

10.5. Advertising on Council Infrastructure - Citizen Jury

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ATTACHMENTS	Nil
CSP LINK	<p>2. Our Built Infrastructure</p> <p>2.1 Infrastructure and assets meet diverse community needs</p> <p>2.2 Vibrant public domains and villages</p> <p>3. Our Innovative City</p> <p>3.1 Our commercial centres are prosperous and vibrant</p> <p>3.2 North Sydney is smart and innovative</p> <p>4. Our Social Vitality</p> <p>4.3 North Sydney’s history is preserved and recognised</p> <p>5. Our Civic Leadership</p> <p>5.2 Strong civic leadership and customer focussed services</p>

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to respond to a Council resolution, to investigate the feasibility of Council hosting a citizen jury to assist with the issue of using Council infrastructure and land for third party advertising.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- A citizen jury is a panel made up of a randomly selected and demographically diverse group of people (Jurors) who listen to and examine information on complex issues and assist with decision making by providing recommendations.
- A citizen jury can vary in size but is generally composed of 30 - 45 citizens (selected through categorised random sampling who are representative of the area) who come together to deliberate and find common ground on an issue.
- The use of citizen juries is not common in NSW Local Government due largely to the cost and resource requirements. When used, it has typically been focused on high level strategic direction such as long-term city planning or financial sustainability.
- The use of citizen juries is consistent with the principles of a participatory democracy and can result in new insights and considerations being available to help elected decision-makers make more informed decisions.
- The formulation of a citizen jury, on the single issue of advertising signage alone, is not considered feasible given the resource and finance cost. Council should consider its broader engagement priorities prior to making a high value engagement investment.

- A broader investigation, to explore a policy and criteria around the potential development of a citizen jury and other in-depth community consultation techniques as part of future community engagement on wider policy issues, is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

1.THAT Council receive and note the report.

2.THAT a citizen jury, on the issue of third-party advertising on Council infrastructure, not be progressed at this time.

3.THAT, as part of the next review of Council's Community Engagement Strategy, the inclusion of citizen jury as part of future community engagement be explored.

Background

In response to the recent lodgement of development applications for the erection of freestanding advertising panels, Council resolved at its meeting of 11 December 2023:

1. THAT Council, as soon as practicable, prepare a report on the feasibility of implementing a no new advertising billboards policy that would cease all new planning applications for outdoor advertising of non-Council information on Council-owned property.

A report was subsequently prepared and presented to Council's meeting of 13 May 2024. The report included a detailed history and background on the relevant legislation and Council's policy response to the issue of the use of public land and infrastructure for third-party advertising. The report can be accessed at <https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/council-meetings/257/13-05-2024-council-meeting>.

In response to the report, Council resolved at its meeting of 13 May 2024:

1. THAT Council staff prepare a report, to come to Council in June 2024, to outline the feasibility of conducting a North Sydney Local Government Area citizen jury to determine the question of whether Council should implement a "no new advertising billboards" policy that would cease all new planning applications for the outdoor advertising of non-Council information on Council-owned property, or other related options as presented in the May 2024 Advertising on Council Infrastructure report.

This report responds to this resolution.

Report

A citizen jury is a panel made up of a randomly selected and demographically diverse group of people (Jurors) who listen to and examine information on complex issues and assist with decision making by providing recommendations. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is the peak body for community engagement and advises that juries are typically made of 30-45 citizens.

With trust in government at an all-time low, citizen juries can provide a great opportunity to build trust by involving the public in solving difficult problems and formulating complex policy.

The Citizen Jury is a deliberative process that requires Jurors to deep dive into the issue through data analysis, consideration of research, expert advice and robust discussion to understand varying viewpoints. It is important that a Citizen Jury is independently selected and the process is planned well, professionally facilitated and resourced with expert witnesses.

A well designed and conducted Citizen Jury is reported to cost \$100K plus and requires significant internal resources to support the process. Due to the extensive resources required

to facilitate this type of engagement, Citizen Juries are not common in Local Government. When used, they are typically focused on high level strategic decisions and multi-faceted problems to ensure the time and cost results in high level benefits.

Examples include:

City of Sydney – Sydney 2050

City of Sydney randomly selected a jury from residents, workers and citizens in City of Sydney and surrounding councils. The jury met for six full Saturdays, reviewing over 2500 submissions for ideas for the future of the city. Throughout the process subject matter experts from architecture, town planning, sustainability, housing and more provided the jury with advice.

Adelaide – How can we have a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?

In 2013, the South Australian Government convened a jury to produce a minimum of five recommendations, with the difficult aim of achieving a balance between tackling alcohol-related crime whilst creating vibrancy of the night-time economy. The jury of 43 persons met for 5 days over three weekends.

City of Greater Bendigo – What should Council spend our money on to shape the community's future?

In 2016, a jury was created to consider financial opportunities and challenges and make recommendations towards Councils long term financial strategy. The jury met for six full days and was encouraged to interact outside of these times via an online forum.

Based upon our research, citizen juries are better suited to more complex problems and policy decisions given the time, resource and financial cost of this type of engagement. In considering current resources available for engagement activities and the range and diversity of competing content requiring community engagement, it would not be feasible to recommend a citizen jury approach to a single issue, without a clear engagement strategy that has considered priority for such an investment.

Over the coming months, Council will be working towards a new draft engagement strategy. It is recommended that the use of citizen jury engagement be considered as part of this, along with the required funding for such an approach.

While North Sydney Council has not conducted a citizen jury engagement, it should be noted that we have been working towards participative engagements that do focus more on ensuring community members are making informed input and that we are reaching a broader range of community members.

For the recent *Have your say on North Sydney's next ten years'* campaign, Council coordinated a demographically selected group of 60 residents to ensure a diverse representation of community feedback on our longer-term planning. Council also arranged a number of panel discussions to help the community understand some of the opportunities and challenges through different viewpoints.

Council also established the Neutral Bay Alive community consultation group in June 2023, following a Council resolution made in March of the same year. The group's purpose was to

provide feedback and input into the draft Neutral Bay Planning Study and encourage wide-ranging discussions in a collaborative and productive manner.

Consultation requirements

Specific community engagement is not required as a result of this report. Any future policy changes relating to the use of citizen juries or advertising structures would be the subject of separate consultation as required.

Financial implications

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) determines the citizen jury engagement approach to be a high-cost method of engagement. A well conducted citizen jury is expected to cost \$100K+.

Resource implications

Given the nature of the citizens jury method of engagement, it requires a high level of staffing to recruit and manage the group, facilitate workshops, prepare information (e.g., briefings, reports, fact sheets), and compile information.

It is also encouraged by IAP2 to “conduct a wider engagement process prior to the jury, so that this feedback (as a summary report) can be considered by the jury as part of their deliberations”. This wider engagement process would also require appropriate resourcing.

Legislation

Advertising and signage are currently controlled by the following planning instruments and policies:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021– Chapter 3: Advertising and Signage;
- North Sydney Local Environmental Plan (NSLEP) 2013; and
- North Sydney Development Control Plan (NSLEP) 2013.

The operation of citizen juries or other community engagement techniques does not require give rise to any particular legislative considerations. Any future decisions to amend Council’s policy framework would require endorsement by Council and amendments publicly exhibited in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act Regulation.