

**INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF EXPENDITURE CAPS FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

Organisation: City of Sydney

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The Hon Peter Phelps MLC
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

By email: electoralmatters@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into the Impact of Expenditure Caps for Local Government Election Campaigns

The City of Sydney submits the information below to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in relation to the Inquiry into the Impact of Expenditure Caps for Local Government Election Campaigns.

The City of Sydney does not consider the current expenditure caps to be adequate. We believe the caps should be set to allow more equitable funding across local government areas.

The City of Sydney is a diverse community and local government area, as Australia's global city.

Councillors of the City of Sydney need to respond to complex issues including:

- housing a growing residential and employment population and providing a diverse range of housing,
- providing enhanced services to that growing community within finite resources,
- managing existing congestion and providing transport options for the future,
- supporting the disadvantaged people in our community,
- responding to environmental challenges, and
- driving economic and cultural development.

The breadth of issues outlined in Sustainable Sydney 2030, the City's Community Strategic Plan, demonstrates the complex range of issues facing our city and our Councillors.

As Australia's global city, a high quality of public domain and services must be provided to this major economic and cultural hub. With over 1 million people in the CBD every day the City must respond to the needs of those people, providing enhanced services to maintain and improve the reputation of our city as clean, safe and a place to live, visit and work.

Our residential population is diverse – over half our population was born overseas with at least 96 languages spoken by our residents. We also have a high turnover in population. In the 2016 census, one third of residents had moved into the City in the last year.

There is also significant disparity in individual and household income with nearly 40% of City of Sydney residents receiving an income in the highest income bracket for NSW incomes and over 20% receiving an income in the lowest. A substantial number, over 9% of our residents live in social housing and over 64% rent their homes.

Housing in the City is also diverse, with multi-unit dwellings making up 82% of our housing stock, with growth of over 23,500 multi-unit dwellings anticipated in the next five years. By comparison, there are 1,500 detached houses and over 19,000 terrace houses.

This makes communicating with residents more complicated, as most multi-unit dwellings do not enable access to post boxes. This limits the ability of candidates to use historic methods of distribution such as door to door distribution. The cost of sending a single communication by post would be greater than the per capita expenditure proposed under the current legislation. Postage costs are also increasing over time.

The City is required to maintain a non-residential register and prepare a roll prior to each election. At the 2016 election, those on the non-residential role made up 16.2% of the City's 141,369 registered voters. Those voters, by their nature, being non-residents, live outside the local government area. Contact with them will necessarily require communication outside the City, a requirement not faced by candidates in other local government areas.

The City provides this information to demonstrate the inadequacy of the proposed caps in enabling candidates to communicate with registered voters, both residents and non-residents, prior to an election, which limits the ability of voters to make informed decisions.

Should you wish to discuss the City's submission you can contact [REDACTED] Executive Manager, Office of the Chief Executive by telephone on [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Monica Barone
Chief Executive Officer