

## **Statement by Wendy Bell to Palerang Council: 23 August 2007**

I would like to correct some errors and misinformation in the GM's report on the Burra Urila Residents and Ratepayers submission.

Firstly, the report states that Palerang has not been formally notified of this petition. I understand that the Director General wrote to you officially referring our submission, so how can Palerang have not been officially notified?

Furthermore, the Mayor, since August 2006, has received two flyers and at least two articles in the local newsletter the Burra Intermittent, advertising the petition and inviting ALL the residents of our area to our meetings. The Mayor was present at our March meeting when I presented an almost identical power point presentation to that presented to the Fernleigh Park meeting. We assumed that Palerang was being kept informed about this proposal.

Peter Bascomb also says that our submission contains errors.

Firstly, he says that our rates table was incorrect. In fact, it was not incorrect. As the GM knows, it was correctly based on the rates model that applied in 2006/7 at the time we made our submission, which was May 2007. It isn't our fault that Palerang did not make its 2007/8 rate until July 2007, long after our submission was sent to the Minister.

All the GM has done is update the table with the 2007/8 rates model. He knows that, at the Fernleigh Park meeting I presented a new table which contains the new rates figured based on the new rates model for 2007/8. I have also sent this table to the DG and Steve Whan.

Our Qbn rates calculations we presented to that meeting were based on the rates model published in their management plan. I understand that Qbn have changed these numbers slightly to increase the base rate to \$352 from \$350 and to slightly increase the ad valorem, and we have now updated our tables accordingly.

It is misleading of the GM to only present you with the numbers relating to 2007/8 and not the whole of the next five years. The purpose of our rates table, as he well knows, was to demonstrate the compounding effect of the 9.9% increase promised by Palerang over the next 5 years v the 3.6% increase promised by Qbn.

Even when we take Qbn's slightly increased base rate and ad valorem into account, and exclude any potential increases in either Council's waste fee over the next 5 years, by 2011/12, Palerang's rural residential rates would be 18% to 22% higher than Queanbeyan for a range of valuations between 200k and 550 k. If Palerang decides to go for 10.31% increase, rates in Palerang would be 19% to 24% higher than Queanbeyan. Unlike the GM, we didn't include a calculation for a valuation of \$150k because we couldn't find anyone with a valuation that low.

In regard to the re-cycling facilities, quite frankly, I don't think the issue revolves around the semantics of whether there is a contract in place between Palerang and Queanbeyan or not. The argument is that the fact that Queanbeyan collects waste from Palerang recycling bins demonstrates that is perfectly able and willing to do so in a cost effective manner. In fact, given the economies of scale, I don't know why you don't contract Queanbeyan to do all the recycling bin emptying in our area.

Regarding the Old Cooma Road, the GM incorrectly interprets that our submission implies that the road would not have been sealed if it were still in Palerang. We have always acknowledged that the road was partly sealed with S94 money. However, it is our understanding that Palerang did not calculate nor collect sufficient S94 money for the task and that QCC had to find a substantial amount of its own funds to complete the road. Would Palerang have done the same?

Furthermore, the Old Cooma Road is maintained to a far better standard than it ever was under Palerang.

I don't have time in the 3 minutes allotted to me to go into any more detail concerning the erroneous assumptions made in the remainder of the GM's paper.

What I will, say, however, is that I am disappointed that the GM has boiled this down to a matter of money when the community of interest issues are so vitally important. He well knows, as does the Mayor, that the sentiment of the meeting at Fernleigh Park was that it is not about rates. It is about the Community of Interest.

Just as an aside, I wonder when Council will be in a position to fill in the blanks in the last paragraph in Section 4a of the GM's report, since it seems to me impossible for him to make any argument about how Palerang will fare without BUR without this information.

I am not surprised that Palerang officers wish Council to object to this proposal, and I'm also not surprised that they have resorted to 2003 scare tactics in raising the spectre of a super-shire. I am, however, absolutely appalled that they want to prevent our submission from going to the boundaries commission.

If any of you in this room tonight believe in democracy and the right for individuals and small communities to be heard you will not try to silence your constituents in this way the GM has asked, but will override the GMs recommendation and support this proposal going to the boundaries commission.