

As the Mayor of Fairfield City Council, I would like to personally respond to the Liberal Party's submission regarding state electorates. The suggestions from the Liberal Party include:

- **Fairfield** – addition of suburbs to its west currently in **Prospect** – Smithfield, Wetherill Park and Bossley Park Fairfield – with the very strong southern boundary of The Horsley Drive. The Fairfield electoral district is now wholly contained within the Fairfield LGA.
- **Liverpool** – adding Mount Pritchard and Bonnyrigg to the electorate
- **Cabramatta** – to lose Mount Pritchard and Bonnyrigg and add Villawood, Bass Hill and Chester Hill

Please see my individual response below:

The *Constitution Act 1902* requires that each electorate has an approximately equal number of eligible voters. The Redistribution Panel must use geographic information systems to conduct modelling and analysis to inform the decision-making process.

The *Electoral Act 2017* (S21) establishes the criteria for distribution the Redistribution Panel must consider to comply with sections 28 and 28A of the Constitution Act 1902. These include (*inter alia*)

- (i) community of interests within the electoral district, including economic, social and regional interests, and
- (ii) means of communication and travel within the electoral district, and
- (iii) the physical features and area of the electoral district, and
- (iv) mountain and other natural boundaries, and
- (v) the boundaries of the existing electoral districts.

Cabramatta Electorate:

The Liberal party submission to move Mount Pritchard and Bonnyrigg (from Fairfield LGA/Cabramatta Electorate) into the Liverpool electorate, and adding Villawood, Bass Hill and Chester Hill (from Canterbury-Bankstown LGA/Bankstown LGA) to the Cabramatta electorate, does not meet the principles of Section 21 of the Electoral Act 2017.

In 2004 and 2013, the Electoral Districts Redistribution Commissioners stressed that

*"keeping whole local government areas wholly contained in one electoral district was an effective means of maximising communities of interest".*

The proposal is not in the interests of the community and jeopardises the democratic rights of the community to be fairly and best represented. The separation of a local government area, which is the most disadvantaged in metropolitan Sydney dilutes representative democracy and disadvantages an already disadvantaged community.

The submission below outlines how the intent of the proposed changes does not meet the criteria set out in the *Constitution Act 1902* or the *Electoral Act 2017*.

## Current Electoral

The current electorate of Cabramatta has 58,488 electors and is within the deviation targets required of 2.26%.

The current suburbs within the electorate are economic, social and regional community of interest as required under Legislation.

Any major change, as suggested, will weaken the voice of the most disadvantaged community. Within the Cabramatta Electorate 73.4% of people speak a language other than English at home, 76.9% have a weekly family income of less than \$1,249 and the area has a 10.5% unemployment rate (ABS 2016). It is vital that the Electorate of Cabramatta has representative democracy and that they have a fair, efficient and effective voice.

## Economic, social and regional communities of interest

Cabramatta has a strong and continuing community identity. Cabramatta is home to a long-standing and unique multicultural community of interest that has specific language, socio-economic and cultural representation.

Cabramatta is recognised with a strong commercial centre, as a tourist attraction and is part of one of the most multicultural local government areas in Australia.

Cabramatta town centre services residents from the surrounding areas, including Bonnyrigg, and Mt Pritchard. These residents identify with Cabramatta and would not identify with Liverpool in the same way. Yet it is being suggested that they be in the Liverpool electorate, despite being in the Fairfield LGA..

The National Institute of Economic and Industry Research report of March 2013 into NSW Local Government Areas: Similarities and Differences identified that Fairfield City is very different to areas surrounding it. The report, developed for the Independent Local Government Review Panel, found that across 14 factors, Fairfield had just 36% similarity rate with Bankstown, and 50% similarity with Liverpool. It is not effective to assume that because these areas are close in proximity, that they share the same identity, values, circumstances or challenges that would best be served or represented under one electorate.

Currently the Cabramatta electorate fits neatly into one local government area of Fairfield City. This is better for representation and for understanding local issues. The suggestion to split the Cabramatta electorate into separate state electorates, will divide the community and place them in electorates where they do not identify, without connectivity and lead to a reduction of effective representation.

In 1998, the Electoral Districts Redistribution Commissioners said that

*a homogenous community of interest "will more likely be influenced by the means of communication, the natural boundaries and an opposing view of another community of interest".*

## Means of communication and travel

Cabramatta has a large population who do not speak English as a first language.

Of the 65.4% of Fairfield City's residents who travel outside of the area to work, only 9% travel to Liverpool for work and 7% of residents travel to Bankstown/Canterbury for work (id.profile).

The electoral office of the current sitting member is located in Cabramatta, with easy transport access from all suburbs within the electorate.

The community of Cabramatta do not have a connection to Bankstown or Liverpool, as evidenced above.

Natural boundaries (such as mountains or rivers) and the boundaries of existing electoral districts

There is a statutory requirement for the panel to consider the existing boundaries when determining if there is a significant reason for change. Local government area boundaries are indicative of long-standing principles in utilising natural boundaries and communities of interest to ensure connection within communities and effective representation.

It is favourable for local boundaries to be utilised as a starting point for state and federal boundaries, including whole suburbs (and LGAs) where possible, as residents know what suburb they live in and would make it easier for them to seek representation.

The current boundaries include major roads like Woodville Road, The Horsley Drive, Hume Highway and Elizabeth Drive that form natural boundaries. Chipping Norton Lakes, Prospect Reservoir and Western Sydney Parklands are also natural boundaries which separate one community from another.

An alternative

A more viable suggestion if electoral boundaries would be to:

- Include suburbs of Villawood (2,088), Bass Hill – Lansdowne (5,841) and Chester Hill (7,200) (total of 15,129 electors) to Bankstown, Auburn or East Hills electorates – where there is stronger connections geographically (including LGA's) and stronger similarities within the communities of interest.
- Include St Johns Park (4,325), Bonnyrigg (5,598), Mount Pritchard (5,780) to Cabramatta (total of 15,703 electors)
- With the Liverpool electorate to be moved back within the Liverpool LGA boundaries as much as possible.

 Carbone