

# Blueprint for our ideal city

**PENRITH COUNCIL**

BY KRYSZYNA POLLARD

AFTER a collective 1500 hours of collaboration, a group of randomly-selected local residents has handed over a blueprint for the city they want to Penrith City Council.

Members of the Community Panel Project attended the February 8 council meeting to deliver their recommendations on service and infrastructure priorities in the city.

The panel was tasked with answering questions on what local services and infrastructure were needed in Penrith, which ones council should do and to what level of quality, and how it should all be paid for.

"The panel members spent a combined total of more than 1500 hours delving into every facet of council's operations," mayor Karen McKeown said in a mayoral minute at the meeting.

"The community panel has been an essential part of our looking to the future and ensuring we are on the right track, and I thank each mem-



**RECOMMENDATIONS DELIVERED:** Members of the Community Panel with mayor Karen McKeown during the handover of the recommendations to Penrith City Council at the February 8 meeting.

ber for their time, consideration and recommendations."

The panel comprised more than 30 people from a variety of backgrounds, and more than 150 comments and submissions were made

during the process.

Panel members James Irwin and Katherine Hardacre both addressed the council on behalf of the panel, saying they had found the project to be enlightening.

"I think it was a very positive experience," Mr Irwin told the meeting.

All panel members agreed the process was "informative and eye-opening", as many of the members did not realise

exactly what the council was responsible for, they told the meeting.

Key issues that had come up in the course of the panel's discussions was that council needed to better

communicate with residents, concern over infrastructure like traffic lights, and the proposed second airport at Badgerys Creek.

Among recommendations included in the panel's report was the provision of parking, investigating further bike path opportunities, and installation of covers and solar lighting at all bus stops.

Other recommendations included converting under used or pocket parks into community gardens, expanding running tracks through suburbs, and installing CCTV cameras "for general public protection to act as a deterrent for crime and public safety rather than just protecting council property".

Councillors around the table congratulated the panel on their hard work.

The panel's work complemented the council's efforts to future-proof the city, including a financial capacity review - including the Special Rate Variation - and an organisational capacity review, which had found productivity savings of almost \$5 million a year, mayor McKeown said.