

As the Mayor of Fairfield City Council, I would like to personally respond to the Labor Party's suggestion to abolish the electoral district of Cabramatta and split it across multiple local government areas and state and federal electorates. My individual comment on the suggestions from the Labor Party include:

- Abolish the Electoral District of **Cabramatta**
  - Take Bonnyrigg, Bonnyrigg Heights and part of Edensor Park from abolished Cabramatta and add to Liverpool electorate (and rename it **Green Valley**)
  - Take Fairfield East, Canley Vale, Canley Heights, Cabramatta and Lansvale from abolished Cabramatta and add to Bankstown (and rename it **Villawood**).
  - Take St Johns Park, Wakeley, Greenfield Park, Prairiewood, Cabramatta West, Mt Pritchard and Edensor Park from abolished Cabramatta electorate and add to **Fairfield**.
- Fairfield - reduction of Smithfield Industrial area, Fairfield East, Canley Vale, Canley Heights, Cabramatta, Lansvale

Please see my individual response below:

The Labor Party suggestion effectively changes the name of the Cabramatta electorate to Villawood. The name Cabramatta has a long and esteemed history for Australians. It is an indigenous name that respects and recognises the traditional owners of the land. It was also famously the home of former Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam.

Cabramatta is a multicultural jewel of Sydney, recognised across the city and the state as a tourism hotspot with a rich culture mix. It's a community that has prevailed and thrived to be the successful centre it is, and of which residents are immensely proud.

To the residents who have migrated from other countries over a long period of time, the name 'Cabramatta' is synonymous with hope and a future as they have worked hard to make better lives for themselves and their families here.

The name of Cabramatta is recognised by people far and wide and has a strong connection with communities, providing a strong sense of identity.

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.

The Labor party submission to abolish the seat of Cabramatta and divide the electorate among three other electorates (Green Valley, Villawood and Fairfield) 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 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, Bonnyrigg Heights, Edensor Park, Canley Vale, Canley Heights, Lansvale, St Johns Park, Wakeley, Greenfield Park, and Mt Pritchard.

Residents from these suburbs in the Fairfield Lga would not identify with Villawood as a centre or as the name of the Electorate. Also the areas of Sefton, Chester Hill or Lakemba which are being proposed to be included in one electorate under the Labor Party submission do not identify with the Fairfield Electorate geographically or as communities of interests.

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 and circumstances.

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 three disparate state electorates will divide the community and

place them in electorates where they do not identify, where there is no connection and no 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 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.

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 need to be adjusted would be to:

- move suburbs outside of the Fairfield LGA identified as Villawood (2,088), Bass Hill – Lansdown (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.
- Move St Johns Park (4,325), Bonnyrigg (5,598), Mount Pritchard (5,780) to Cabramatta (total of 15,703 electors) also including the suburb of Wakeley.
- The Fairfield LGA to be the Eastern boundary of the electorate, using Woodville Road as a recognizable boundary line and include the suburbs of Canley Heights, St Johns

Park, Wakeley, Bonnyrigg, Mount Pritchard and any other in the Fairfield LGA be added to form the electorate of Cabramatta.