



Dr Peter Boxall
Chairperson
IPART
PO Box K35
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NSW 1240

30 June 2015

Dear Dr Boxall

Re: Fit for the Future Submission

We are pleased to lodge our Fit for the Future Joint Submission for your assessment.

This Joint Submission includes the Improvement Proposals and supporting documentation for the City of Ryde, Hunter's Hill and Lane Cove Councils as well as our superior alternative, the Joint Regional Authority collaborative model.

Our Joint Submission demonstrates that our Councils have proven scale and capacity to deliver our well-established visions for our communities, to engage effectively with our business communities and, importantly, to work in partnership with all tiers of government.

We have jointly and separately assessed the Independent Local Government Review Panel's (ILGRP) report, *Revitalising Local Government*. This report proposes that our Councils merge with Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby, with one-third of the City of Ryde amalgamating with a larger Parramatta Council.

We reject these proposals with the strong support of our communities, and as outlined in our Joint Submission base this rejection on:

- Empirical research
- Extensive community engagement
- Our considered view that mergers are an inelegant response to the sophisticated and multifaceted challenge of sustaining Sydney's global competitiveness.
- Our analysis of the ILGRP's stated objectives for proposing to split the City of Ryde which found an overwhelming lack of consideration and knowledge of the impacts of the proposal, and the significant contribution the City of Ryde makes in realising the NSW Government's vision for Sydney.

Our proposal to establish a Joint Regional Authority is a progressive and superior alternative. A collaborative model with a primary focus on centralisation of subregional-scale planning and a secondary focus on regional procurement and shared services. The JRA model is a fit for purpose response, heralding a more integrated and functional regional approach to intergovernmental relationships, strategic decision making, service delivery and advocacy. It can be readily adapted for implementation anywhere in Metropolitan Sydney.

This approach fulfils the NSW Government's objectives to optimise regional infrastructure and strategic planning outcomes. It is built on the Joint Organisation model contemplated by the NSW Government and as recommended by the ILGRP. It provides all the benefits of increased scale without the expensive and disruptive impacts of large-scale mergers.

Our Councils are willing to participate in a pilot to test the JRA model, with the Office of Local Government oversight. Developing the JRA pilot with the NSW Government involvement means we can shape its success, not only with additional guidance and financial support, but also with integrated priorities and preferences of two tiers of government.

The fact that our Councils are prepared to welcome a test case for a JRA is a reflection of our commitment and belief in the model, and our dedication to finding the right model for local governance in Sydney.

Our Councils, in accord with our communities, believe local government is the government of communities and places, giving expression to people's aspirations for their neighbourhoods and town centres. For this reason we reject forced amalgamations as a regressive response and offer a solution that in Professor Allan's words captures the upsides of a merger while retaining a Council's capacity to relate to people and places on a neighbourhood basis.

We would be happy to provide additional information and to meet with you to discuss our Joint Submission at your convenience.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Bill Pickering
Mayor- City of Ryde

Councillor Richard Quinn
Mayor- Hunter's Hill Council

Councillor David Brooks-Horn
Mayor- Lane Cove Council