

B.U.R.R.A.

Burra-Urila Residents and Ratepayers' Association

B.U.R.R.A. Meeting

The next meeting of the Burra Urila Residents and Ratepayers Association will be held on

Tuesday, 12 December
at 7.00pm at the Burra Hall.

Tea, coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

Bring your signed petition!



PETITION TO RELOCATE BURRA, URILA AND ROYALLA ESTATE WITHIN THE QUEANBEYAN CITY COUNCIL AREA.

The Background

At the last meeting of the Burra Urila Residents and Ratepayers Association held on 17 August 2006, there was strong support for a review of the Palerang Shire boundary and for the option of Burra, Urila and the part of the Royalla Estate not already within Queanbeyan to be re-located within the Queanbeyan City Council area.

This dissatisfaction has been fuelled by successive rate increases coupled with diminished services following the local government amalgamations which saw the old Yarrowlumla and Tallaganda shires merged to form the Eastern Capital City Regional Council, subsequently re-named Palerang Shire. Since the amalgamation, Palerang Council's financial position has gone from bad to worse, with the cost of staff salaries alone exceeding rates income by about \$1.5 million per year.

This year, the Minister for Local Government allowed Palerang Council to increase its rates by 9.9% and we have already received our rates bills with this increase factored in. Palerang says it will apply for a 9.9% rates increase every year for the next five years as it believes this is the only way to cover its debts and meet its ongoing expenses, which do not include improved or enhanced services to our area.

The 'last straw' for many residents was the imposition of the \$90 per year, per property, waste management fee, part of which covers the cost of access to the recycling bins.

The Options

- Accept that Palerang's financial position is unviable without the imposition of substantial rate increases and put up with the rates rises every year for little or no improvement in services: or
- Lobby for our area to be included in the Queanbeyan City Council area.

The Pros and Cons

At the BURRA meeting on 17 August some residents expressed concern that, if we lobbied for inclusion in the Queanbeyan City Council (QCC) area, we might be going from the frying pan into the fire. They wanted to know if they'd be better off or worse off financially under QCC, or whether services would improve or get worse. We did some research and here's what we found.

Rates

Queanbeyan and Palerang have slightly different bases for calculating rates which means that, for 2006/7, rural residential ratepayers are slightly better off in Queanbeyan than they would be in Palerang.

2006/07	ad valorem*	Base	Waste management
Queanbeyan	.002275	\$379	\$26
Palerang	.002375	\$302	\$90

* Ad valorem means the cents in the dollar applied to your property valuation

** Other charges such as septic tank inspections may arise, but neither council appears to have a clear policy on this at present.

Valuation	2006/07	
	Palerang	QBN
\$150,000	\$748	\$746
\$200,000	\$867	\$860
\$250,000	\$986	\$974
\$300,000	\$1105	\$1088

However, Palerang has said it will seek a 9.9% rate increase over the next five years while QCC says it will stay within the 3.6% cap. This means that, over the next five years, rates for rural residential property will end up a huge 36% more in Palerang than in Queanbeyan. For farmland the difference would see ratepayers paying an extraordinary 125% more in Palerang due to the higher ad valorem (0.002610 in Palerang instead of 0.001433 in Queanbeyan).

Valuation	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Palerang	QBN	Palerang	QBN	Palerang	QBN	Palerang	QBN	Palerang	QBN
\$150,000	\$822	\$773	\$904	\$801	\$993	\$830	\$1,092	\$860	\$1,200	\$891
\$200,000	\$953	\$891	\$1,047	\$923	\$1,151	\$956	\$1,265	\$991	\$1,390	\$1,026
\$250,000	\$1,083	\$1,009	\$1,191	\$1,045	\$1,308	\$1,083	\$1,438	\$1,122	\$1,580	\$1,162
\$300,000	\$1,214	\$1,127	\$1,334	\$1,167	\$1,466	\$1,209	\$1,611	\$1,253	\$1,771	\$1,298

Services

We canvassed the views of a small number of residents whose properties were transferred to the QCC area during the last local government amalgamation. All were initially opposed to the transfer but they now hold positive or neutral views. Here's what they had to say about QCC.

Roads

The frequency and standard of maintenance is much improved. Dangerous overhanging trees have been lopped. Noxious weeds on verges have been sprayed.

Waste Disposal

Residents were asked if they wanted garbage collection but they turned this down. A recycling service is provided at the Queanbeyan depot and at three other collection points. On three days a year the depot accepts large items such as fridges, etc. at no extra charge. (Note: This service costs \$26 compared to Palerang's \$90. Palerang residents also have to pay an extra \$90 for a tip pass if they wish to use the Bungendore tip).

Rural Fire Service

QCC is supportive of the rural fire brigades. 5 councillors attended a recent brigade meeting in the QCC area.

Consultation

Council consults with the community and takes notice of ratepayers' views. For example, Royalla residents expressed concern about the impact of a hostel at Royalla and Council rejected the development application. Staff are generally helpful and good at dealing with enquiries. They return telephone calls. Development applications seem to be dealt with faster and planning staff are helpful.

City v bush

Rural residents did not feel disadvantaged by being a minority group in the Council area. There is no tendency to overpopulate the rural area with inappropriate development and QCC's development interest is focussed on extensions to the town areas which are already approved, eg the Googong township.

The logic

- Palerang is not a viable economic entity without large rates increases over the next few years.
- Queanbeyan is financially stable, with large reserves and a large ratepayer base enabling costs to be spread more widely and evenly.
- Palerang's only hope of increasing its ratepayer base is more development in our rural and village areas.
- QCC would consider, in the normal way, any applications from rural residents who wish to subdivide. However, QCC does not see rural subdivision as its main focus for increasing its ratepayer base. Instead, its focus is on the development of new urban areas such as the Googong township.
- Our area is geographically isolated from the rest of Palerang Shire.
- Our community of interest is with Queanbeyan and Canberra, not with Bungendore and Braidwood. Most of us use the roads and other services in Queanbeyan far more than Bungendore or Braidwood.

The process

Given all the above, BURRA felt it was appropriate to provide residents in the Burra, Urila and Royalla area with the opportunity to lobby for a boundary review to relocate our area within the QCC boundary.

Section 218E of the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamations and Boundary Changes) Act 1999 No 38 says that a proposal for a boundary change may be made by an appropriate minimum number of electors. For a proposal relating to only part of an area (eg part of Palerang Shire) the minimum number of electors is 250 or 10% of the voters in the area, whichever is the less. Section 218F of the Act says that, on receiving a proposal, the Minister must refer it for examination and report to the Boundaries Commission or to the Director General. They will then consider the proposal and make a recommendation to the Minister, who may or may not agree to implement the proposal.

What can you do?

If you think there should be a review of the boundary to incorporate Burra Urila and Royalla into the QCC local government area you should sign the petition enclosed and return it to:

- B.U.R.R.A., PO Box 775 Queanbeyan, NSW 2620, or
- drop it off to the mailbox at 1088 Burra Rd, or
- bring the signed petition along to the next BURRA meeting on 12 December at 7.00 pm.

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About B.U.R.R.A.

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

B.U.R.R.A. provides a co-ordinated voice for Burra and Urila residents in both the Palerang and Cooma administrative areas, with the intention of making sure that our significant investments (time, money and emotions) and our rural lifestyle are protected.

B.U.R.R.A. provides input to policies and decisions at all levels of Government to try to ensure that:

- The amenity of Burra, Urila and surrounds is preserved and enhanced.
- Future development affecting Burra, Urila and surrounds is consistent with existing zonings, is compatible with surrounding properties, and recognises the need to protect the significant investment made by existing residents.
- Services and infrastructure keep pace with the community's needs and provide value for money.

For more information about B.U.R.R.A. contact:

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For more information about the boundary review and petition, contact:

Peter Hawker: 6236 3191