COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

City of Ryde
Lifestyle and opportunity
@ your doorstep

Contents

Introduction

Here at the City of Ryde, we believe that by encouraging open conversations and interactions on local issues we can improve our delivery of service and empower our citizens and our community.

The Communications and Engagement Strategy has been prepared as a framework to support Council's Strategic Plan and as part of Council's commitment to encourage open, transparent and active relationships between Council and the Community.

The strategy is underpinned by strong community feedback which provided Council with a clear understanding of our community demographics as well as insights into our community's desired relationship with Council.

The objectives of developing this strategy were to:

- Understand community satisfaction and expectations of Council in the areas of communication and community engagement

- Analyse Council's current process in Engagement and Communications in order to ensure Council is effectively reaching the community

- Identify new initiatives that will assist with providing a service offering that supports Council in it's commitment to communicate and engage in a way that encourages an open, transparent relationship between community and Council

One of the key fundamentals that underpins this Communications and Engagement Strategy is for it to be supported by a clear action plan. In communicating both the strategy and the action plan, the City of Ryde has developed the 'Let's' Philosophy in how it connects with our community.

'Let's' is always inclusive. It is an action that refers both to the talker and the listener. The 'Let's' approach essentially drives Council into 'actionable thinking'.

This is not a tagline. It is a mechanism to trigger a new way of thinking, of mobilising Council into creating strategies and plans that are actionable, tangible, REAL!

We are proud to put forward to you this Communications and Engagement Strategy. We believe its successful implementation will result in a stronger relationship between Council and the community ... so ...

LET'S GO!!

What informed OUR STRATEGY?

What did we consider as part of developing the Strategy?

Over the last 12 months we have undertaken a number of key research initiatives to better understand our community. Through this process we have connected with over 2,000 community members who have shared their thoughts, experiences and feelings about the City of Ryde.

We have listened to our community through surveys (both online and telephone), community workshops and focus groups.

The feedback from the community has been invaluable and has helped us identify:

Who makes up our community?	→	Community needs in the way of communication & engagement	→	What we're doing well and what we can improve	→	Strategies to meet the needs and wants of our community

The importance of a Communications & Engagement Strategy

From the 450 responses we received to our community satisfaction survey we were able to ascertain that one of the top 5 core priorities to the community is:

> " having input into Council's decision making processes "

The core premise of this Strategy works towards meeting this top priority of the community through developing specific and effective communications and engagement opportunities for the community as a response to this feedback.

key initiatives

Whilst the strategy outlines in further detail the different service offerings, the following are 7 key initiatives that the City of Ryde will focus on over the next 2 years:

NEW ONLINE ENGAGEMENT SITE

Develop a new online platform that provides a clear line of sight to all Council projects, including an avenue to participate in conversations and receive updates on relevant progress so that the community can feel informed about, and involved in Council's projects.

NEW WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY

To improve functionality, stability and overall user experience of the website.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Develop a plan to grow our online community and engage more through social media and email communications (i.e. Facebook, twitter, email etc).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Review and revise Council's Community Engagement policy, framework and toolbox to ensure Council works towards best practice standards and to further embed engagement initiatives into Council's project management.

BRANDING AUDIT

Complete an audit of Council's branding to ensure consistency in the use of Council's branding across the City.

CORPORATE INFORMATION PLAN

Develop a strategy to better inform the community of Council's financial management/long-term planning decisions.
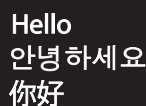
ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS

Develop a communications plan specifically for CALD and community members with a disablity to ensure they have adequate access to Council's information and services.

Who did we consider as part of
OUR STRATEGY?

Our Council

We manage 51 services, $2.5 billion of assets and an annual budget in excess of $136 million, with an additional $43.3 million contributed assets gained from development agreements. We spend around $101 million annually on services that benefit our community.

We encompass 40 square kilometres including waterways and parklands. Within this sits the Macquarie Park Corridor, our specialist Macquarie Park Centre, Macquarie University and Ryde and Meadowbank Colleges of TAFE, which enrol 13,000 students each year, over 13,000 businesses, five public libraries, 24 primary schools, five high schools and the Ryde and Macquarie Park hospitals.

We are a diverse community and Council's service offering reflects this diversity through a multitude of community initiatives, infrastructure projects and relevant services that support the safety, development and harmony of our community.

Our Community

There are 110,791 residents calling the City of Ryde home (2012 Census estimate), a figure that is projected to rise to 134,455 by 2030.

The original inhabitants of the Ryde area were the Darug Aboriginal people. The population is culturally diverse with a mix of cultural backgrounds. The 10 largest ancestries are Australian, English, Chinese, Irish, Italian, Scottish, Korean, Indian, Armenian, and German. 42% of residents were born overseas, with 37% from countries where English is not the first language.

Half of our population is aged between 25 and 59, with a median age of 36. Compared to Greater Sydney, City of Ryde has a larger percentage of 18 to 34 year olds, and seniors aged 70 to 84. 9% of the population are attending University.

The area is comprised of a mix of dwellings with 52% separate houses, and 48% medium or high density dwellings. 61% of households are purchasing or fully own their home, whilst a third are renting.

Of the 69,480 people who work in the City of Ryde, 13,643 or 19.6% also live in the area. The majority (52%) of Council's staff are locals who live within 10 kilometres of the area.

"half of our population is aged between 25 and 59, with a median age of 36"

Our community profile

Community

Communications

External Communications

Digital Communications

Internal Communications

Web Communications

Visual Communications

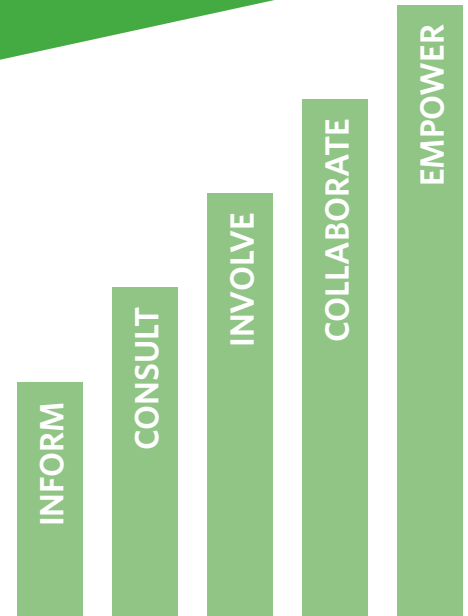### Media

Engagement

Community Engagement

Public Relations

Business Process Improvement

Research & Insights

Council

Connecting with our community

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

IAP2 is the International Association of Public Participation which developed an international framework for engagement and is considered a best practice benchmark worldwide. The purpose of the spectrum is to improve the practice of public participation or community engagement, incorporating individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest.

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	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced that decision .	We will look to for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS	• Factsheets • Websites • Open houses	• Public comments • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings	• Workshops • Deliberate polling	• Citizen advisory committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Communicating with our stakeholders is important to ensure we have a well informed community that has been provided the opportunity to engage with Council. The following stakeholder matrix identifies the mediums of communication and engagement Council uses to meet these needs.

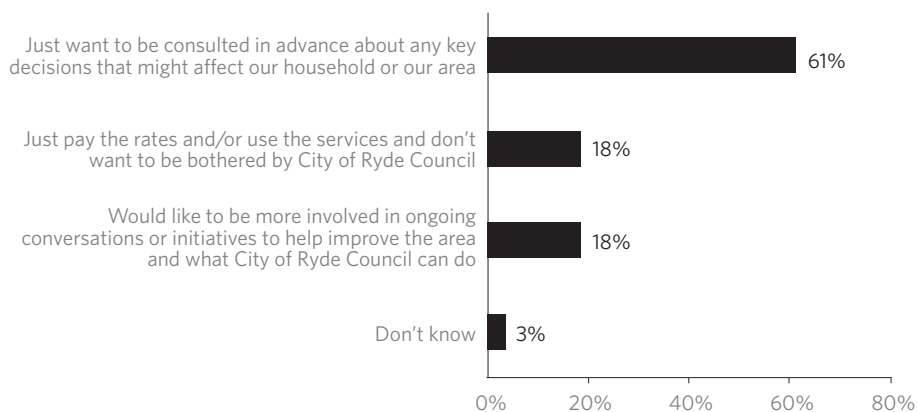## Stakeholder Communications Matrix

● = AVAILABLE
■ = CAN BE PROVIDED

STAKEHOLDERS	Count	% OF RESIDENTS (103,038)	Rates Notices Inserts	Direct Mail	Letterbox Drop	Email Correspondence	Publications	Corporate Communications	Press Releases	Press Interviews	Radio	Advertising	Council Offices and Libraries	Face-to-face	Meetings	Telephone	On-hold Messages	Events and Festivals	Online Forums	Surveys	Focus Groups	Workshops	Community Meetings	Drop in sessions	Information booths	Engagement Portal	Social Media	Email Marketing	Email invoicing and eRates	Website	SMS	Digital Advertising
Councillors	12					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		
Committee Members	130					●	●	●					●	●	●			●			●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		
City of Ryde Executive Team	6			●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●			●	●	●	●	●	●				●		
City of Ryde Staff	669			●			●	●	●				●	●	●	●		●			●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		
Chambers of Commerce Members	330			●			●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●
Local, Federal and State MPs				●		●	●		●						●			●									●			●		
Other Local Councils	8			●		●	●		●						●												●			●		
Not-for-Profit Organisations				●	●		●		●			●		●	●			●									●			●		
Ratepayers (inside LGA)			●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	■	●	■	●
Ratepayers (outside LGA)			●	●			●					■	●	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	■	●	■	■
Residents	103,038	100	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	■	●
Non-English Speaking residents	43,295	42	■	■	■		■		■		■	■	■			■				■	■	■	■	■	■		●			●		
Businesses	33,000	27		●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●			●					●		●	●	●	●	●		●
Contractors and Suppliers	3,500			●		●	●	●							●																	
Tertiary Students (Tafe and Uni)	11,730	11			●		●											●							●		●	■		●		
Visitors to major events	53,000	53					●					●	●														●			●		
Employees	69,481	20					●		●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●		●	●	●	●		●
Community Groups				●		●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		
Sporting Club Members	20,902			●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●			●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●
Older People 60+	19,788	19		●	●		●				●	●			●	●		●			●				●		●		●	●		
Young People 12-17	6,124	6					●											●									●					
Children 0-11	14,055	14					●											●														
People with a disability	4,574	4														●	●	●									●			■		
Volunteers	14,777	14			●	●	●					●	●	●	●		●	●			●		●		●		●	●		●		

Market segmentation

City of Ryde recognises that different people have different needs when it comes to communication and engagement with Council. We have undertaken research to understand the key segments within our community, and identify appropriate ways of communicating with and engaging with these segments.

Firstly, we wanted to understand what members of the community needed from Council in terms of their preferred relationship.

There were two ends of the spectrum: those who don't want to be bothered by Council (18%), and those who want more ongoing involvement in initiatives to improve the area (18%). The majority (61%) want to be consulted on key decisions. As this is such a large segment, we have broken it down further in terms of those who have been consulted in the past (38%) and those who have not been consulted (22%).

Just want to be consulted in advance about any key decisions that might affect our household or our area — 61%

Just pay the rates and/or use the services and don't want to be bothered by City of Ryde Council — 18%

Would like to be more involved in ongoing conversations or initiatives to help improve the area and what City of Ryde Council can do — 18%

Don't know — 3%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

Don't want to be bothered	Wants to be consulted and hasn't been	Wants to be consulted and has been	Wants more ongoing involvement
18% of residents	22% of residents	38% of residents	18% of residents

Half of those that have had experience with consultation and want to be consulted have also used City of Ryde's website, and half have not.

JASON

Doesn't want to be bothered (18% of residents)

Who am I?

Jason, 24 is a recent graduate who has just started working full-time. He has been living in the area for about 3 years and enjoys the convenience in terms of public transport and shopping.

Jason thinks City of Ryde is doing a fairly good job, and hasn't really felt a need to contact them or get involved in any types of community consultation. As long as his rubbish gets picked up, and the area stays well maintained then he is happy.

Segment stats

- 55% are male
- 35% are aged 18-34, and 31% are aged 65+. 35% are retired
- 37% live in the East Ward
- 1 in 6 have lived in the area for less than 5 years
- 53% are born overseas

Key characteristics

- More likely to not participate in any community activities (1 in 4)
- 2 in 5 still attend local events
- Slightly less well informed about Council
- Less likely to read either local newspaper – but 3 in 5 still read both
- 1 in 4 don't have internet access. (3 in 4 are reachable online but may be less receptive to online information from or about City of Ryde. Offline communication essential for this segment)
- Less likely to have contacted Council – 2 in 5 have never contacted Council before, but those who have are especially likely to visit a Council office in person. 1 in 3 were dissatisfied with their most recent experience
- 90% have never been involved in consultation.

Community involvement

Jason wouldn't really consider himself as being particularly 'active' in the community. He likes to spend his spare time with friends, or just relaxing at home. He has been to the local Granny Smith Festival a few times and occasionally uses local community centres.

How to reach Jason with Council information

- Local newspapers
- Letters or leaflets
- Newsletters
- Word of mouth
- Local shopping centres
- Events & festivals.

Level of community engagement:

Inform

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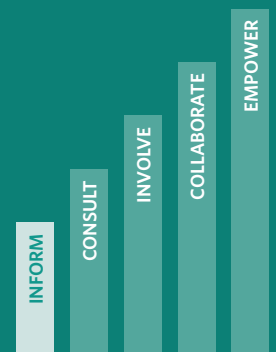
Market segmentation

CATHY

Wants to be consulted and hasn't been (22% of residents)

Who am I?

Cathy, 48, has been living in the area for the last 10 years. She currently works as a pharmaceutical packer. After a long day at work, Cathy likes to watch some TV to unwind and relax.

Cathy is interested in what goes on locally, and would like to be involved and consulted, but hasn't had any experiences so far, partly due to a lack of time. She recalls Council asking for her comments about a proposed neighbouring development in the past, but didn't find the time to respond.

Segment stats

- 61% are female
- 1 in 6 have lived in the area between 6 to 10 years.
- 28% Secondary School highest education.

Key characteristics

- Less likely to get involved in local campaigns or petitions, or write letters to councillors
- Less active in the community
- Still likely to attend local events
- Less likely to find out about Council through events and exhibitions hosted by Council, or universities/ schools
- More likely to find out through local newspapers or TV/radio.
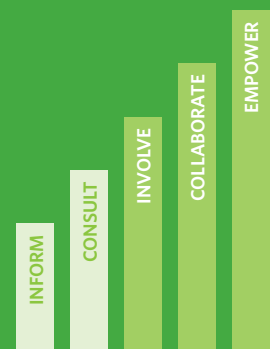
Community involvement

Cathy tries to attend local events when she can, but isn't particularly active in the community. She's unlikely to be involved in any petitions, or to write letters to Councillors and isn't too sure who she could even contact.

How to reach Cathy with Council information

- Local newspapers
- Leaflets or letters
- Newsletters
- Word of mouth
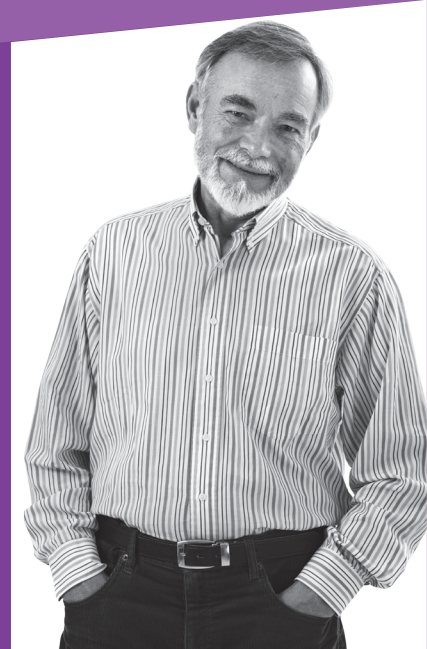- TV or radio
- Events & festivals.

Level of community engagement:

Consult

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GEOFF
Wants more ongoing involvement (18% of residents)

Who am I?

Geoff, 62, is nearing retirement. He has been living in the area for more than 10 years.

Geoff has a strong interest in the local community, and wants to be more involved and have input into Council's decision making. He is quick to report things to Council that requires their attention, such as potholes and graffiti.

Segment stats

- 50% are male
- 31% are 50-64 years old
- 87% have lived in the area 10+ years
- 70% were born in Australia

Key characteristics

- More likely to be active in local campaigns and petitions, community groups, library activities, be on a committee
- Most likely to write to elected councillors, newspapers
- More likely to find out about Council by going into a Council office
- 1 in 5 have been involved in consultation at least once
- More likely to rate Council poorly for consultation and ongoing engagement.

Community involvement

Geoff is quite active in the community. He has on a few occasions written to Councillors and been involved in petitions. He is a member of the Rotary Club, and is considering joining a committee to have more input on traffic issues in the local area.

How to reach Geoff with Council information

- Local newspapers
- Leaflets or letters
- Newsletters
- Word of mouth
- Face to face in a Council office.

Level of community engagement:

Collaborate

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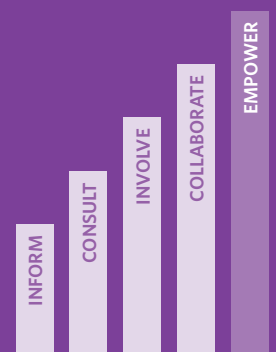
Market segmentation

SUE

Wants to be consulted and has been (38% of residents)

Who am I? – Website Users (19% of residents)

Sue, 35, is married with two young kids. She's currently working part time as a bookkeeper and her husband is a banker.

Sue keeps busy by taking her kids to and from school and extracurricular activities, working, shopping for groceries, and getting dinner on the table. Despite this, she still takes an active interest in what is going on in the local area and looks out for changes that could affect her and her family.

Sue has received letters from Council before asking for her comments on plans to upgrade parks and playgrounds in her area. There was an information session held but she was too busy to attend. She did submit her comments online through the Council website, and likes being able to access information online in her own time. She sometimes also finds out about local events and activities through her children's school.

HELEN

Wants to be consulted and has been (38% of residents)

Who am I? Non website users (19% of residents)

Helen, 60 is now retired. She has been living in the area for the last 20 years. Helen usually likes to go to the local library to read and to socialise. She reads the local papers to keep informed about what is going on in the area.

Helen has written letters to Council to express her concerns about proposed developments in her local town centre. She doesn't access the internet apart from at the library.

Segment stats

- 59% are female
- 31% are 35-64 years old
- 70% were born in Australia.

Website users: 19% of residents

- 43% are 35-49 years old
- 67% are Employed full or part time
- 67% Family with children – any age
- 69% were born in Australia.

Non website users: 19% of residents

- 63% are female
- 33% are 50-64 years old, 27% are 65+
- 72% were born in Australia, 72%

Key characteristics

- Very likely to attend local events
- More likely to get involved in local campaigns or petitions
- More likely to rate Council well for consultation.

Community involvement

Sue and Helen both regularly attend local events. They have also been involved in petitions.

How to reach Sue and Helen with Council information

- Local newspapers
- Leaflets or letters
- Newsletters
- Word-of–mouth
- Website
- Exhibitions
- Events & festivals
- Surveys
- Schools.

Level of community engagement:

Involve

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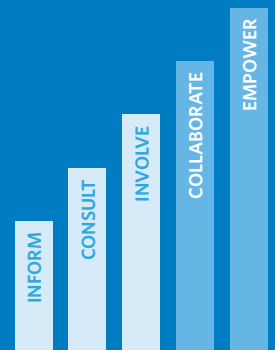
Needs analysis

In preparing this Strategy we have considered both quantitative data (online polls, telephone surveys), and qualitative data (online discussion boards, focus groups) compiled over the past twelve months. This valuable community feedback has enabled us to put together a comprehensive needs analysis.

1   Macquarie University (2012). Community Perceptions, Attitudes & Opinions.

2   Micromex Research (2013). Amalgamations Research.

3   Micromex Research. (2013). Community Survey.

4   instinct and reason (2013). Community Survey/Segmentation for Communications And Engagement Strategy.

What does the community need from us in the way of communication?

86% of our community said the provision of Council information to the community was 'important' or 'very important'. [3]

90% of residents surveyed get information about Ryde as an area through the local paper. [4]

80% of residents get information about Council services and activities through letters or leaflets, and 75% read Newsletters[4] though just 23% thought City View would be one of the best ways for Council to communicate information to residents. [2]

88% of residents have access to the internet. 45% now use smartphones and 36% use tablets. 45% use Council's website to find information about Council. [4]

1 in 2 Just over half of our residents use social media like Facebook, and about 1 in 6 would consider following City of Ryde on social media. [4]

1 in 2 Half of the residents surveyed had contacted Council within the past 12 months. Phone is by far the most prevalent contact method, followed by visiting Council's offices, then Email. [4]

Residents are particularly critical of Council's lack of communication over the issues of traffic problems, and high rise developments, exacerbated by negative perceptions that Council is somewhat dysfunctional and disorganised (Qualitative Research Perceptions Report, 2012).

" Moving forward they need to be more proactive. For a council to make the community a place where everyone wants to go to, they need to be more proactive instead of reactive and they need to be ahead of the game. "

What does the community need from us in the way of Community Engagement?

Engagement:

84% said community input to Council decision making was 'important' or 'very important'. [3]

78% want to be engaged with Council at some level, with 60% preferring to be consulted about issues that might affect their household or area, and 18% wanting more involvement in ongoing conversations or initiatives to help improve the area. [4]

1 in 5 residents just want to pay the rates and not be bothered by Council. [4]

77% of residents say they've never had any experience with community consultation, and just under half (49%) say they have never been provided opportunities to comment on community issues or proposed initiatives. [4]

" There's a lot of discussion amongst the council I think, but there's not a lot of community discussion. "

Needs analysis

What does the community feel we do well?

Communications:

86% of residents feel well informed about the area, and 63% feel well informed about Council. [4]

web Council's website is of moderately high importance, and meeting expectations. [3]

77% believe Council caters for a multicultural community. [4]

63% believe Council is proud of its heritage and traditions but not living in the past. [4]

Engagement:

41% believe Council continuously engages the community to stay in touch with needs and expectations. [4]

1 in 3 believe Council consults the community effectively around all key decisions. [4]

Some engagement initiatives have been well run with positive feedback from those involved:

" I just wanted to express my sincere appreciation for all the great initiatives and community support the City of Ryde council provides. Namely; 2012 Waste Survey Results - I completed the survey myself and it is great that the council has communicated the results to the community. It shows the council really cares about the community and is wanting to make positive changes to benefit everyone. "

" Thanks for the opportunity to contribute. This is a way to have a say. Sometimes it is hard to be heard. I'd love the opportunity to be involved again. My hope for City of Ryde is that they do listen to the community and really try to serve the community and want to make a difference to people's lives. "

" When at consultations, if you try to bring up something that is not on the agenda it gets pushed to the side. I had one time when they said "yes we know about X". It was obvious that they had already made up their mind on that subject and there was nowhere to go to talk further. Perhaps when topics come up at these consultations, the consultants could make a point of offering to discuss other issues at another time and date. I appreciate that there is time constraints at these meetings. "

What does the community feel we could do better?

Communications:

29% believe City of Ryde has trusted Councillors. [4]

1 in 4 believe Council is dysfunctional. [4]

46% believe City of Ryde has a generally positive image in the community at this point in time. [4]

50% scored City of Ryde 7 or more out of 10 for an organisation they can trust to look after the needs and act in the best interest of the community. [4]

Engagement:

40% rate the way Council consults with the community before making key decisions as 'Satisfactory'. [4]

19% rate the way Council consults with the community before making key decisions as 'Poor'. [4]

59% rated similarly in terms of the way Council engages with the community on a regular basis to keep in touch with community needs, concerns and experiences. [4]

[1] Macquarie University (2012). Community Perceptions, Attitudes & Opinions.

[2] Micromex Research (2013). Amalgamations Research.

[3] Micromex Research. (2013). Community Survey.

[4] instinct and reason (2013). Community Survey/Segmentation for Communications And Engagement Strategy.

" I think that Ryde Council does have a desire to consult and hear people's input / feedback, but my criticism is that through all of these consultations that if you do not have the correct person / contact with Council to follow it through, and you do not stay on top of them (i.e. reminder emails, and phone calls etc.) that the consultation that happened can have little tangible effect on whatever the issue is. "

Our STRATEGY

Strengths

Council's primary function is to make decisions in the best interests of its community and as part of this commitment Council has dedicated itself to community based decision making and implementation of projects to support this function.

Council's strong commitment to community engagement and communications is exemplified by its decision to form a specialised unit to support all areas of Council in order to achieve the aim of a more engaged, better informed community.

swot analysis

Weaknesses

Council's priority is first and foremost to deliver essential services to the community. However from time to time there is a limitation on the funding available to Council for communications and engagement. This requires Council to effectively manage community expectations in each and every instance of projects and services that affect the community.

Opportunities

Through the research completed, Council now has a comprehensive understanding of the gap between community expectations of engagement and communications, and the current service delivery in these areas.

The development of this strategy will ensure the strategic objectives are directed at meeting the needs and desires of the community.

The result will be a communications and community engagement approach that is practical, innovative and integrated; ensuring an authentic positive experience for our customers and a community that feels supported, engaged and informed by Council.

Threats

As part of Council's role in making decisions in the best interests of the community, it will require Council from time to time to make difficult decisions that not all community members will agree with. However, Council's promise to the community is a good, consistent, transparent process in its decision making to provide community with clarity.

steep analysis

Environment

Safe
Strong business community
Educational facilities
Accessible
Centrally located
Traffic congestion
Development concerns
Extensive community open space
Parks / Playgrounds / Open Space
Sustainability minded community
Surrounded by rivers
Major traffic thoroughfare
Global warming

Technology

Accelerating change
Increasing expectation of
information accessibility
Shifting expectations
Broad demographic
= significant user ability gap
Mobile accessibility
to information

Society

Community pride
Culturally diverse
Sense of belonging
Sense of permanency
Ageing population
Increase in group households
Increase in lone households

Politics

Level of community disengagement
Local reputational damage
Policy implications
Potential Amalgamations
Impacts of shift in Government
Council election every 4 years
Mayoral election annually
Legislative requirements for comms

Economics

Locally strong economic
environment
Growth area
Employment opportunities vs
increasing unemployment
Strong real estate market
Macquarie Business Park

Macquarie University (2012).
Community Perceptions, Attitudes & Opinions.
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Community Survey/Segmentation
for Communications And
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Our
STRATEGIC AIMS

communications / media
strategic objectives

The Council aims to deliver timely, informative, engaging and transparent communications that fully complies with the Local Government Act. We are committed to the process of sharing information, and promote the benefits that effective communications has for building trust in our Community.

Principles:

1 Our communications are planned and proactive

2 Our approach is creative and engaging

3 Our delivery is targeted and cost-effective

4 Our language is direct and transparent

5 Our messaging is positive and two-way

6 Our process is consistent and strategic.

community engagement
strategic objectives

The Council's overarching aim is to create a link with the Community. The success of this is dependent upon Council implementing structured effective strategies which genuinely engage the community, resulting in an open honest and transparent relationship between Council and community.

Principles:

1 Our engagement is planned, proactive and fit for purpose

2 Our research is objective and provides actionable insights to inform key business decisions.

3 Our feedback process is transparent and robust

4 Our business process improvement is diligent and continuous

5 Our community interactions are genuine and conciliatory.

Let's COMMUNICATE

External communications

Strategic aim

To advise and deliver planned and effective communications by utilising multiple digital and print mediums that is cost effective, innovative and wide reaching. To seek out opportunities to communicate the many services, events and initiatives that the organisation provides to raise awareness with all our stakeholders.

Key functions

- To inform the Community of the projects, initiatives and events that Council delivers
- To meet legal obligations of informing the public of exhibitions and notices
- To plan, advise and deliver succinct and transparent communications
- To report regularly and honestly on Council's performance to the Community
- To disseminate communications across multiple mediums cost effectively
- To utilise communications through appropriate channels that meet the needs of the Community
- To provide ongoing analysis and reporting on effectiveness of communications

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE	KEY STRATEGIES	FUTURE STATE
Inconsistent budget allocation to communications	To make communications budgets an integral part of project management.	Accessible communication mediums to all groups of Council to deliver communications .
Reactive communication strategies	To develop a Communications Toolkit.	Planned and effective communications, resulting from a collaborative approach.
Traditional communications	Realign resources from traditional communications to digital communications to meet the growing demand for information and interactivity online.	Additional new and creative mediums for increased exposure to Council communications through cost-effective options.
One way communications	Create guidelines and shift internal culture that welcomes feedback and provide multiple avenues for contact with Council.	Engaged discussion where our community feel part of Council decision making and that their voice is heard.
Underdeveloped communication mediums	Finalise the communications review and provide recommendations to the organisation on effective communication choices.	Distribute targeted communications based on community interest and local needs.

Let's
ENGAGE

Community Engagement

Strategic aim

To liaise with the community on relevant projects to ensure all stakeholders are informed, and where appropriate, create meaningful engagement opportunities whereby community feedback is sought and considered as part of the decision making process.

Key functions

- To facilitate community workshops that seek to provide the community with an avenue for delivering meaningful feedback

- To create appropriate and relatable communications on large scale projects that have either a community impact or would generate community interest

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE	KEY STRATEGIES	FUTURE STATE
Council has a Community Engagement Framework that requires revision	▶ Review and Revise the Community Engagement Framework (taking into account the recommendations from the Citizens Engagement Advisory Panel) for Council to endorse in 2014.	▶ Council has a revised community Engagement Framework in place that assists Council to execute best practice philosophies of community engagement whereby Council can identify the appropriate level of engagement for each project on the basis of a robust framework of factors for consideration.
Council does not have an interactive online platform that brings all community engagement activities in to one place for the community to review and respond	▶ Develop a new online platform (in line with the Council resolution) to provide community members with an online platform where they can review, consider and respond to community engagement related projects.	▶ Council has in place an interactive online platform that provides community with a clear line of sight to all of Councils projects. The online platform will be a place where community members can easily review project progress and understand how and when they can participate in the process.
Council's approach to Community Engagement is not consistently embedded in the early stages of project planning	▶ Develop and roll out a community engagement program that assists staff in understanding how to appropriately determine community engagement requirements on a project by project basis.	▶ Council has embedded a consistent culture of community engagement whereby new staff inducted into the organisation are aware of Council's policies and procedures in considering engagement as early as possible in the project's development.

Let's
INFORM

Media

Strategic aim

To deliver clear, consistent and factual information to the media that will result in positive and accurate coverage of Council decisions and activities.

Key functions

- To promote the good work of the Council
- To plan media contact whenever possible
- To produce regular media releases that are well written in plain English
- To identify positive publicity opportunities through strong internal communications
- To respond to media requests in a timely and appropriate way
- To monitor media coverage and maintain accurate files
- To build strong and effective relationships with media at all levels
- To develop individual strategies for issues and events
- To provide advice on issues management and consult with internal stakeholders
- To maintain consistent messaging across all media channels.

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE		KEY STRATEGIES		FUTURE STATE
Well established traditional media but lacking in new media opportunities	▶	Extend traditional media to include digital distribution of messaging and CALD media.	▶	Greater spread of exposure to information of Council services, events, initiatives and projects.
No documented crisis media management process to support Council's Business Continuity Plan	▶	Implement a crisis management media protocol.	▶	Informed community and a perceived level of trust in times of need.
Lack of presence on radio	▶	Develop and nurture relationship with local and metro radio and seek opportunities for spokesperson interviews.	▶	Increased awareness of Council services, events, initiatives and projects.
Out of date A-Z handbook	▶	Update external A-Z handbook.	▶	Better informed community aware of the services within the LGA.

Let's CONNECT

Digital Communications

Strategic aim

To connect with and foster relationships online with our Community, by developing engaging and valuable two-way conversations.

Key functions

- To promote the City of Ryde through the distribution of information helpful to residents and businesses
- To deliver City of Ryde's digital media campaigns
- To develop and manage City of Ryde's social media platforms and communities
- To liaise with stakeholders to develop engaging online content to feed and spark discussions, monitor online conversations, answer questions, offer solutions and mediate conversations to build brand visibility and community engagement
- To provide training and ongoing support to all staff involved in unit/project based social media initiatives
- To provide real time reporting of meetings and of Council and major public workshops, as required
- To develop a consistent style, tone and personality for digital communications
- To provide ongoing analysis and reporting on volume and effectiveness of digital communications.

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE	KEY STRATEGIES	FUTURE STATE
Cost effective medium of communications but lacks being implemented as part of whole communications mix	Implement as part of Communications delivery through central portal for requests.	Sought after communications for our community through a planned cohesive approach.
Newly established media with an opportunity to shape future communications	Report back regularly.	Informed decision-making on what makes successful communications for Social Media specific to the City of Ryde.
Limited budget allocation for promotions	Trial paid advertising on Facebook to determine effectiveness in bolstering fan growth to official City of Ryde pages and online community engagement levels.	Clear understanding of successful advertising through Facebook and other social media channels to target new fans and assist with the dissemination of key messages to a greater online community who work, live, play and study in the City of Ryde.
Community has limited knowledge of the City's social media presence	Implement a marketing campaign to build awareness and exposure of Council's social media channels.	Increased community awareness and participation in Council social media channels.
Evolving expectations around social media response times by Council	Creation of an internal Customer Service Charter and the continued education of internal staff regarding timeliness of expected response times to enquiries.	Expectations set around prioritising responses to social media enquiries and are responded to quickly and efficiently.

Let's
PROMOTE

Public Relations

Strategic aim

To increase public awareness of Council's objectives, activities and services by fostering meaningful relationships between Council and the Community. Success in this strategic aim will result in a develop deeper levels of interaction and engagement with various stakeholders across the local government area.

Key functions

- To promote the projects, initiatives and events that Council delivers

- To build strong and meaningful relationships with the various stakeholders in our Community

- Provide a more targeted approach to education and awareness of Council services into specific sectors of the community to ensure maximum usage by community of available Council services.

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE	KEY STRATEGIES	FUTURE STATE
Community has limited knowledge of Council Services	Implement a marketing campaign to build awareness and exposure to Council services and projects.	Increased community awareness of Council services.
Council does not currently have an internal process to assist unit's to effectively promote their projects	Developing and imbedding an internal process that facilitates a co-ordinated and proactive approach to informing the community of Council's role.	Council has an imbedded PR process that ensures all relevant projects are effectively communicated to the wider community.
Some Council issues currently impacting negatively on Community's trust of Council	Developing strategies to further strengthen community and Council relationships that seek to increase council and community interaction where appropriate.	Strengthened relationship between council and community whereby community feels a sense of trust in Council.

Let's EXAMINE

Research & Insights

Strategic aim

To collect relevant feedback and research from the community in a meaningful and independent way in order to inform Council's service delivery priorities; understand and improve customer experience and assist with making fiscally responsible decisions.

Key functions

- Develop and distribute surveys for relevant projects to assist with Council's key decision making requirements on related projects

- Collate broad feedback / data from the community to assist with strategic decisions and forward planning

- Develop transactional surveys that provide an understanding of customer experience and satisfaction as a part of ongoing business process improvement

- Undertake relevant research for Council as and when it's required

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE	KEY STRATEGIES	FUTURE STATE
A lack of embedded understanding of the value of this function across Council	▶ Proactively engage with all units across Council to find opportunities for utilising research both internally and externally to better inform business decisions.	▶ Council understands the value of this role and proactively seeks to engage the assistance of this function in the enhancement of their project or service delivery.
Not a consistent approach to evidence based decision making across Council	▶ Review and implement changes to the corporate project plan template and identify where research can play a critical role (i.e. Scoping – identifying demonstrated community need, Community Engagement, Post Implementation Review).	▶ Council embraces community feedback and research and utilises this information to its fullest extent in strategic thinking and decision making.
Whilst a number of large scale research and community surveying has occurred, Council is yet to fully realise the process improvements from this feedback	▶ Introduce reporting that follows up on the outcomes of community research, and incorporate this into communications to the community on Council's business improvement initiatives.	▶ Council has an embedded process to collect and respond to customer satisfaction and other feedback that translates the feedback into business process improvement strategies.

Let's
IMPROVE

Business Process Improvement

Strategic
aim

To provide a dedicated channel whereby Council can address any feedback relating to Council's customer service delivery method, approach or standards. This relates both to positive feedback or any concerns raised by community members.

Key
functions

- To act in a liaison capacity between Council and community when concerns are raised, and provide community members with a point of contact in such situations.

- To implement Council's complaints procedure including the assessment, investigation and resolution of all registered complaints

- To communicate to the business compliments received from community members, promoting such feedback in order to assist in the continued improvement of our customer service standards across all of Council

- To work with Council staff to identify and implement business process improvements that are identified through the customer feedback.

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE		KEY STRATEGIES		FUTURE STATE
Whilst Council has scored high in customer satisfaction (78%) there is still room for improvement in how Council as an organisation applies a consistent approach to customer service	▶	Develop and implement Customer service training incorporating experiential learning as part of the process to further bed down process improvements.	▶	All Council staff see themselves as ambassadors of City of Ryde and apply a customer centric focus to their work, embracing feedback and seeking ways to exceed customer expectations.
Council has an inconsistent approach to communications	▶	Introduce a new style of communication to strengthen the acknowledgement of customer feedback and compliments.	▶	Council has a consistent approach to its communications to community in the acknowledgement feedback and compliments.
Whilst this role is currently occupied by an exceptional staff member, there is no succession planning in place which is a risk for Council	▶	Develop and ongoing succession plan to ensure that Council continues to provide the community with an exceptional level of service in this area.	▶	Council has a number of staff who can seamlessly transition into the Business Process Improvement role so that the community continues to receive a high level of service in this crucial role.

Let's
DESIGN

Visual Communications

Strategic aim

To ensure Council's online presence and printed publications strengthens our brand via creative, informative and engaging communications.

Key functions

- To provide graphic design services including advice to all Groups of Council for print and online environments

- To strengthen Council's brand and promote Council's services, events and initiatives through designing and delivering a range of high quality publications and web graphics from concept to finished art

- To create innovative visual communications for web and print

- To monitor and make recommendations on our corporate brand

- To assist with the administration, development and maintenance of Council's web sites

- To review content before publishing to ensure it meets Council's visual and written style

- To prepare and upload visual content for Council's web sites

- To provide ongoing analysis and reporting on effectiveness of visual communications.

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE	KEY STRATEGIES	FUTURE STATE
Out-dated Publications Policy	To review Publications Policy and promote it to the organisation.	Consistent approach to publications throughout the City.
Out-dated Signage Policy	To review Signage Policy and promote it to the organisation.	Consistent approach to signage throughout the City.
Inconsistent approach to brand identity Strategy	To endorse a united brand identity.	Consistent, recognised and strengthened brand with all our stakeholders.

Let's
INFORM

Web Communications

Strategic aim

To be the central point of contact online, enabling 24/7 access to information and services to our customers.

Key functions

- To administer, develop and maintain Council's web sites

- To ensure online content for Council's websites are relevant, accurate, timely, strategically placed and easily accessible

- To prepare and review content before publishing to ensure it meets Council's visual and written style

- To ensure Council's web sites meet international and national web design and navigation standards

- To provide ongoing analysis and reporting on effectiveness of web communications.

Strategic objectives

CURRENT STATE		KEY STRATEGIES		FUTURE STATE
Stagnant website	▶	To proactively seek new initiatives and identify opportunities to improve Council's online presence through technological advancements.	▶	Multimedia-rich content that is engaging and at the forefront of Council industry standards.
Heavy text-based website	▶	To utilise the web and graphic designer within the Communications and Media Team to enhance visual communications [Jerome Bruner, a psychologist from New York University, proved that people remember up to 30 percent of what they read, but 80 percent of what they see.].	▶	Strengthen brand recall through visual recognition and increased understanding of Councils services, projects and initiatives.
Web site transfers well to mobile but could capitalise on customer need for mobile site/app	▶	To develop a Smart Phone application.	▶	Access to relevant information at the customers time-of-need.
Unstable, limited features and time consuming web content system	▶	To purchase a new Web Content System.	▶	Effective web content system that is user-friendly, quick to update, feature-rich, adaptable and reliable.
Internal customers lack knowledge of writing for the web	▶	To create a 'writing for the web' guideline and train internal staff.	▶	Established internal culture of writing for the web that results in timely and effective web communications.

Glossary

Our Council
Our local govern, including staff and the policies and guidelines that deliver the services, events, projects and initiatives,

Our City of Ryde
Our local government area and the people, organisations, businesses, students within

Our Community
Our people who make up the City of Ryde, another word for stakeholder

Our Stakeholders
All who have an exposure to our service or those who have an impact on that delivery

A service
An ongoing delivery of an expected community service

An event
A community-focused event or launch of a project or initiative

An initiative
a partnership based delivery or a community service

A project
time based delivery

CALD
Culturally and linguistically diverse

CMS
Content Management System

Translation information

ENGLISH

If you do not understand this document, please come to the Ryde Civic Centre, Devlin Street, to discuss it with Council staff, who will arrange an interpreter service. Alternately, you may ring the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 to ask an interpreter to contact Council for you. Our phone number is 9952 8222 and our office ours are 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

ARABIC

إذا كنت لا تفهم محتويات هذه الرسالة، فالرجاء الاتصال بمركز مجلس بلدية رايد Ryde Civic Centre، وعنوانه: Ryde Devlin Street, لمناقشتها مع العاملين في المجلس عن طريق مترجم، يستعين به العاملون لمساعدتك. أو يمكنك، بدلا من ذلك، أن تتصل بمكتب خدمات الترجمة TIS على الرقم 450 131 وأن تطلب من أحد المترجمين أن يتصل بالمجلس نيابة عنك. رقم تليفون المجلس هو 9952 8222، وساعات العمل هناك هي من الساعة 8.30 صباحا إلى 4.30 بعد الظهر من يوم الاثنين إلى يوم الجمعة.

ARMENIAN

Եթէ այս նամակը չէք հասկնար, խնդրեմ եկէք՝ *Րայդ Սիվիք Սենյրը, Տեվլին* փողոց, Րայդ, խոսակցելու Քաղաքապետարանի պաշտոնեաներուն հետ, որոնք թարգմանիչ մը կրնան կարգադրել: Կամ, կրնաք հեռաձայնել Թարգմանութեան Սպասարկութեան՝ 131 450, եւ խնդրել որ թարգմանիչ մը Քաղաքապետարանին հետ կապ հաստատէ՝ Ձեզի համար: Քաղաքապետարանի հեռաձայնի թիւն է՝ 9952 8222: Քաղաքապետարանի գրասենեակի ժամերն են՝ կ.ա. ժամը 8.30 - կ.ե. ժամը 4.30, Երկուշաբթիէն Ուրբաթ:

CHINESE

如果您看不懂這封信，請到位于 Devlin Street, Ryde 的禮特區市府禮堂 （Ryde Civic Centre）與區政廳工作人員討論，他們將會給您安排傳譯員服務。或者您自己打電話給 "翻譯及傳譯服務"，電話：131 450，請他們替您與區政廳聯係。區政廳的電話號碼是：9952 8222。 區政廳工作時間是：周一至周五，上午 8.30 到下午 4.30。

FARSI

اگر اين نامه را نمي فهميد لطفا به مركز شهرداري رايد در Devlin Street مراجعه كنيد. كارمندان شهرداري ترتيب استفاده از يك مترجم را براي شما خواهند داد. يا ميتوانيد به سرويس ترجمه كتبي و شفاهي شماره 450 131 تلفن بزنيد و بخواهيد كه يك مترجم از جانب شما با شهرداري تماس بگيرد. شماره تلفن شهرداري 8222 9952 و ساعات كار از 8.30 صبح تا 4.30 بعد از ظهر مي ..

ITALIAN

Le persone che hanno difficoltà a capire le presente relazione annuale, sono pregate di presentarsi al Ryde Civic Centre in Devlin Street, Ryde, e parlarne con gli impiegati municipali che provvederanno a richiedere l'intervento di un interprete. Oppure possono chiamare il Translating and Interpreting Service al 131 450 e chiedere ad uno dei loro interpreti di mettersi in contatto con il comune di Ryde. Il numero del comune è 9952 8222. Gli uffici comunali sono aperti dalle 8.30 alle 16.30, dal lunedi al venerdi.

KOREAN

이 편지를 이해할 수 없으시면 Ryde의 Devlin Street에 있는 Ryde Civic Centre로 오셔서 카운슬 직원과 상담하여 주십시오. 저희 직원이 통역 써비스를 연결해 드릴 것입니다. 아니면 131 450번으로 통번역 써비스(TIS)에 전화하셔서 통역사에게 대신 카운슬에 연락해 주도록 부탁하셔도 됩니다. 카운슬 전화 번호는 9952 8222번입니다. 카운슬의 업무 시간은 오전 8:30부터 오후 4:30, 월요일에서 금요일까지입니다.

Contact Us

We welcome your feedback on this Strategy, feel free to contact the Communications and Media Team on 9952 8222 or email cityofryde@ryde.nsw.gov.au