

**INQUIRY INTO ABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO
FUND INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

Name: David Reynolds

Date Received: 27 May 2024

Dear Chair,

I am a Rate payer in the Canterbury Bankstown LGA and have been doing some number crunching on the number of Rate Notices issue by Council and comparing that to the number of domestic dwellings the two census counts (Aug 9, 2016 & Aug 10, 2021) in the LGA and have found there is a significant discrepancy that cannot be easily explained away.

I have contacted Council to understand why 16% to 17% of dwellings do not get issued a rate notice (not even a minimum Rate notice) .

The specific questions I put to Council are:

1. Can you please explain to me why there is a variation between the 2016 & 2021 Census count, Domestic Waste Levy counts and the number of Rate notices being issued by Council?
2. Additionally, if multiple dwellings are being included in a single Rate notice for one property title (EG - non-strata multi dwelling), are these multiple dwellings being charged at least the minimum rate per dwelling or higher where individual valuation is higher than minimum?
3. Does Council know how many non-strata multiple dwellings on a single title are in the LGA and does this account for the variation?
 - A. If so what is the number Council is aware of?
 - B. And what is the distribution across the LGA?
4. If these non-strata dwellings on one rate notice are only contributing a proportion of that rate notice without a minimum Rate charge threshold being applied would it be fair to say that other Rate payers paying the minimum rate or above are subsidizing these non-strata multi dwellings on a single Rate notice?
5. If this 16% to 17% of dwellings are not currently paying at least the minimum Rate what is in place to bring equity so that all Rate payers are treated equally?

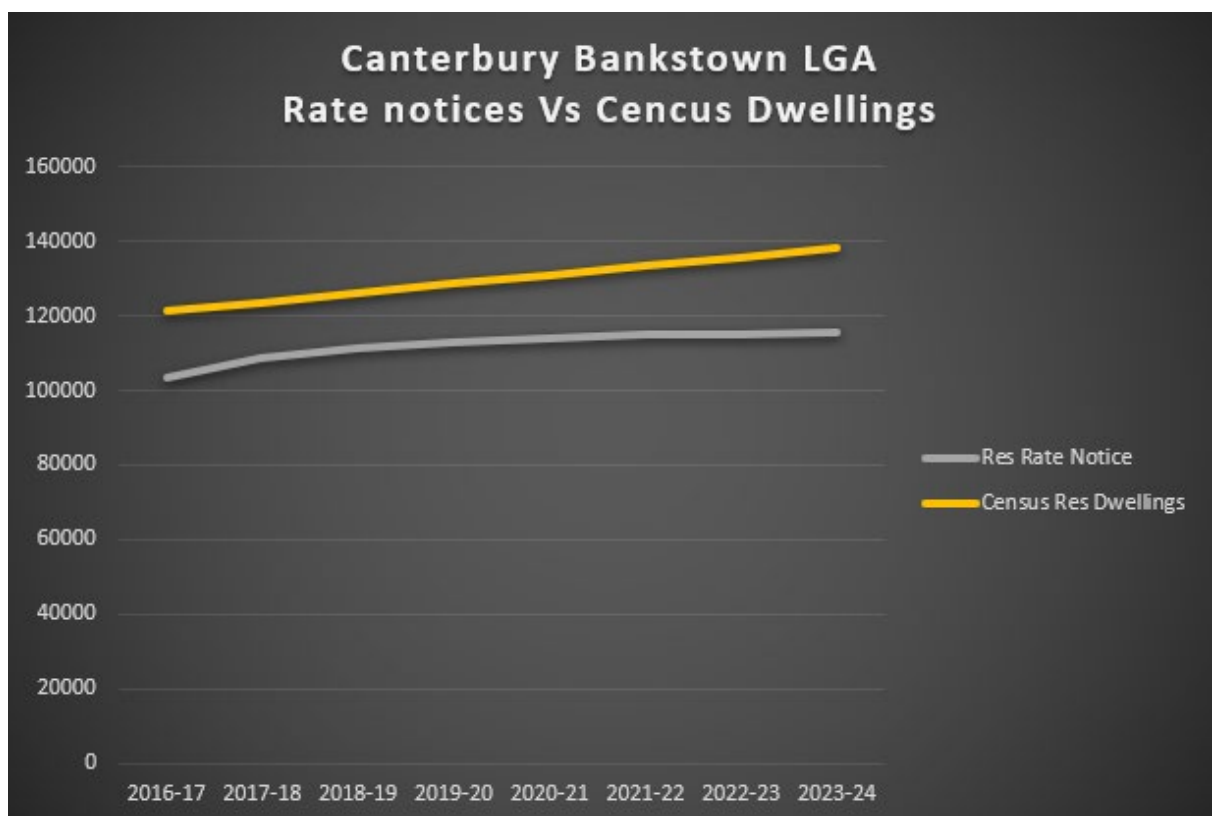
I have received a response from Canterbury Bankstown Council that directs me to the exemptions in the Local Government Act

- [LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993 - SECT 555](#)
- [LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993 - SECT 556](#)

The Council points out it is not required to reconcile the differences between the Census count of residential dwellings and the number of Residential Rate notices Council issues. Council has dismissed the alignment of the residential Waste Levy charges because "*many owners pay for additional services for the same parcel of land*". However I note that "DWM Additional Service" is accounted separately and was not included in my observation of the alignment of Domestic Waste Management services.

It still leaves a staggering 16% to 17% of Residential Dwellings that don't get a Rate notice even for the minimum Rate of \$990 (2023/24 budget), if charged at the minimum rate it would bring in an additional \$18.2 million dollars to Council based on the 2021 Census count.

Year	Canterbury Rate Notice	Bankstown Rate Notice	Total Res Rate Notice	Census Res Dwellings	Difference	% Difference
2016-17	43425	60073	103498	121315	17817	17.21%
2017-18	48039	60834	108873	123718	14845	13.64%
2018-19	49510	61941	111451	126121	14670	13.16%
2019-20	50208	62551	112759	128524	15765	13.98%
2020-21	51065	63173	114238	130927	16689	14.61%
2021-22	51223	63654	114877	133330	18453	16.06%
2022-23	51279	63903	115182	135733	20551	17.84%
2023-24	51417	64291	115708	138136	22428	19.38%



(Census data has been straight line estimated for non-Census years)

But still, this variance is significant and means Rate Payers are subsidizing Residential Dwellings that do not receive Rate Notices...

I'd be grateful if the Standing Committee on State Development inquiry into "Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services" could look into the variance I have found in the Canterbury Bankstown LGA. And, clarify if this is Statewide anomaly or confined to just a few LGAs and what are the root causes of the apparent cross-subsidizing of some rate payers by other rate payers. Again emphasizing Rates were charged at the minimum rate on the discrepancy it would have brought in an additional \$18.2 million dollars to Council 2021, based on the Census domestic dwelling count.

ATTACHMENTS:

I have attached screen captures from the various Canterbury & Bankstown financial reports that show the number of Rate notices issued back to 2016/17 and the email correspondence I've had with Council.

Regards

David Reynolds