

the BURRA Blurb

NEWSLETTER OF THE BURRA URILA RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

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Queanbeyan – Palerang Boundary Update

Queanbeyan City Council (QCC) has lodged a submission with the Minister for Local Government to alter the Queanbeyan/Palerang Boundary to unite the Burra, Urila and Royalla areas under Queanbeyan. You can read QCC's submission by following the link on the front page of their website at www.qcc.nsw.gov.au

The Process

The Local Government Amendment (Amalgamations and Boundary Changes) Act 1999 states that a boundary proposal may be initiated by the Minister for Local Government, or a Council affected by the proposal, or an appropriate minimum number of electors. The Minister must refer any such submission to the NSW Boundaries Commission. In order to guarantee independent scrutiny, the job of conducting public consultation on the

submission rests with the Boundaries Commission, not the affected community nor the Council lodging it.

The Boundaries Commission can hold a public inquiry, but for a minor boundary adjustment, such as the Burra/Urila/Royalla adjustment, they will often seek written submissions from residents.

It has been suggested that Palerang Council could conduct the consultation process. Apart from this being contrary to the legislation, Palerang Council has spent the last five years flatly opposing any boundary change, so they could hardly be considered independent.

Far from attempting to 'amalgamate by stealth', or to by-pass the consultation process, Queanbeyan City Council and

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Thank you to our supporters!

We'd like to thank our almost 400 supporters, including the many who regularly view our website at www.burra.org.au and those who send us their views using the feedback form on the website.

We now have a Facebook page (facebook.com/BurraNSW) and Twitter feed (@BURRA_NSW) so you can share your opinions with the rest of our community.

The ACTEW pipeline is now well under construction and the ACT government appears to have gone quiet on the gas fired power station and light aircraft airport proposals just across the border at Williamsdale.

BURRA continues to monitor activities planned for this area, including ActewAGL's proposed 20 megawatt solar farm at Williamsdale and Canberra Airport's expansion plans and its 24 hour freight hub proposal which brings the potential for increased aircraft activity over our area, including more night-time flights.

Check our website at www.burra.org.au for local news and join in the conversation on Facebook and Twitter (links from our website).

twitter 

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Queanbeyan – Palerang Boundary Update

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BURRA have acted properly within the applicable legislation, in order to prompt an independent investigation into the Queanbeyan/Palerang boundary.

Background

Minister's decision on BURRA's 2007 proposal

In 2007, BURRA lodged a boundary submission requesting that Burra, Urila and all of Royalla be incorporated within the QCC boundary. The submission was supported by 350 signatures (about half the voters in the area affected by the boundary change proposal). In 2009 the then

Minister for Local Government, the Hon Barbara Perry MP, announced that she had decided not to approve the boundary change. The NSW Boundaries Commission's report, on which the Minister relied for her decision, stated that there were no compelling reasons for the boundary change. You can read the Boundaries Commission's report, and BURRA's response by following the links on the front page of the BURRA website at www.burra.org.au

Boundaries Commission's Findings

The Boundaries Commission's report glossed over the important reasons why around half the

voters supported the boundary change. Reasons such as residents' historic and ongoing ties with Queanbeyan, the political and social community of interest we share with the Queanbeyan region, and the obvious economies of scale from uniting the areas. Instead, the Boundaries Commission's findings hinged on Palerang Council's claim that it would go bust without the income generated from residents in this area.

The Boundaries Commission's report does not mention Palerang's costs to service our area, nor whether Palerang is making a profit or loss from

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What is BURRA?

BURRA is an incorporated association. BURRA does not charge a membership fee, instead we invite everybody in the community to join in the discussion for free, via our website and our public meetings which are advertised to the whole community, including our neighbours in Royalla, Little Burra, and Mount Campbell.

BURRA is not the same organisation as the Burra Community Association (BCA). The BCA is the local organisation whose officially registered objectives under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1984* are to provide community activities and conduct social functions. BURRA is also a separate organisation from the Burra Section 355 Committee, which is a sub-committee of Palerang Council tasked with bookings and maintenance issues for the Burra Hall and Cargill and Burra Parks.

BURRA is a truly independent voice for residents and, unlike the BCA or the Burra Section 355 committee, BURRA does not seek Palerang Council funding or in-kind support for any of its activities.

BURRA aims to work collaboratively with other community groups. For instance, we host web pages for various groups on our website free of charge. Community groups in Burra, Urila and the nearby rural communities of Little Burra, Mt Campbell and Royalla are welcome to submit information for publication on the website.

Similarly, local business are invited to list on our Local Services Guide. This is a free service to local businesses.

To list your community group or business on our website, contact the webmanager at web@burra.org.au

B.U.R.R.A. CONTACTS:

Wendy Bell 6236 3445
Ros Bush 6236 3536
Email: info@burra.org.au

Website: www.burra.org.au
Facebook: [facebook.com/BurraNSW](https://www.facebook.com/BurraNSW)
Twitter: twitter.com/BURRA_NSW

B.U.R.R.A. is a community group whose broad aim is to support the interests of Burra and Urila residents and ratepayers in the Palerang and Cooma-Monaro administrative areas.

B.U.R.R.A. provides a forum to accommodate and encourage a diversity of views.

B.U.R.R.A. provides input to policies and decisions at all levels of Government on matters such as:

- The natural amenity and landscape of Burra, Urila and surrounds;
- Services and infrastructure;
- Future development consistent with the area's rural and rural residential zoning.

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residents in the area. It is difficult to see how the Boundaries Commission could have reached their conclusion in the absence of this crucial costing information.

No Right of Appeal

BURRA spent some time attempting to have the Minister's decision reviewed and/or to exercise a right of appeal but unfortunately no such avenues were open. The only option was to repeat the process of organising another petition and drafting another submission in accordance with the terms of the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamations and Boundary Changes) Act 1999. Residents who wish to lodge a minor boundary proposal must obtain the signatures of 10% of the voters or 250, whichever is less. However, there is no such requirement imposed on the Minister or a Council, who may also lodge a boundary proposal under the Act.

Our efforts in once again collecting signatures and drafting the submission would have been futile if we had subsequently discovered that QCC were not prepared to support a boundary change so, following the change of State Government in 2011, BURRA approached QCC to ask if they would support a boundary change and whether they would consider:

- a) asking the Minister to initiate a review of the Palerang/Queanbeyan boundary in relation to Burra, Urila and Royalla; or
- b) drafting their own submission seeking integration of Burra, Urila and Royalla within Queanbeyan; or

- c) supporting a further initiative by the Burra Urila Residents and Ratepayers Association to re-draft and re-submit a boundary change proposal, along with the required number of electors' signatures.

At that time, QCC resolved to write to the Minister for Local Government asking him to initiate a review. You can read QCC's September 2011 Council minutes on their website. This decision was widely reported the following day on both WIN TV news and on ABC radio with interviews given by BURRA and Queanbeyan Mayor Tim Overall. The Minister for Local Government subsequently wrote to BURRA confirming that QCC had, indeed made the request.

Since then, Queanbeyan City Council has lodged its own submission with the Minister. Lodgment of the submission was widely reported on local TV and other media, again, with interviews being given by BURRA and Queanbeyan Mayor Tim Overall. Accusations of 'stealth' on behalf of both BURRA and QCC do not stack up against the evidence of events being widely reported in the local media and published on the QCC website.

Is this just a land grab so QCC can develop the area?

QCC have stated publicly that they have no wish to initiate major sub division and development in rural residential areas. The land release at Googong will satisfy Queanbeyan's growth needs for at least the next 20 years, and Tralee is also still under consideration. Like Palerang Council, QCC will, of course, consider any requests from individual residents who wish to sub-divide their properties in line with the Local Environmental

Plan. Unlike Palerang, QCC does not need to rely on sub-division in rural areas to increase their rates base.

What can you do?

You can write in support of the boundary change to:

The Hon Donald Page MP
Minister for Local Government
Level 33 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000
office@page.minister.nsw.gov.au

Mr John Barilaro MP
Member for Monaro
110-112 Monaro Street,
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
monaro@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Tim Overall, Mayor
Queanbeyan City Council
PO Box 90
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
tim.overall@qcc.nsw.gov.au

New Board to investigate Council Boundaries across NSW

It isn't just Burra, Urila and Royalla residents who have experienced a bad outcome from the 2003/4 Council amalgamations.

The Minister for Local Government has recognised that the unworkable anomalies created by the amalgamation process are still having a negative impact on many NSW residents' quality of life and finances.

The Minister has established a Board to review these anomalies. It is unclear at this stage what impact, if any, the Board's deliberations will have on consideration of QCC's submission.

See www.burra.org.au for more information.

Why Support A Boundary Change?

Services

Residents of Burra, Urila and Royalla need to make use of Queanbeyan City Council (QCC) facilities, such as the serviced sports grounds, swimming pool, library and children's services, and aged care and disability services. We rely on QCC to repair and maintain the Old Cooma Road, which is a main feeder road to our area from Queanbeyan and Canberra.

QCC already provides all local government services to our rural residential neighbours in the surrounding areas of Mount Campbell, Little Burra, Fernleigh Park and the part of the Royalla Estate currently within the Queanbeyan boundary. QCC will also be providing all services to the 5550 home Googong Township which is located between Queanbeyan and Burra, Urila and Royalla. There would be obvious economies of scale in having QCC service our area at the same time.

Geographic Isolation

We are still, and always will be, geographically isolated from the rest of the Palerang Shire and our dependence on Queanbeyan for services will become even more apparent now Queanbeyan's Googong Township has commenced. This centre will contain schools, parks, shops and businesses. Lots in the first stages of this development have already been sold. Residents already have to drive through Queanbeyan to reach the distant Palerang Council offices in Bungendore and Braidwood. In future, residents will have to drive past the Googong Township as well. Prior to the boundary change in 2003/4, Yarrowlunla Shire Offices were in Farrer Place Queanbeyan.

Political and Social Inclusion

It's important that residents are able to provide input to the plans for our whole neighbourhood, and to the provision of local government services to our geographic area. We also need to have our community's significant contribution to the economic and social life of Queanbeyan recognised, through being able to contribute to the decision-making process. For these reasons, it is important that we are able to vote in the QCC elections, which can only happen if the boundary is changed to accommodate this.

Uniting the Area

Royalla is currently split between two Councils. For social, economic and political reasons it makes sense for Royalla to be united under one Council. For the reasons given above, it is logical that QCC should take over the administration of the whole of the Royalla area, as well as for Burra and Urila.

Are we to remain Palerang's Cash Cow?

Palerang Council have repeatedly claimed that they would go bust without our income, so we can

assume they make a profit from our area. In that case, we need to ask where the money goes, because, evidently it is not spent here. Palerang Council apparently views residents in this area as their cash cow whose role is to subsidise services in other parts of the Shire, such as the swimming pools, libraries, roads and pavements in Bungendore, Braidwood and Captains Flat. We make little or no use of these services in Palerang, but we do take advantage of similar services in Queanbeyan paid for by QCC ratepayers.

Rates

Comparative charges for 2011/12 are shown in the table below. For our calculations we have used an example of a 20 acre rural residential property valued at \$293,000. The difference between the two Council's charges of around \$60 holds true for all land valuations in the average Burra/Urila/Royalla range of valuations. The Queanbeyan calculation is based on their adopted fees and charges as per QCC's publications available on their website and verified with QCC's rates department. The Palerang Council calculation is based on an actual rates notice.

	Queanbeyan		Palerang	
Base Rate		410.00		398.00
Ad Valorem	0.0016890	494.88	0.0017064	499.98
Rural Waste Charge*		35.00		102.00
Total Charge**		939.88		999.98

* Since 2005/6, Palerang Council has charged residents a re-cycling fee increasing from \$90 to \$102 in 2011/12. Until the road-side recycling trial commenced in September 2011, Palerang's only re-cycling service available to the area was the provision of banks of bins on the Burra Road and at Cargill and Burra Parks. During the same period, Queanbeyan City Council's fee for use of banks of bins was between \$26 and \$35. Queanbeyan City Council's current \$35 fee also includes access to the QCC's Lorne Road recycling centre, plus two collections per year from drop-off points (on designated days) in the rural residential areas when residents may dispose of large household items which they would otherwise have to pay to take to the tip.

** Palerang Council is now also considering introducing a household garbage collection which would add up to \$297 to the base rate and ad valorem. QCC is currently obtaining costings for kerbside recycling and garbage collection with a view to surveying residents as to their wishes.