



**Questions raised by the community at the
Cremorne Ward Community Forum
held on Tuesday 27 September 2011**

Questions Raised	Council's Reply
<p>1. With regard to the proposed special rate variation, the explanatory letter sent to all ratepayers lists maintenance and not initial development of new infrastructure. I am concerned that revenue from the levies is being used to carry out maintenance and this is not what I understood the levies to be for? Do you think IPART will view the proposed programs of work favourably?</p>	<p>Some Infrastructure Levy funding is spent on maintenance, for the purpose of bringing assets to a higher standard than they otherwise would be. For example the Infrastructure Levy allows Council to increase the frequency of its road resheeting program thus improving the standard of the roads in the local government area (LGA). Overall 90-95% of Infrastructure Levy funding is used for capital projects.</p>
<p>2. It is noted within the factsheets, enclosed with the explanatory letter, that funding from levies has and will continue to be used to expand parking facilities. Can you give examples of where this has happened?</p>	<p>Expansion of facilities such as Barry Street Car Park is an example of where additional car parking has been provided through levy funding.</p>
<p>3. With regard to the Environment Levy, would some of the projects proposed as being funded by this levy be better funded at a State or Federal level? Aren't programs delivered at a local level duplication and is there any net gain to Council in delivering to programs identified?</p>	<p>Council's sustainability education programs, delivered to date have been well received, and have focused on areas not targeted by State and Federal programs e.g. due to the make up of dwellings in the North Sydney LGA a number of programs have focused on apartment dwellers as opposed to single dwelling targeted by State and Federal programs.</p> <p>Council has received positive feedback from participants of its sustainability education programs. Programs are developed in response to identified community needs and interest, through consultation.</p> <p>The North Sydney community has gained through a number of schemes supported and initiated by Council e.g. rebates and cost incentives on rain water tanks and the City Switch program has helped the CBD business community be more energy and water efficient and contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across the LGA. This program originated in North Sydney and is now run in collaboration with City of Sydney, Parramatta and other Australian capital cities.</p>

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	<p>Similarly, Council has also directly benefited from sustainability projects. For example the installation of 120 solar panels on the roof of Council premises partially funded by the levy, generates cost savings in power bills thus having a positive effect on Council's bottom line</p>
<p>4. How is the community informed of Council's environmental sustainability programs?</p>	<p>Council informs the local community of its initiatives via weekly advertisements in the Mosman Daily and via our website. Council also produces and distributes newsletters including North Sydney News which is distributed to all households 2 times a year and has several e-newsletters including Green e-News which specifically promotes Council's environmental sustainability programs and initiatives.</p> <p>For more information visit www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au. You can also subscribe to various newsletters including the green e-news by clicking the 'subscribe' button at the bottom of the homepage.</p>
<p>5. How does Council balance street tree management and maintenance/expansion of the urban forest with the need to maintain tree branches near power lines? Is there scope for political lobbying at state level to improve the current situation?</p>	<p>Electricity supply/provision falls under State legislation which overrides Local Government policy. However, North Sydney Council works hard to find solutions which benefit both the local community and electricity suppliers, by consciously choosing tree species that will grow around power lines or introducing small shrub planting when replanting. This takes a combined approach as every street is different. In most cases Council won't remove trees just because of powerlines overhead. Council maintains ongoing liaison with Energy Australia regarding tree maintenance, but we have little control over their contractors carrying out the work. Council does lobby at the State level for improvements.</p>
<p>6. Would putting power lines underground be a simple solution to the conflict between street trees and power lines?</p>	<p>Yes, to a degree this would negate the problem. Council's planning controls actively encourage new development to underground power supplies. However retrofitting existing properties across the LGA is currently prohibitively expensive (at an approx. cost of \$3,000 per metre). Council has undertaken cable bundling at several locations across the LGA and this has been funded by the Environment Levy.</p>
<p>7. New street trees being planted on footpaths seem to have smaller tree pits than those they are replacing or complementing near by e.g. Wycombe Road. Is it possible to take away one parking space in order to accommodate larger trees?</p>	<p>Council is taking steps to improve street trees generally. New technology allows smaller tree pits which perform as well as older larger ones. Also Council is looking to plant trees in median strips and other available land to maximise tree coverage.</p>

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<p>8. Is Council working to prevent the problems of large tree roots impacting on the drainage system?</p>	<p>Yes. Trees are seen as important assets. Engineered solutions are being sought to resolve drainage problems associated with tree roots. Where possible trees will not be sacrificed as their existence has a positive impact on stormwater more generally.</p>
<p>9. Can Council take action relating to trees on private land impacting on Neighbours?</p>	<p>No. Council has no power to take action in these areas as they are private disputes. Residents can have disputes about trees resolved by the Land and Environment Court or the Community Justice Centre.</p>
<p>10. Most of the trees in Wycombe Road are Chinese Tallowwoods are many are diseased e.g. sap dropping onto cars/objects below. What is being done about this issue? Is it an option to replace the diseased trees?</p>	<p>Council's arborists recently concluded an inoculation trial, which involved injecting a systemic insecticide into the trees to eliminate the Scale Insect, which produces large quantities of Honeydew leading to Sooty Mould growth. Some success has been achieved enabling the process be to be used in other areas. It is expected to take another 18 months to 2 years to achieve significant results. But timing is important for the process to be effective; success depends on treating the tree at the right time. The difficulty is getting to all affected trees at the right time in the insect's lifecycle. Council will trial this method throughout the LGA before removing or replacing trees.</p> <p>There are over 1,600 of these trees in the North Sydney LGA. Replacing trees would be very expensive and would have a significant detrimental affect on the streetscape.</p>
<p>11. Does Council engage in dialogue with neighbouring councils regarding street tree planning along LGA boundaries e.g. Spofforth Street?</p>	<p>Yes. Council does liaise with its neighbouring councils, including Mosman regarding such initiatives and long term strategies.</p>
<p>12. What is Council's rationale for palm trees in Hayes Street and raised sandstone garden edging as this is a trip hazard?</p>	<p>Palms were planted, following community consultation, to address residents concerns about potential loss of views in lieu of another species. In this location they did not want canopy cover. The sandstone edging was installed to the stop the tree sites being eroded on this steep hill</p>
<p>13. During the construction of the new Bus Stopping area on the Warringah Freeway, a number of trees were removed. Can Council arrange for landscaping at this site?</p>	<p>The bus stopping area is an RTA project on RTA land. To offset the removal of vegetation at the site, additional trees were planted on the adjoining golf course as it was not deemed appropriate to do so on the freeway.</p>
<p>14. Council's verge mowing contractors are not picking up grass cuttings and they are being washed into the drains when it rains, why is this and what can be done to address the issue?</p>	<p>Council's contractors are not required to catch/remove grass cutting, since this service was reinstated, as picking up grass cuttings significantly increases the cost. Instead the contractors are required to put the cuttings back onto the verge to decompose. Grass cutting should not be left in gutters to be washed into the drains; Council will monitor</p>

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	provision of this service.
15. Is there filtering of urban runoff which flows into the Harbour?	Yes. North Sydney Council was one of the first harbour councils to install Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs). Approximately 180 - 200 tonnes of debris is collected per annum by the traps, which would otherwise have ended up in the Harbour.
16. Do GPTs remove small particles such as cigarette butts?	Yes the GPT will collect most cigarette butts and prevent them from entering the harbour but the traps can not collect very small particles.
17. Will Infrastructure Levy funds be used to install a GPTs at the end of Bogota Street, as this is a major discharge point into the Harbour?	No, as a GPT is already installed at that location. It is cleaned every 3-4 weeks.
18. The presentation talked about repairing existing stormwater drainage systems within the Cremorne Ward, but are there any plans to install new pipes e.g. Barry Street and Wycombe Rd?	North Sydney's current drainage system was designed in the 1920's for 1920's standards. Council's drainage network is a significant asset including over 98km of pipes. Council's asset management efforts are focused on bringing the existing system up to current standards. The key objective is controlling peak flow rates. The more cost effective solution is to repair and/or replace sections of pipes rather than pulling up all existing pipes and replacing with new. Drainage works were carried out at Wycombe Road/Yeo Street in 2010. Once the current scheduled maintenance program is complete the installation of new pipes at other key locations will be investigated. Note: Drainage works were carried out at Wycombe Road/Yeo Street in 2010
19. Does the smoking in outdoor spaces ban apply to streets and plazas? Does it apply to the Mount Street Plaza area, which is classified as a park?	No. The new arrangements do not prohibit smoking in these areas/localities.
20. The beach area at the bottom of Hayes Street has large numbers of boats on it. It looks unsightly and is almost inaccessible to the public. Can Council act as it is starting to affect the way people can use the beach?	There is no storage for dingys/small boats at this site. The problem of dingy storage is felt broadly across parts of the LGA and Council is taking steps to make improvements. It is focusing on the worst affected areas first and introducing storage systems to encourage better storage of watercrafts.
21. Do people pay to use Council's dingy storage racks?	Yes and No. Some storage facilities do incur a fee (where high demand), while others don't (where demand is low). In problem areas the racks will be offered free, as Council aims to correct poor storage behaviour by offering access to such facilities.

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<p>22. What's going on with the development at the corner of Mount and Walker Streets in the CBD and the development proposal at Berry Square?</p>	<p>These developments were dealt with under Part 3A legislation and determined by the NSW Planning Minister. Consent for the respective developments has been granted but at this time work is yet to commence. More information can be found at the Department of Planning Website - major development project pages - http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/page/</p>
<p>23. What can Council do about the issue of boat trailers parking on streets? Can Council lobby to change the road rules relating to width of trailers as this is a major problem on the narrow streets around the LGA?</p>	<p>Boat trailers of a specific size are allowed to park in accordance with parking restrictions. Council has previously raised this issue at the annual Local Government Association (LGA) Conference requesting. It is challenging to get support across all councils to lobby to change the current legislation as this issue is limited to inner urban areas. Council, via the Mayor, will raise the issue with the LGA Executive to see if support can be gained for a change in road rules.</p>
<p>24. Advertisements for tonight's forum included the Cremorne Point Playground. We have had no mention. Are there going to major changes to the existing site?</p>	<p>This item was removed from the agenda as the project is in the early concept stages and there is little to report. Funds have been allocated in the 2011/12 budget for its refurbishment. There are no plans to reduce the amount of grass around the existing play ground area. The objective of the refurbishment is to improve 'play value' within the existing size and scale. Footprint may increase marginally to enable greater shade/canopy provision. Community consultation will occur before work will begin. Consultation opportunities will be promoted via Council's website and local papers.</p>
<p>25. The speed and volume of traffic on the road is increasing at Ben Boyd Road and Wycombe Road. Neutral Precinct has suggested traffic calming be installed e.g. no right turn. Does Council see this as a problem?</p>	<p>A Right Turn restriction into Ben Boyd Road or Wycombe Road is not a preferred treatment as it is likely to transfer the problem to other nearby local roads which are less suitable for high traffic volumes than Ben Boyd Road and Wycombe Road. Furthermore a request such as this can only be implemented with support from the North Sydney Traffic Committee; consultation with the community and a Traffic Management Plan approved by the RTA. This process can take several months (or years); however given the potential impacts on residents in the immediate area it is unlikely that this request would be supported.</p> <p>Council has noted various locations in Ben Boyd Road and Wycombe Road for traffic calming in its list of outstanding projects. It should be noted that Council has a limited budget for such works. As part of its Traffic Strategy, Council undertakes a review of the priorities for traffic projects each year. The traffic strategy implementation procedure adopts a methodology that allows the</p>

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	community's high priority traffic projects to be ranked according to a number of criteria, including safety, residential amenity, pedestrian amenity, cyclist amenity, through traffic control, public transport benefits and equity. Traffic calming projects suggested for Ben Boyd Road and Wycombe Road will be reviewed annually and will remain on the list of outstanding projects until funding is available.
<p>26. How do I find out when and where my local Precinct Committee meets?</p>	<p>For up-to-date information about Precinct Committee meeting times, venues and office bearer contact details contact Council's Community Engagement Coordinator on 9936 8100 and/or precincts@northsydney.nsw.gov.au; website http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/precincts</p>