'working families' wanted more information in quick precise points of information and wanted broader communication using many different forms of communication methods.

The **2017 CSP Engagement Plan** will take account of the feedback.



72% of the community have seen Council's brand or logo recently



Working families want quick precise points of information via different methods

# who should we engage with?

It is important that we engage with those people who are most likely to be affected by services, policies and decisions. This may be residents, people who work in the area, visitors and students. It may also include businesses, public authority service providers and anyone else affected or interested.

We must especially consider the involvement of people whose voices may not be heard. This includes the six equality 'strands' of age, gender, disability, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

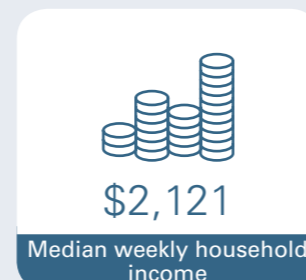
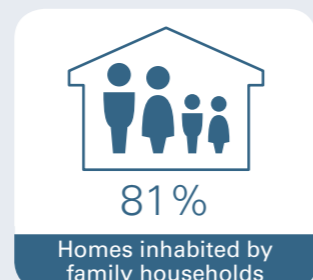
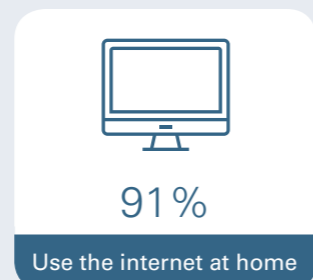
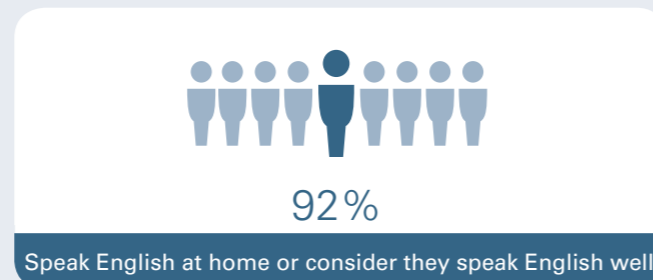
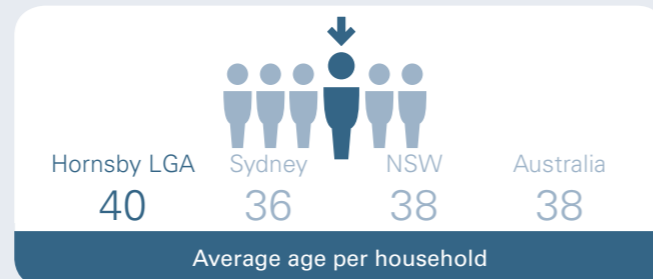
Effort must be directed at innovative ways of reaching the 'silent majority'. The traditional community meeting format does not suit people working or heavily involved in family and other activities.

Who is the 'silent majority' in Hornsby Shire?

- The average age in Hornsby Shire is 40 years, and the average home has 2.9 people.
- 92% of people speak only English at home or consider they speak English well
- 91% of people use the internet at home
- 72.2% of people completed year 12 or equivalent
- 81% of homes are inhabited by family households
- The median weekly household income is \$2,121

Source – ABS Census 2016

Council should communicate as one organisation and with one voice, coordinating the information it provides, and its communications should be easily and instantly identifiable as coming from Hornsby Shire Council.



# principles of engagement

There are different types of engagement, which have varying levels of outcomes. In engaging for a community strategic plan or longer term issues, we will use all three types.

- 1. Informing** - providing information and communications
  - The information will be as accessible as possible
  - The information will be two-way where possible, so Council can hear and understand resident's views
- 2. Consulting** - consultation and research
  - The information must have a clear purpose, saying why it is being carried out and how the results will be used
  - The information should represent a balanced cross section of the local community, including those who work, live and visit, as well as organisations and businesses if appropriate
- 3. Involving** – involvement
  - Involvement should encourage people to work with Council
  - Involvement should be transparent so that it is clear how the involvement has fed into the final decision-making.



# measuring the success of the Community Engagement Strategy

The ultimate measure of success will be a demonstrable improvement in the percentage of the community who feel we keep them very or fairly well informed and are satisfied with the opportunities to be involved. That is an improvement on the 2009 research findings in which less than half (45%) considered that Council kept them very or fairly well informed,

Another measure will be improvement in the percentage of people who can recall Council's brand. The 2015 research findings in which 72% of respondents recalled being exposed to Council's brand the previous week.

Council will undertake a community survey to track community opinion regarding:

1. opportunities for involvement in decision making
2. opportunities to participate and comment on topics of interest
3. the readability, format and delivery of information to the community
4. recognition of Council's brand



## Community Engagement Plan for the 2018-2028 Community Strategic Plan

Micromex Research has been engaged to undertake engagement and consultation on behalf of Council. The engagement will be undertaken in three stages.

Stages 2 and 3 will incorporate an innovative sampling approach involving targeted number harvesting to ensure a representative/inclusive sample, thereby addressing social justice principles.

### Stage One

The brief requires a desktop review of community engagements/consultations in the last few years, specifically:

#### May 2012

A Community Engagement Survey to inform preparation of a Community Strategic Plan (*Owl Research and Marketing Pty Ltd*)

#### July 2014

Socio-Cultural Consultation Outcomes Report (*Straight Talk, Jetty Research*)

#### June 2015

Hornsby Shire Council, a Shire of Opportunity (*McCrinkle - forecasts, strategy, research*)

#### July 2015

Community Recognition and Communication Effectiveness Research (*Straight Talk*)

#### August 2015

Active Living Hornsby Strategy – Community Engagement Report (*People, Place and Partnership Pty Ltd*)

#### August 2015

Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan – Outcomes of Consultation (*Elton Consulting*)

#### June 2016

Hornsby Snapshot Findings and Future Planning for Hornsby Community Plan (*The Miller Group*)

#### Sept 2016

A Snapshot of the Hornsby Shire in 2016 (*Hornsby Shire Council*)

The purpose is to assess and interrogate all relevant available data

### Stage Two

#### Mid October 2017

The brief requires an innovative approach to consulting with the “the average” Hornsby Shire resident (ie silent majority), taking account of the criteria outlined in main document.



Micromex will use a resident selfie vox pop method via a **saywhatnow** app

Candidates will be ‘harvested’ via intercepts at popular locations including train stations and the Hornsby Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

The purpose is to use an innovative and visual way to explore community aspirations

### Stage Three

#### Late October 2017

A community phone survey of 600 randomly selected Hornsby Shire residents. An interviewer will be used to collect contact details of hard to reach groups via face to face intercept interviews at destinational hubs.

A web based survey available to anyone with an interest to complete online

The purpose is the achieve a representative measure of community aspirations

#### Final Report by mid December 2017



## keeping everyone informed

All participants, where possible, to be made aware of the findings via direct email, web site, e-newsletter and advertisements in local papers.

## evolving the plan

Documentation will be prepared in consultation with internal stakeholders and engagement with Councillors, and exhibited for public feedback prior to adoption.

