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Ryde councillor to sit on two local governments if successful for City of Sydney

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It is one way of making local government more efficient: use the same councillors on multiple councils.

A Ryde councillor may soon find himself in the unusual position of being part of two local governments if he is also elected to the City of Sydney next month.

Craig Chung, a Liberal councillor in Ryde, will run as the second candidate on [Christine Forster's](#) Liberal ticket for the City of Sydney elections.

And if he does win a spot on the City of Sydney, he does not plan to step down from Ryde Council.



The emergence of Craig Chung is another element in a typically spiky contest for Sydney's Town Hall. STEVEN SIEWERT

That is to spare ratepayers in that area the expense of a by-election, he says. And because Ryde Council is likely to be merged with Lane Cove and Hunters Hill, pending the resolution of legal challenges.

"I'm getting advice from the Office of Local Government on that," said Cr Chung, when asked if he could sit on two councils at the same time.

"Christine approached me back in March to consider running and I think she recognised that I had some skills and experience to bring to a ticket.

"At the time, of course, we expected that Ryde would be amalgamated and merged and I wouldn't be a councillor and I took up the challenge immediately," said the councillor, who highlighted his experience and work around the fast-developing Macquarie Park area.

Councillors are not permitted to also sit in NSW Parliament, after the government passed laws in 2012 that were widely interpreted as intending to force lord mayor Clover Moore from Parliament.

But Fairfax Media asked the Office of Local Government if a councillor could sit on two councils at the same time.

A spokesman offered no reason why not. "Anyone who is entitled to vote at an election for a council is also eligible to stand for election to that council," the spokesman said.



If Cr Chung does end up sitting on two councils, it is unlikely to be for long. There is, however, no time-frame for when the existing Ryde Council would be dissolved.

The emergence of Cr Chung, who owns an education export business in the City of Sydney, on the second spot on the Liberal ticket is another element in what is proving to be a typically spiky contest for Sydney's Town Hall.

The second spot on the Liberal ticket was expected to be held by sitting councillor Edward Mandla.

But Cr Mandla recently quit the party, [alleging it had been taken over by lobbyists](#), while lashing out at Cr Forster, the sister of former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, for not being a team player.

Cr Mandla is instead running on the "Sydney Matters" ticket, under mayoral candidate Angela Vithoulkas.

Cr Chung has a strong chance of being elected. Two Liberal candidates, Cr Mandla and Cr Forster, won spots on the current council in 2012.

Incumbent [lord mayor Clover Moore](#) is the heavy favourite to be re-elected at the September 10 poll.

More will be known about the impact of electoral changes to increase the business vote in the City next week, when the Electoral Commission releases details of the non-residential roll.



Ryde councillor Craig Chung may find himself in the unusual position of sitting on two councils.



Liberal councillor Christine Forster is hoping to end Clover Moore's 12-year reign as Sydney lord mayor. NIC WALKER

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