



2016

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY







Giving our community the chance to be involved in decisions that affect them.

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

All local councils across the state are required to plan and report in line with the NSW Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This "recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live, a sustainable environment, opportunities for social interaction, opportunities for education and employment, and reliable infrastructure. The difference lies in how each community responds to these needs. It also recognises that council plans and policies should not exist in isolation - that they are inter-connected. This framework allows NSW councils to draw their various plans together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning holistically and sustainably for the future."

The following Penrith Council documents are freely available on our website and in hard copy on request.

Community Strategic Plan

Our Community Plan is a 'big picture' plan based around the seven Outcomes our community has told us will improve Penrith as a place to live, work and visit. These are long term goals and Council cannot deliver



them alone – we need to work with state and federal government, businesses, other organisations and our community to achieve these Outcomes together. Our Community Plan not only sets out where we want to be, but also where we are now and how we'll know we're on the right track.

Delivery Program and Operational Plan

Our Delivery Program, which incorporates our Operational Plan, sets out Council's role in delivering the Outcomes over the four years from 2017-21. It's our commitment to our community,



and includes the services, activities and projects we will deliver, our annual budget, our detailed works programs and how we will measure our performance to ensure we're delivering the right services the best way we can.

Community Engagement Strategy

This document identifies the various stakeholders in our City's future and sets out how Council plans to engage with each of these groups to develop and review our Community Strategic Plan.



Resourcing Strategy

We cannot deliver the services the community needs without properly managing our people, our assets and our money. The Resourcing Strategy looks at the key risks and opportunities we're likely to face over the



next 10 years, and how they may impact our long term financial sustainability. It looks at how we will use our resources and what we need to do to ensure our assets and our workforce are best placed to deliver on our commitments over the next four years.

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Introduction

Penrith is growing and transforming. We are the heart of the New West; a recognised Regional City; a vital hub for regional business, health, education and employment. We are building an exciting future, our population is growing rapidly and now more than ever the people of Penrith are seeking the employment, study, cultural and recreational opportunities that the City has to offer.

Unlike more established areas of Sydney, we have the chance to build our own unique future and determine, through engaging with our community, exactly how we want to shape it.

A Community Engagement Strategy outlines standards and principles to guide the process, ensuring Council undertakes inclusive and comprehensive engagement programs.

In 2012 we conducted an extensive community engagement program that involved approximately 5,000 participants and included a range of tailored engagement activities to maximise community input. This engagement informed the 2013-17 Community Plan.

Since then, in addition to the organisation's standard engagement activities, we have seen some exciting and innovative engagement initiatives that not only consult and involve but move toward collaborating

with and **empowering** our community members.
Our Neighbourhood Renewal's Team Colyton program and the recent Community Panel, detailed later in this strategy, are good examples of this.

We strive to improve our ability to connect with our community through drawing on our own internal organisational values: **innovation**, **accountability** and **respect**. We are working to enhance existing opportunities and develop new opportunities for our community to effectively engage with us and be part of the decision making process on a range of issues and projects.

Through ongoing engagement with our community, we are able to monitor our progress against the existing community outcomes and ensure newly developed community outcomes, and the strategies we implement to achieve them, remain sustainable, innovative, achievable and effective.



What is community engagement?

We know community engagement is the future of local government. Our Council is in a unique position to work closely with the community to build a meaningful dialogue about the aspirations, diverse stories and the future of Penrith.

Community engagement, or public participation, is defined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make better decisions.

Council is deeply committed to the belief that those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process. We aim to improve our connection with the communities we serve and provide them with the best possible standard of service. We undertake engagement around decisions that directly impact on living, working, playing, studying, using services and doing business in the City.

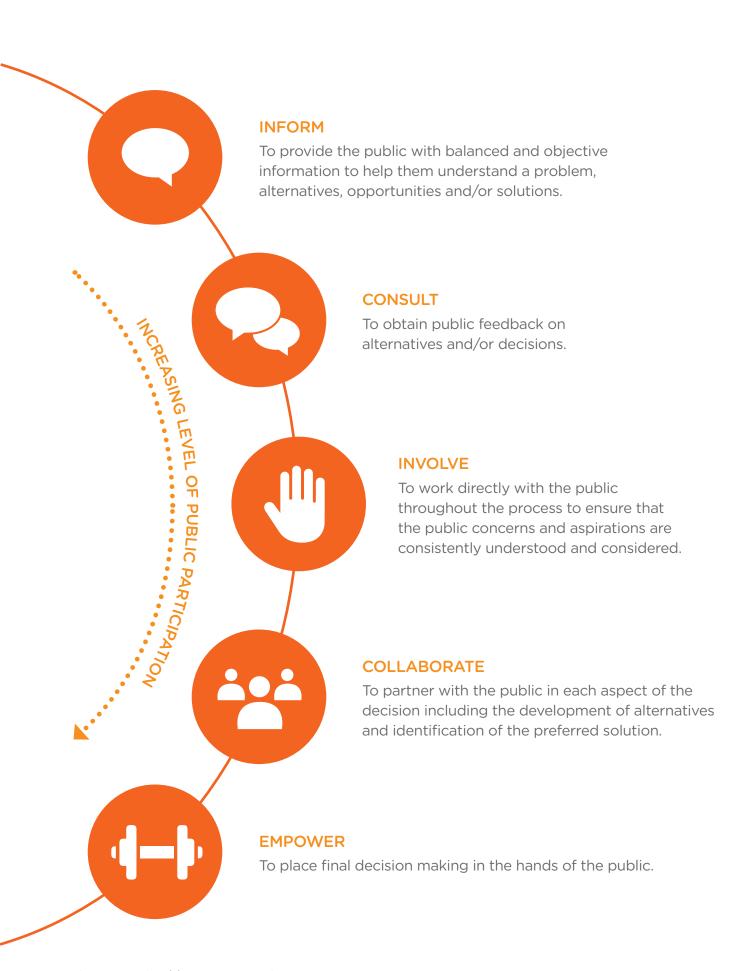
LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Council undertakes community engagement at a number of levels, offering opportunities for the community to influence the decision making process. IAP2 describes five levels of community engagement:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower

Council engages at each of these levels across our services, and in all areas we seek to provide real opportunities for our community to be informed and heard.

Council delivers a diverse range of services, many of them engage with the community in some way. Some focus more on informing and consulting our communities, while others work directly alongside communities and empower people make decisions and take action in their neighbourhoods. All of our services operate under the Local Government Act which means we have certain regulatory responsibilities and powers that also affect how we engage with our community.



Source: IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

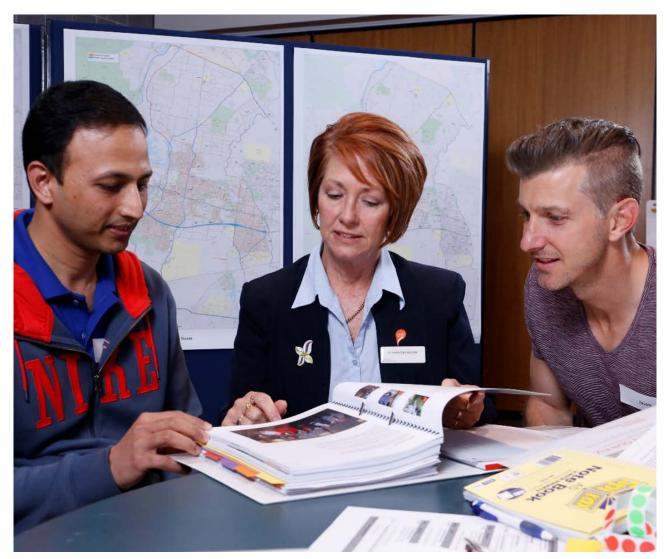
Why is engagement important?

We understand that when we work with our community it contributes to better informed and more sustainable decisions.

Effective and inclusive community engagement benefits both Council and the community by:

- increasing community awareness about Council's services and activities
- increasing Council's understanding of the diverse experiences, needs and priorities of our local communities, so we can deliver more efficient and effective services
- allowing exploration of a wider range of solutions and possibilities
- fostering effective communication and positive relationships
- identifying emerging issues which enables proactive planning and strategies
- identifying and resolving issues early, often reducing costs and negative impacts.

Council has always been committed to involving our residents and stakeholders in the decisions that affect them. We value the diversity of skills, views and expertise that our communities bring to the conversation. We seek opportunities to gather a broad range of perspectives to help us make better informed decisions about policy directions and service delivery.



Community Panel members with Councillor Karen McKeown.

Our engagement objectives & values

Council's community engagement objectives are to:

- ensure all community engagement initiatives across our organisation are fair and inclusive, affording all community members the opportunity to 'have their say', through providing clear engagement principles and practices
- give community members and stakeholders an opportunity to have input into Council's decision making where possible, in an open and transparent process
- ensure that the needs and concerns of the community are identified and addressed wherever possible
- ensure our strategic planning reflects the aspirations of our community and partners
- ensure Council meets its legislative requirements in regards to community engagement.

Council is committed to the following values when consulting with our communities:

INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION	We will provide opportunities for all people who are potentially affected by, or interested in, projects or activities to participate.
COMMITMENT	We will identify, understand and work to engage relevant communities.
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	We will build trust through personal contact and keeping promises. Effective relationships between Council and its communities will be maintained by using a variety of communication channels, as well as respecting stakeholder values and interests, and exploring them to find common ground.
TRANSPARENCY	Our community engagement processes will be undertaken in a clear and transparent manner so that our community understand at the outset what they have the opportunity to influence, and to what degree.
PARTNERSHIP APPROACH	The needs and priorities of Council and the community will be respected in the design and implementation of any community engagement processes.
FEEDBACK	We will inform participants how their input contributed to the decision making process.

We are committed to social justice and recognise that it is about promoting more socially inclusive communities for all people, particularly people likely to be marginalised or in vulnerable situations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, older people, women and young people.

Council's Community Engagement Strategy recognises that everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in decision making about the future of their community. It is based on the social justice principles of equity, access and participation to ensure:

- equity in decision making and the distribution of resources
- fair access for everyone to the economic resources and services they need to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life
- better opportunities for everyone for genuine participation and consultation about decisions that affect their lives.

Our community

Any individual or group of individuals, organisation or political entity with an interest in the outcome of a decision.



How we engage our community

We seek innovative ways to engage our diverse community through various levels, types and tools of engagement. The approach varies from one engagement activity to another, depending on what the engagement is for, who the target audience is, and the level of urgency or priority.

In addition to engagement that is required by legislation – such as the public exhibition of certain documents, plans and development applications, Council takes a proactive approach to engaging our community across various services, offering opportunities to our residents, workers, visitors, businesses, industry and government to be informed, involved and have their say.

Some of our key engagement activities include:

- community and cultural activities
- community meetings
- Your Say online consultation portal
- local events and festivals
- listening posts
- stakeholder meetings and 'roundtables'
- public exhibitions and submissions
- web, mobile apps and social media

- community and stakeholder reference groups
- advisory panels and groups
- traineeship program
- school workshops
- Mayoral Youth Challenge
- business forums
- surveys, including a customer satisfaction survey
- face-to-face customer service including our libraries, recreation and neighbourhood centres.

As we review our Community Plan and prepare the Delivery Program 2017-21; it is important we check the community outcomes are still relevant and what are emerging as key issues for our community. Some of this information can be gathered through ongoing engagement activities, but we have also employed two targeted activities:

- **the Community Panel** a panel of independently and randomly selected community members to answer the question 'What services and facilities do we need in Penrith, to what level, and how should we fund them?'
- an Online Survey completed by more than 550 residents, visitors, government agencies and businesses between June and September 2016 to identify existing and emerging priorities.

We will continue to engage with the community through a number of channels to complement the existing initiatives. Recommendations from both the engagement initiatives already undertaken and those that will be carried out over the next few months will be used to inform the development of the new Community Plan and Delivery Program.



Figure 3 - Members of Afford group at Thornton all abilities playground

Engagement activities

We are committed to best practice community engagement across our organisation. Ongoing and extensive engagement activities are conducted for specific projects or specialised services, and information from all of these feeds helps ensure our understanding of what matters to the community is up to date and comprehensive.

We also receive feedback from our community on an ongoing basis through social media, customer service staff, our switch board and conversations between our community and our staff as they work in the field. Our bi-annual customer satisfaction survey also provides information not only about satisfaction with Council services, but also more general measures of social cohesion and wellbeing.

This table provides an overview of various activities and projects that involve extensive engagement and therefore contribute to our overall understanding of community needs:

SERVICE	KEY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS	LEVEL
ADVOCACY, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	 Advocacy programs Penrith Progression Development Services Forum Public exhibitions e.g. Citywide Development Control Plan, Sydney Science Park 	Inform to Consult
CHILDREN'S SERVICES	 Parent workshops Children's Services Cooperative Board community representation (2 members) Children's Services customer survey (approximately 460 parents per year) 	Inform to Consult
CITY PLACES & PROJECTS	 Neighbourhood Renewal Program Team Colyton Penrith Mayoral Challenge Creative and Welcoming Village Cranebrook Youth Leadership Forum Callisto Playground design Werrington Lakes Upgrade & Public Art Meet St Marys film project St Marys Queen St Streetscape Improvement Project 	Inform to Empower
COMMUNITY WELLBEING	 Re-Imagine Ageing Project Community Networking Breakfast Disability Inclusion Action Plan Cultural & Inclusive Events Seniors Festival Wearing the Crown project Penrith Homelessness Summit Community Assistance Program 	Inform to Collaborate

SERVICE	KEY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS	LEVEL
CORPORATE FINANCE & WORKFORCE	Community PanelSpecial Rate Variation proposalsCustomer Satisfaction Survey	Inform to Collaborate
EMERGENCY SERVICES, REGULATION & WASTE	 Companion Animals Act Education Program Waste Not! Festival Flood study consultations Waste Satisfaction Surveys 	Inform to Consult
ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH	 Environmental Photography Competition Stormwater Education Program and Catchment Tours Night Nature Walks Cranebrook Wetland and Cumberland Plains Woodland Restoration Project Werrington Creek Restoration Project Schools for Sustainability One Tree Per Child 	Inform to Consult
GOVERNANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	A comprehensive program of civic and community events that enables us to connect with our community	Inform to Consult
LIBRARIES	 Sydney Writers Festival E-connect Home Library Outreach Service 	Inform to Consult
PUBLIC SPACES & COMMUNITY SAFETY	 'Our River' Masterplan White Ribbon Day Twilight River Walk Clean up Australia Day 	Inform to Consult



Challenges

GROWING COMMUNITY

Penrith City is expected to have a population of more than 250,000 by 2031. With our rapidly growing community there is not only an increase in the number of households, but also the number of people, community groups and businesses.

Knowing who our community members are is a critical part of understanding the needs of the community. We need to ensure our engagement initiatives are ongoing and continue to grow and evolve with our community.

CAPACITY AND TRAINING

To effectively and consistently engage with all areas of our diverse community, we need the right staff and skills in place. Our staff need to be continuously learning about new and improved ways of connecting with our community.

In 2015, 12 staff from a range of departments undertook community engagement training with IAP2. They reported improved knowledge and confidence in planning for and delivering community engagement, and now champion public participation in their area of Council.

TECHNOLOGY

Over the past four years we have seen a shift in the way we communicate with our community due to an increase in online channels that enable 24/7 access to information. The 2014 Customer Experience Study indicated that while residents still want to be able to write to, email and phone us, there is growing demand for 'self-service' information through the web, social media and apps. Even with the increased use of online and social media, we need to ensure we reach stakeholders across all areas of our community by using a range of communication channels.

We are increasingly using regular email newsletters to keep sections of our community up to date with opportunities and services, including the Sustainability News, New West newsletter, and a Food Safety newsletter to local food businesses.

Traditional media channels such as newspapers, radio, television and community newsletters continue to be used and remain an important part of communication.

Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring our online information – especially our corporate website – meets federal standards for online accessibility, so that people of all abilities can access our information. This presents some challenges in terms of skills and training, resources and technology.

Mobile technology

People today generally expect direct and instant contact, and the use of mobile technology is on the rise. To support this trend, Council has developed three apps that are now in use: the Council app, Waste Champion app and Walk Wise app.

Not all residents use technology

While there is an increase in the use of online and mobile technologies, a significant proportion of our population is still not relying heavily on technology. The 2011 census indicated 30% of homes in our community do not have internet access. Council is proactive in providing technical support and assistance through our Digital help desk and Tech Savvy workshops. However, we know alternative methods are still important for people who cannot easily, or choose not to engage online.

Engagement Highlights

Council has engaged extensively with our community, discussing the changing characteristics and predicted future growth of our population, to determine what our community wants and needs now and into the future.

AWARDS

Council was a finalist in the Organisation of the Year category and was highly commended at the International Association of Public Participation annual awards October 2014, recognising the many ways we engage with our community. We were also highly commended in the Planning Institute of Australia's Great Place Award category for the Penrith 'Pop Up' (Triangle) Park, was recognised for its success in turning a poor quality space into a fantastic public meeting space. The judges described the Park as an example of Council working with community to deliver something special.



Staff receiving IAP2 award.

NO BOUNDARIES PROJECT

The No Boundaries project invited people of all abilities to collaborate with professional artists in a series of creative workshops. The artwork they created featured as large scale projection onto the outside of the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre. More than 450 people, including people with disability, attended the event, the first of its kind in Penrith. It showcased the creative and artistic abilities of people with disability to the wider community.



Artwork projects on The Joan.

OUR RIVER' MASTERPLAN

The public open space on both sides of the river, between and around the Victoria and M4 bridges is vital to our City and community. We needed a road map for how we would protect and make the most of it into the future, including connecting it with Penrith City Centre; enhancing its natural environment and nurturing a landscape that supports active, healthy lifestyles.

Council engaged consultants Clouston Associates to develop a Masterplan in consultation with residents, sporting and environmental groups, community groups, organisations, businesses and visitors. The program involved surveys taken on site at the river and events; letter box drops and an on-line survey, stakeholder interviews, plus four community workshops.

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Council used a variety of community engagement approaches to encourage residents and community partners to help us find ways to make our City a better place for all, by having input into our 2017-21 Disability Inclusion Action Plan. These included advertised public forums, an online survey on the Your Say Penrith website, focus groups and meetings to ensure representation of a range of views and experiences.

Council met with over 100 people with disability, their family members and carers, and disability professionals, including children, older people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, and people with a diversity of disabilities.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PROGRAM

The Neighbourhood Renewal Program, funded through Special Rate Variations from 2006, 2011, and 2016, seeks to address comparative disadvantage across 10 older established suburbs and two rural communities. It uses grass roots and creative community engagement processes and runs several innovative initiatives that actively collaborate with and empower residents to lead decision making processes, and offer opportunities for cultural and creative engagement.



Residents of Colyton sharing ideas for a new wall art design, part of Neighbourhood Renewal Program's Creative Village 2016 initiative.

TEAM COLYTON

Council endorsed 'Team Colyton' in 2015, a new model of Neighbourhood Renewal that aims to increase the opportunities for residents to participate in decision making about their neighbourhood. The inaugural project in Colyton had nearly 100 residents sign up as members and they have worked together to prepare a three year Colyton Community Action Plan that contains a series of local priorities for action.

Residents have been empowered to take local action themselves, working alongside Council and other services. This has resulted in exciting new resident led projects and social connection events such as the inaugural Colyton Carols, delivered by Team Colyton, which attracted more than 500 residents.

COMMUNITY PANEL

The Penrith Community Panel was brought together in September 2015 as part of the engagement process for the Planning Our Future Special Rate Variation. The panel was run under a deliberative democracy model and coordinated independently by not-for-profit research organisation new Democracy Foundation.

The panel was made up of 34 everyday people who were randomly selected from across our City. It was important that the panel members were representative of our residents but also were regular people with no special knowledge of Council. The panel was asked to consider the questions 'What local services and infrastructure do we need in Penrith? What should we do, to what level of quality, and how should we pay for it?'

In order to answer these questions, the panel was provided with information about the demographics of Penrith; an overview of Council services, assets and financials; current and future challenges, and Council's vision for the future. Over six full day sessions, the panel invested a combined total of more than 1500 hours to discuss the information, their thoughts and priorities. The panel was actively engaged during the process and requested additional information on more than 70 points, including economic development, planning, advocacy, growth, transport and parking.

Although the process itself had to be endorsed by Council, once it started the panel operated independently. Discussions were facilitated by newDemocracy and although Council staff were present at each meeting, they could only answer questions posed by the panel - they were not allowed to contribute to discussions in any other way. This preserved the independence of the process, making sure the final recommendations were truly owned by the panel as representatives of the community.

The panel last met in December 2015 and delivered its final recommendations in early 2016. The recommendations tell us what the community sees as the priorities for our City and how we can deliver the services and infrastructure Penrith needs. They reflect the panel's in-depth research and discussions, and provide a perspective on Council's role in the community that draws from a variety of backgrounds, experiences and aspirations.

Council is now working to see how to implement each of the recommendations, and when. Some are already underway while others will be considered as we develop our new Community Plan and Delivery Program.



2015 Community Panel.

PENRITH MAYORAL CHALLENGE

The Mayoral Challenge gives young people the chance to design improvements to public spaces in their local area, building civic pride and connection. It offers a unique opportunity for young people to contribute to their local community and build skills in leadership and decision making. This project has created quality public spaces for Cranebrook, Colyton and Kingswood.



Students participating in the Penrith Mayoral Challenge 2016.

INTERPRETING ASSISTANCE

ENGLISH If you do not understand this, please contact the Telephone Interpreting

Service on 131 450 and ask them to contact Penrith City Council on your behalf on (02) 4732 7777. Or come to the Council offices and ask for an

interpreter.

إذا لم يكن بامكانك قراءة النص أعلاه. الرجاء الاتصال بخدمات الترجمة الفورية الهاتفية (TIS)

على الرقم 450 131 والطلب منهم الاتصال بدورهم بمجلس مدينة بنريث نيابة عنك على الرقم 7777 4732 (02) . أو بمكنك الخضور إلى المجلس وطلب ترتيب مترجم فوري لك .

CHINESE 如果您无法阅读这些文字,请致电 131 450 联系电话传译服务中心,请他

们代您拨打 (02) 4732 7777 联系 Penrith 市议会。您也可以亲自到市议会来

并要求获得口译服务。

GREEK Αν δεν μπορείτε να το διαβάσετε αυτό, τηλεφωνήστε στην Τηλεφωνική

Υπηρεσία Διερμηνέων στο 131 450 και ζητήστε τους να επικοινωνήσουν με το Δήμο Penrith (Penrith City Council) για λογαριασμό σας στον αριθμό

(02) 4732 7777, ή ελάτε στη Δημαρχία και ζητήστε διερμηνέα.

HINDI यदि आप इसे नहीं पढ़ पाते हैं, तो कृपया 131 450 पर टेलीफोन दुभाषिया सेवा

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ITALIAN Se non riuscite a leggere questo, contattate il servizio telefonico di inter-

pretariato al numero 131 450 e chiedetegli di contattare da parte vostra il comune di Penrith City al numero (02) 4732 7777 oppure venite in comune

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VIETNAMESE Nếu quý vị không thể đọc được thông tin này, xin liên lạc Dịch Vụ Thông

Dịch Qua Điện Thoại ở số 131 450 và yêu cầu họ thay mặt quý vị liên lạc với Hội Đồng Thành Phố Penrith ở số (02) 4732 7777. Hoặc hãy tới Hội

Đồng và yêu cầu có thông dịch viên.

Contact: Penrith City Council Telephone: 02 4732 7777

Civic Centre Facsimile: 02 4732 7958

601 High Street Email: pencit@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

Penrith NSW