

Sydney City Council: Moving **Boundaries and a Changing Franchise** 

by

Gareth Griffith

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Briefing Paper presents an historical overview of changes to the City of Sydney's boundaries (pp.5-9), franchise (pp.10-13) and the methods of electing the lord mayor (pp.13-14). It is to a significant extent based on the historical work undertaken by Shirley Fitzgerald, the City Council's official historian, and FA Larcombe in this field.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 1995 into the NSW Parliament on 31 May 1995, the Sydney City Council has again found its way to the centre of the political stage. According to the Minister's Second Reading Speech, the purpose of that part of the bill which deals with the Council is to ensure "fairness and certainty in future elections and rating policy for the city council". The intention is that those aspects of the Bill relating to Council elections will apply to the forthcoming election in September 1995.

In brief, the main amendments proposed under the Bill are as follows:

- The Lord Mayor of Sydney is to be popularly elected on a compulsory preferential voting system (Schedule 2 (18));
- An elector is not qualified to vote in the capacity of an occupier if the occupier's primary place of residence is not in NSW (Schedule 2 (3) and (9));
- Only persons who are Australian citizens or British subjects are entitled to have their names placed on the non-residential roll for the City of Sydney (Schedule 2 (10)-(12), (15) and (16);
- Where the elector is a ratepaying lessee he or she must pay at least \$5,000 per annum for the lease and rates. This is currently a requirement for an elector who votes in the capacity of an occupier (Schedule 2 (1), (2) and (4)-(8).

The Bill also provides for the preparation of the non-residential roll to be used in the forthcoming election.

The Bill is the latest in a very long line of measures stretching back to the nineteenth century dealing with matters relevant to the election of the Sydney City Council. This Briefing Paper presents an historical overview of those measures. It is to a significant extent based on the historical work undertaken by Shirley Fitzgerald, the City Council's official historian, and FA Larcombe in this field.

The Paper begins with a brief section highlighting some of the more controversial incidents in the Council's colourful history, before moving on to discuss changes to the Council's boundaries, franchise and the methods of electing the lord mayor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> NSWPD (proof LA), 31 May 1995, p 6.

# 2. A TROUBLED HISTORY

Sydney City Council has a troubled history. Since its inception in 1842, the Council has been sacked on four occasions by the government of the day. The first sacking was in 1853; the last in 1987. Of that first occasion, Fitzgerald has written that the ostensible reason for the Council's demise was its failure to provide adequate water for the city, or to establish a system of sewerage. But she goes on to explain that behind the move lay a greater concern of the established ruling class at "the unhealthy democratic tendencies within the Corporation". In some important respects the arguments surrounding the early years of the Council have found echoes in its later history. Larcombe makes the point with regard to the debate surrounding the decision by the Bavin Government to replace the Council with an appointed Commission from 1928 to 1930, at which time the Nationalists spoke of illegalities, including claims of extravagance and corruption, while the Labor Party was more concerned to argue the case for "the democratic right to selfgoverning institutions". Having set out the terms of the debate, Larcombe then goes behind the rhetoric of the day to reach the conclusion that the real reason for abolishing the Council was "simply to get rid of Labor control".3 Larcombe's account of the third sacking of the Council by the Askin Government in 1967 is in similar terms, again concluding that "In all the third Commission was no more than a political expedient to get rid of the Labor domination of the City Council". As to the means used to achieve this end, Larcombe described them as the abolition of popular control by dictatorial methods.4 The convoluted politics of the City Council produced a further crisis in the mid-1980s which, according to Fitzgerald, centred on the growing numbers of independent members and the problem this posed for the control of the Council by either of the major Parties. The unlikely outcome was that in 1987 the Unsworth Labor Government sacked the Labor City Council.5

Whatever construction is put on these events, and clearly they are open to alternative renditions, they do at least serve to demonstrate the difficult relationship which has existed between the Council and successive State governments.

A different perspective is gained on that relationship when one considers the notorious Sydney City Council (Disclosure of Allegations) Act 1953. This arose out of a series of allegations involving illegality by city aldermen on the Labor controlled Council and by the Council's employees. In response, the Cahill Government passed the abovementioned legislation under which a person could be ordered by the Supreme Court to produce evidence or disclose sources of information relating to offences involving the city's aldermen and its employees. Such an order could be sought by a police inspector or superintendent having reasonable cause to believe someone had such information, that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> S Fitzgerald, *Sydney*, 1842-1992, Sydney 1992, p 46.

FA Larcombe, *The Advancement of Local Government in NSW 1906 to the Present*, Sydney 1978, pp 44-45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid, p 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 134.

person having previously made such charges or published such material. On the Government side it was argued that the legislation would force those making the allegations into the open and so allow their charges to be examined publicly. On the other side it was seen as an attempt to gag the disclosure of corruption and to stamp out legitimate criticism. Geoffrey Sawer wrote in the Australian Quarterly in March 1954: "A hasty measure requiring disclosure to police officers - some of the very people whose conduct might be involved - and with no proper protection to clerical or professional confidence, is indefensible". Larcombe was to observe, "It would be safe to assert that no local government legislation, certainly in Australia and perhaps in any other country, excited so much adverse criticism and world-wide condemnation...".6

These events are some of the highlights of the Council's turbulent story. At each stage in that story debate has revolved around boundary changes, the nature of the franchise and the method of electing the Lord Mayor.

#### 3. CITY BOUNDARIES

Fitzgerald comments that the expansions and contractions of the city boundaries, at least since World War 1, have reflected "party political battles for the control of the inner city, and have not involved any serious attempts to create either a Greater Sydney or a local boundary which coincided with any genuine community of interests". Whether one agrees with that assessment or not, it does serve to point towards a basic dichotomy of opinion between the main Parties on the subject of Sydney's boundaries. Stated in stark terms, traditionally the Labor Party, on one side, has sought to extend the city's boundaries to include the formally working class suburbs which lie on its fringes; the conservative side of politics, on the other hand, has sought to limit its boundaries to the CBD area, thus capitalising on the city's business vote.

At present under the City of Sydney Act 1988 the boundaries coincide with the CBD and the Pyrmont peninsula. This is in fact the smallest the city has ever been, smaller even than it was in 1842. This "skeletal" model contrasts with the situation in 1948 when the boundaries were extended to include the inner municipalities of Glebe, Darlington, Redfern, Paddington, Newtown, Erskineville, Alexandria and Waterloo. That extension was in response to the findings of the 1945 royal commission on local government boundaries which proposed a reduction in the number of municipalities, under the County of Cumberland plan. In fact the 1948 boundaries were themselves a compromise between the conflicting views of the three royal commissioners.\*

The 1948 changes can also be looked upon as an approximation of what had become known during and after World War 1 as the Greater Sydney model of local government administration. In fact, as with the 1945 royal commissioners, opinion differed regarding

FR Larcombe, op cit, p 133. See also D Clune, *The Labor Government in NSW 1941 to 1965*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney 1990, pp 91-94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 135.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>B</sup> FA Larcombe, op cit, pp 115-126.

the exact form that an enlarged council would have taken, with one approach favouring a metropolitan-wide super Council based on the model of the London County Council. The formation of that body in 1888 was influential in the subsequent debate which occurred in NSW concerning the efficacy of larger administrative units and the expansion of the powers of municipal government. Fitzgerald reports that for much of the 1920s both sides of politics supported some version of the Greater Sydney scheme, at both Council and State Government level. To this end, in 1931 McKell introduced a Bill designed to create a powerful regional greater Council, a proposal which foundered on the rocks of the dismissal of the Lang Government in the following year. Fitzgerald adds that the plan was in any case "cooly received by the conservative forces" and goes on to comment that from then on "moves for Greater Sydney became more blatantly motivated by party-political concerns".

In any event, the boundaries established in 1948 under the McGirr Government remained in place till 1967. So, too, did the Labor majority on the Council. According to Larcombe, the 1948 boundaries combined with the electoral division of the Council area into 4 wards in 1959 "gave the newly named Civic Reform Party virtually no chance of gaining office".<sup>10</sup>

It was after the Askin Government had sacked the Council in 1967 that the boundaries reverted to their more restricted pre-1948 limits. What happened in 1967 was that, against the State-wide trend of reducing the number of local government areas, various parts of the former City Council area were separated out to form distinct units of municipal administration. The old Glebe municipality was joined to Leichhardt, most of Paddington to Woollahra, parts of Camperdown were ceded to Marickville, Newtown was divided between Marickville and Northcott, and the remaining 1948 additions became a new municipality of Northcott, soon to be renamed South Sydney.11 At the elections for the restored Council in 1969 the new boundaries no doubt contributed to Civic Reform's success, as did the division of the area into 5 wards. As Larcombe notes, the result was close with Civic Reform obtaining a bare 51% of the total formal vote. Civic Reform won in the Gipps, Macquarie and Fitzroy wards; the ALP in Philip and Flinders. 12 This gave Civic Reform a 12-8 majority on the Council, which basically returned the balance of political power to that which had been in place between 1930 and 1948. The one exception occurred in 1974 when Civic Reform inflicted its most crushing defeat on the ALP, conceding it only 3 of the 20 seats.

Almost immediately upon taking office Wran Government reduced the number of Council aldermen from 20 to 15 and created new ward boundaries under the *Local Government* (Elections) Amendment Act 1976. However, the ALP failed to gain control of the Council

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> FA Larcombe, op cit, p 133.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p 133. It was renamed South Sydney on 27 September 1969.

Wards were abolished between 1953 and 1959. The Council area was divided into 4 wards in 1959.

in the 1977 election, at which time Civic Reform gained 8 seats and Labor 7. Labor was successful at the next election, but by then the franchise had also been changed.

Then the boundaries shifted again under the Local Government (City of Sydney Boundaries) Act 1981, which came into effect in 1982. This time the City of Sydney was amalgamated with the municipality of South Sydney. On the Government side it was said that "The municipality of South Sydney has had a very difficult existence. It seems clear that it was created solely to reduce the area of the city and not because the suburbs of the new municipality had a cohesiveness or community of interest that called for them to be united in an autonomous unit". 13 For the Opposition it was claimed, "The reason for the proposal to amalgamate South Sydney council with the Sydney City council is not one of proper local government consideration. There has been no consideration of the benefits, which may or may not occur, for the residents and ratepayers of the council areas concerned. The aim is only to serve the ends of persons involved in the power struggle at present dividing the Labor Party". 14 Another account of these events is gained from Fitzgerald who writes that the amalgamation with South Sydney, a traditional right-wing Labor stronghold, was an attempt to reduce the voice of the new, independent third-force in the Council. She concludes, "As the amalgamation was simply done by adding South Sydney's Council to the city's, the new body was firmly right-wing Labor". 15

As noted, the Unsworth Government sacked the Council under the City of Sydney Act 1987. In the following year the Greiner Government changed the Council's boundaries again, this time returning them to an area smaller than their pre-1982 limits. The electoral roll was changed, leaving only vestigial residential precincts in the city. The shrinking electoral roll is one gauge of the changing fortunes of the City of Sydney in this period. Thus, in 1965 there were a total of 100,371 names on the electoral roll. In 1969 this had been reduced to 45,318, and in 1988 the number was down again to 16,133.

The latest reduction was achieved by the creation of an additional city of South Sydney under the City of Sydney Act 1988. Under this scheme, the city of Sydney itself was not divided into wards, whilst the city of South Sydney was divided into 3 wards. The city of Sydney was to be administered by 7 aldermen; the city of South Sydney by 9 aldermen. According to the Government, these reforms achieved the goal of differentiating "between the urban heart of Sydney, with its special civic requirements, and the surrounding inner areas, which need a more conventional municipal government". They were certainly in line with the main recommendations of the second Goran Report, which was itself the

NSWPD, 2 December 1981, p 1421.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> NSWPD, 3 December 1981, p 1531.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 133-4.

As against the pre-1982 boundaries, the 1989 Council had lost parts of East Sydney, most of Surrey Hills and Chippendale, as well as parts of Camperdown. One effect was that the new City of South Sydney was larger in size than the pre-1982 municipality of South Sydney.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> NSWPD, 14 September 1988, p 1277.

line with the main recommendations of the second Goran Report, which was itself the culmination of an inquiry into the administration of the city established by the Unsworth Government. Among other things that report urged the Government to endorse the following principles as fundamental to any management of Sydney:

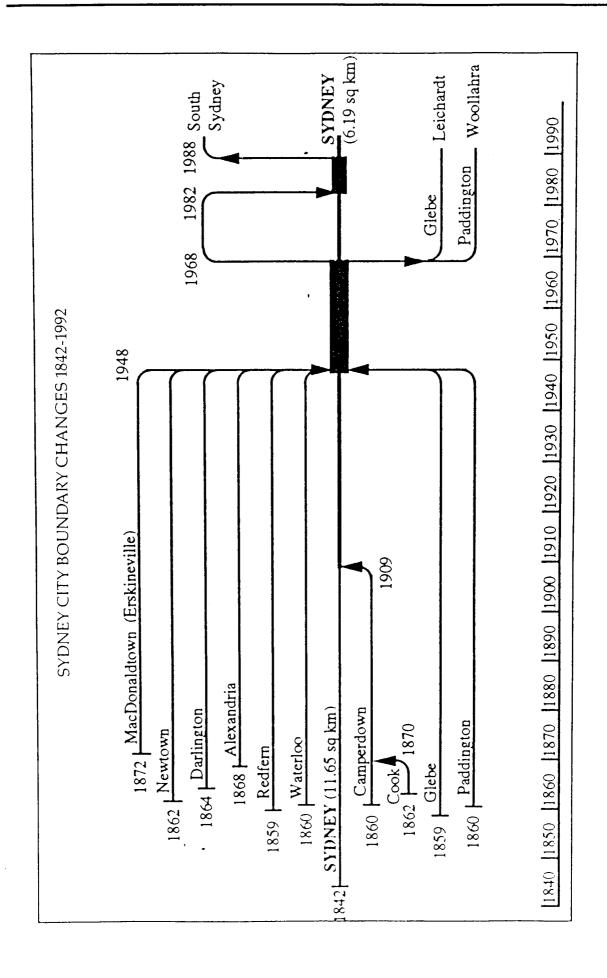
- (a) that the central, mainly non-residential, area of Sydney is dissimilar to the remainder of Sydney;
- (b) that the City is the major developing centre of banking, exchange and commerce in Australia;
- (c) that it is necessary to develop and maintain Sydney as the City to attract local and offshore capital for investment in New South Wales enterprises;
- (d) that Sydney, as the gateway to Australia and in its own right, is the major centre for tourism in Australia;
- (e) that Central Sydney needs specialist planning and development;
- (f) that Sydney is a developing centre for culture and the arts;
- (g) that the importance of Sydney in these fields must be recognised internationally;
- (h) that the City must be managed by a skilful, professional and stable government.<sup>18</sup>

For Fitzgerald, the main political issue at stake had now shifted, away from each dominant State party wanting to control the Council, to a question of "the State legislature wanting control, regardless of which party was in power".<sup>19</sup>

The diagram on the next page showing the expansions and contractions in the city's boundaries since 1842 is from Fitzgerald (page 133).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> AJ Goran, City of Sydney Inquiry, Report Two, 1988, p.9.

<sup>19</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 134.



# 4. CITY FRANCHISE

Just as the city's boundaries have expanded and contracted over the years so has its franchise. It is also the case that the Council's franchise has certain peculiarities of its own, notably in relation to the continuing role played by property qualification. Fitzgerald observes in this regard that the trend towards a broad-based political democracy has not occurred in the local arena of the Sydney City Council: "The question of 'who is a citizen' has never been resolved according to any clear philosophical criteria, and the extent of the franchise has varied, with no discernible trend towards democratically elected Councils". 20

In recent times the debate has centred on the relationship between the residential and non-residential vote. Whereas until the first decades of the twentieth century at least the qualification for the residential vote itself was the key issue, with the debate revolving around issues of gender, duration of occupancy and property qualification. Other matters of more or less enduring interest in this context are: (a) the distribution of electors between wards, when these have been in existence; and (b) the issue of compulsory voting.

Predictably enough the subject of the franchise proved controversial in the 1840s. In the event, under the City of Sydney Incorporation Act 1842, to qualify for the vote one had to be male, resident in Sydney or within 7 miles of its boundary for at least one year, as well as the occupant of property of an annual value of £25. The idea of cumulative or plural voting was considered but rejected. On its behalf, the Sydney Morning Herald argued that the person who pays the rates should have the votes in proportion:

If it is to give a vote to the occupant of a hovel of £10 a year, why should it not give two votes to the occupant of two tenements, situated in different wards, of £400 a year each?<sup>21</sup>

On the other side demands were made for a universal ratepayer franchise and as a result the franchise qualification was reduced to £20 in 1844.

With the restoration of the City Council in 1857, following 2 years of government by commission, it was proposed at first to use a parliamentary franchise, which would have had the effect of enfranchising non-ratepayers. Parkes opposed the idea, as did the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the basic argument being that adult franchise was appropriate for central government but not for the city where administration was mostly concerned with property. In the event, the 1857 legislation adopted a franchise limited to ratepayers, but in which the same ratepayer was eligible to vote in every ward where he held or occupied property. <sup>22</sup> Importantly, as Fitzgerald observes, the 1857 *Corporation Act* spelt out that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid, p 136.

FA Larcombe, *The Origins of Local Government in New South Wales, 1831-58*, Sydney 1973, p 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid, p 164.

the occupier was the ratepayer: "However, in this 1857 Act, both the occupier and the owner could be deemed to be the ratepayer, and clearly, if the same ratepayer could vote in each ward, this anticipated an owner vote. The emphasis was shifting towards property representation".<sup>23</sup>

Fitzgerald goes on to explain that this trend intensified under the *Sydney Corporation Act* 1879 which saw the introduction of plural voting in respect of one property and with it an increase in the landlord vote. Not until 1900 was the franchise widened when the vote was extended to three groups of citizens: owners of freehold property of £5 value; those with a leasehold interest of £25; and occupiers. Lodgers in houses with an annual value of £10 could vote, but only if they fulfilled a 12-month qualification. Property owners could still vote in every ward in which they owned property, while plural voting in respect to one property was abolished. Also, women were allowed to vote for the first time.<sup>24</sup> However, legislation allowing women to stand for election to the Council, though passed in 1918, was not integrated into the *Corporation Act* till 1929.

By the turn of the century, therefore, the franchise had been widened through the inclusion of occupiers of rateable property who indirectly contributed towards city revenues through payments of rents. Yet, the franchise had not widened far enough to include all classes of residents that were eligible to vote at parliamentary elections. There was still no full adult franchise. In subsequent years that cause was taken up by the Labor Party, notably by Arthur Griffith, a Labor member of the Legislative Assembly from 1894 to 1917. For example, his Sydney Corporation Franchise Bill 1912 proposed to extend the right to vote to all adult citizens who had resided in the city for at least 3 months. The proposal failed to convince the Legislative Council where a former Lord Mayor, Thomas Hughes, declared: "It is a political fad to seek to enfranchise a number of persons who cannot be shown in any shape or form to have the interest of the city more at heart than those who control it at present". It was explained to Parliament that at the time there were 45,203 electors; owners were already outnumbered 6 to one. To extend the franchise to all adults would add a further 20,000 electors who had no interest in municipal services beyond those of public health.<sup>25</sup>

The same fate awaited the Sydney Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1921 which would have introduced popular election of the Lord Mayor and a parliamentary franchise, permitting one vote for adult residents in the city. Again, the measures were opposed in the Legislative Council where it was said that the Bill would deny the franchise to a section of ratepayers who provided 80% of the Council's revenue. Larcombe reports that Hughes was vocal once more in his opposition to the proposal, urging the peculiar relationship between municipal government and land taxation as the determinant of the franchise.

<sup>23</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 137.

Fitzgerald notes that the 1879 Act omitted to specify "males only" and suggests that initially some women did exercise their right to vote, before the Act was interpreted in such a way as to exclude women voters: Ibid, p 138.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> FA Larcombe (1978), op cit, p 36.

The political importance of the franchise question was underlined by Larcombe who commented that it was "perhaps the most important of the factors determining which party controlled the City Council". He explains that neither the ALP nor the Citizens' Reform Association was insensible to its importance in the 1920s. From the conservative side interest focussed in this period on the uneven distribution of electors among the wards, which was seen to favour Labor. The system was duly reformed by the Fuller Government under the Sydney Corporation (Amendment) Act 1924.

Subsequently, the franchise remained at the forefront of debate. According to Larcombe, in 1927 an adult franchise was virtually adopted under the *Local Government* (Amendment) Act of that year, which gave adults with at least 6 months occupancy of rateable property the right to vote at municipal and shire elections. In 1934 the Stevens Government introduced further amendments. The number of aldermen was increased from 15 to 20, to be elected by a preferential block majority system. The franchise was altered, notably by increasing the residential qualification for occupiers of a property with an annual assessed value of at least £26 to 12 months, thus reducing the franchise. Ratepayers could vote in any ward where qualified but the other categories of voters could vote in one ward only. The contentious lodger vote remained but was reduced to some 12% of qualified electors. Voting was preferential but was still voluntary. According to Larcombe, the 1934 legislation fell short of the platform policy of the Citizens' Reform Association. In the contention of the platform policy of the Citizens' Reform Association.

The right of every citizen to vote in City elections was finally achieved in 1941 when the McKell Government added the adult franchise to the property franchise.<sup>29</sup> By the time of the 1948 election compulsory voting had also been introduced.

Using Fitzgerald as a guide again, the next major change came under the Askin Government in 1968 when voting was made voluntary again, postal voting was introduced in order to facilitate non-resident owners, and the voting system changed from proportional to preferential representation. Most significantly, a lessee vote was introduced, "so that all partners in a legal firm, for example, could vote".<sup>30</sup>

True to the partisan history of Sydney City politics, the Wran Government re-introduced compulsory voting in 1977 and abolished the lessee vote in 1980. Predicably, the situation changed again in 1988 under the Greiner Government's City of Sydney Act, which restored the lessee vote. In the relevant Second Reading Speech the Minister commented:

In 1980 the franchise of occupiers of non-residential properties and ratepaying lessees was removed. This Government is firmly of the opinion that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid, p 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid, p 139.

the council of the city of Sydney, being the totally unique local government area that it is, should be directly accountable to all those who have a genuine financial stake and a real interest in the effective operation of its government. Accordingly, the bill proposes a return, with some minor modifications, to the broad categories of electoral franchise that were in place prior to 1980. However, to qualify as a ratepaying lessee or occupier, it will be necessary for a person to have held the requisite electoral qualifications for a period of not less than three months preceding the closing of the rolls. This is designed to prevent persons unjustifiably manufacturing an electoral qualification.<sup>31</sup>

In the context of the perennial debate regarding property rights versus residential franchise, Fitzgerald has commented that "the property vote has continued to be of greater or lesser importance, depending on the political whim of the State legislature". It is the case, however, that the debate about the franchise has continued to reflect different ideas about the City of Sydney, in terms of its uniqueness or otherwise for the purposes of political representation.

### 5. METHODS OF ELECTING THE LORD MAYOR

An issue which has emerged from time to time since 1842 is that of the method of electing the city's Mayor or Lord Mayor.<sup>33</sup> Basically, the question has been whether the Lord Mayor should be elected directly by the whole city or only by Council members. The key arguments on behalf of the latter option revolved around the following notions: the right of a body to elect its own chairman; a sitting alderman had a better idea of council administration than an outsider; and the members cooperated more with a candidate of their choice.<sup>34</sup> Against this, a negative appraisal of mayoral elections by aldermen was set out by James Murphy in 1860 in these terms:

this mode of election is faulty and injurious in its effects, to the general interests of the citizens, in as much as it occasions differences of opinion among aldermen and produces party feelings, which more or less affect the deliberations and decisions of the council and tend to place personal considerations before the public good.<sup>35</sup>

Provision for the popular election of the Mayor of the City of Sydney was first made in the Sydney Corporation Regulation Act 1850. However, that arrangement was short-lived.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *NSWPD*, 14 September 1988, p 1279.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> S Fitzgerald, op cit, p 139.

The lord mayoralty was conferred on the mayors of Sydney and Melbourne in December 1902.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> FA Larcombe (1978), op cit, p 129.

FA Larcombe, *The Stabilisation of Local Government in New South Wales, 1858-1906*, Sydney 1976, p.8.

Direct election was not a feature of the legislation which followed the period when the city government was run by commission between 1854-1856. But if the practice withered the idea did not. As Larcombe explains, the issue remained on the political agenda for the remainder of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s Daniel O'Connor attempted on several occasions to introduce legislation enshrining the principle of popular election. Each time the proposed legislation lapsed in the Legislative Council where, according to Larcombe, there was strong opposition to popular election of chairmen. Another attempt to introduce the principle was made at the turn of the century, but again it failed to convince members of the Legislative Council. In the end the principle was traded off for the Legislative Council's acceptance of lodger enfranchisement. With that compromise the *Sydney Corporation Act Amendment Act 1900* was passed, but the idea of the popular election of the Mayor was temporarily shelved.<sup>36</sup>

Subsequently, the principle of popular election was revived from time to time by circumstances such as the movement for a Greater Sydney and by the city mayoral deadlock of 1915. But only in 1953 was popular election introduced again, a century after its abolition. In the meantime changes had occurred to the method by which Council members elected the Lord Mayor, notably in 1934 when legislation was introduced providing for a secret ballot and preferential voting.<sup>37</sup> That system remained in place till 1953 when the Cahill Government, at which time the principle of the separate election of chairman was compulsorily extended to the Cities of Newcastle and Wollongong and to any municipality and shire which resolved to adopt it. In 1967 the Askin Government abolished it for all councils and election of the chairman returned to the council members. Direct popular election was again re-introduced by the Wran Government under the Local Government (Elections) Amendment Act 1976. It remained in place till the Greiner Government returned the election of the Lord Mayor to the 7 aldermen under the City of Sydney Act 1988.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> FA Larcombe (1976), op cit, pp 7-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> FA Larcombe (1978), op cit, p 6.