

# IT'S WHAT WE WANT

Marissa Georgopoulos

UPGRADES to major roads, more jobs, additional outdoor fitness facilities and updates to the Nepean River banks were some demands made on Penrith Council by the Penrith Community Panel.

The panel presented its The City We Want report to the council during Monday night's meeting, with advice on how, when and where money should be spent.

The 34 residents worked off the knowledge the council's 2015 to 2016 budget is \$237 million, far less than the \$298 million worth of identified infrastructure needs.

The panel proposed the council halve the number of bulk pick-ups, reduce street sweeping frequency, and re-evaluate council staff structure as ways to lessen costs.

Recommendations were given time frames and top priorities were water play areas for children and street lighting, asked to be delivered within two years.

"The panel experience was ... informative and eye-opening," member Katherine Hardacre said.

Deputy Mayor Ross Fowler said the process produced positive results and the panel was "quite complimentary" of how council operates.

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REGIONWIDE

## Park not 'up to scratch'

JORDAN SPRINGS SITE DEEMED LOW ON PLAY EQUIPMENT, GRASS AND SHADE



Lynsey Irwin of Jordan Springs with her 19-month-old son Cooper. She says the park lacks play equipment for younger children.

Picture: MATTHEW SULLIVAN

Marissa Georgopoulos

MORE play equipment and shade options at parks is what Lynsey Irwin would like to see Penrith Council spend its money on.

Ms Irwin said she and partner John Buckner enjoyed getting out with their 19-month-old son, Cooper, and her stepson, Aiden, 5, but were disappointed by features at the park near their Jordan Springs home.

"When we were building we were told every section would have a park so we assumed ours would be like the others that have great equipment, lots of grass and shady trees," she said.

The Boronia Village Park has a hopscotch and snakes



and ladders game, but the resident said it didn't cater for younger children, so the family visits nearby parks in the suburb.

"It would be nice even just to have a set of swings ... or if

you could just sit under a tree and have a barbecue area here," she said.

The community panel highlighted the need for more trees to be planted and parks and reserves.

### Ratepayers voice their ideas

THE randomly chosen panel (pictured) came together for more than 1500 hours between September and December to discuss and debate ideas.

Members were asked what services and infrastructure was needed locally, and what Penrith Council should prioritise, to what level of quality and how it should be paid for.

The resulting report highlighted 43 focus areas and more than 10 advocacy items.

The council was deemed Fit for the Future by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in October and in response, working with the panel was part of the community engagement program, council papers said.

One of the panel's recommendations for the council was to set up free water-play areas around the city.

Ms Irwin said she was all for the idea, as the one at Werrington with water fea-

tures has been "fantastic". "That is something I would definitely support," she said.

"Especially because it's so hot here and the majority of people in Jordan Springs don't have a pool."



Mayor Karen McKeown.

### Mayor praises panel for project

FROM page one

Penrith mayor Karen McKeown commended the panel for their hard work and said it was the right time for the project, with Penrith and the council "going through a period of growth."

Councillor Maurice Giroto had the idea to start up the community panel.

"It is outstanding (they chose to) take out of their own time and convert it into the community — democracy goes beyond election day," Cr Giroto said.

Before the process, council ensured the panel would be given transparency.

Georgina Inwood, program manager for newDemocracy Foundation — the non profit organisation that oversaw the project — said council's openness was "extraordinary".

Panel member James Irwin of Jordan Springs said it was refreshing to see how many recommendations were currently being dealt with by council.

"A lot of people in the government area were not aware of the good things council are already doing; that emphasises communication is key," he said.

These included plans for multistorey car parking, campaigning for Penrith, and riverside upgrades.

Do you agree with the community panel's recommendations?