



Marin, of Cranebrook, Wendy and her daughter Vivienne, of Glenmore Park, and Steven, of Leonay.

Picture: MATTHEW SULLIVAN

# Citizen jury meets to look at infrastructure plans

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PANEL HAS HAD ITS FIRST FORUM**

**PROJECTS AHEAD**

Ian Paterson

PENRITH Council's community panel is assembled and members are already gaining an appreciation of the tough job ahead.

The "citizens jury" held its first meeting as the council embarks on a new age of community consultation to try and determine what community infrastructure projects need to be prioritised and built first.

Wendy, 31, of Glenmore Park, is one of the 34 panel members invited to participate in the project.

She said the experience so far had opened her eyes to the complexity of the issues facing local government.

"It has been very transparent and I have been impressed by the level of detail we have been allowed to have access to — especially in the forum we had — and we could ask for any infor-

mation we wanted," Wendy said.

Marin, a business owner of Cranebrook said he was initially sceptical about whether anything could be achieved via the project.

"I was intrigued by the whole idea and like most people, I had become disillusioned with the whole political process and the extremes of the debate shouting over the rest of us," he said.

"Whereas this process has

gathered a group of Australians, given them the same information (as) councillors and asked them to make recommendations (about) what we'd like to see in our suburbs or areas in the future."

University student Steve said all demographics were represented on the panel.

Recommendations made by the panel will be presented to councillors who will vote whether to accept, modify or reject the proposals.

- 5000 people were invited to participate in the community panel with 34 people selected
- Members must be over 18
- The panel will meet another five times between now and December
- Penrith Council has more than \$298 million in future infrastructure projects requiring funding over the medium to long term
- The 2015-16 budget is \$237 million, leaving a \$61 million shortfall