

# APPENDICIES

## **APPENDIX A - Parramatta City Council Submission to ILGRP (28 June 2013)**



Our Reference: F2007/02184  
Contact: Jennifer O'Donnell  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

The Chairman  
Independent Local Government Review Panel  
C/- Division of Local Government  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Locked Bag 3015  
NOWRA NSW

28 June 2013

Dear Sir

**Submission on '*Future Directions for NSW Local Government: Twenty Essential Steps*'**

At its meeting on 24 June 2013 Council resolved to make the attached submission in response to the Panel's discussion paper '*Future Directions for NSW Local Government: Twenty Essential Steps*' and further to emphasise its opposition to the abolition of wards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sue Coleman', written over a horizontal line.

Sue Coleman  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

## **Parramatta City Council**

Submission to the Independent Local Government Review Panel's  
report

### ***"Future Directions for Local Government"***

***April 2013***

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Parramatta City Council appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Panel's latest report.

Council's submission is in two parts - firstly some broad observations and questions and secondly Council's response to the Panel's proposals/options.

#### **PART 1 – OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

Some key questions remain based on the current proposals particularly in the following areas.

The proposed role of the State Government will be critical in any reform proposals. At present the Panel's paper lacks detail on a number of matters including the proposed relationship between the State Government and local government authorities. It is not clear that an agreement between the State Government and Local Government NSW provides a firm basis for clarifying the way in which partnerships on key initiatives might work in practice. As rightly noted in the paper, formal MOUs or other binding arrangements are likely to be necessary in many cases.

In the absence of specific details around assistance in managing any changes and incentives to enter into voluntary arrangements, it is difficult for Council to form a view on the cost-benefit of the proposals around alternative structures for local government.

The paper appears to contain a number of unresolved tensions between wishing to improve the standing of local government as a "trusted partner" of other levels of government and a focus on accountability to local communities on the one hand and increasingly complex and onerous reporting mechanisms to the State Government on the other hand. Council has particular concerns about the proposed increasing oversight of the NSW Auditor General, however if there is clarity of purpose and responsibility that would add value, then the approach could have merit.

Much of the paper rightly focuses on the need for continuous improvement and innovation in the local government sector. This is an area where Council has focused considerable effort in recent years. Council would welcome the opportunity to contribute to work to establish strong benchmarks for improvement and sharing of ideas across the sector. Council is concerned that the increasingly onerous compliance structures and review mechanisms proposed in the paper may work to

hamper innovation. In particular, it is not clear that the link between Internal Audit (including the establishment of an "Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee") and Auditor-General oversight functions and the ability to drive innovative practices is made out. Traditional audit functions have an inherently backwards-looking emphasis as the very nature of audit functions, including performance audits, tends to be on testing implementation. While Internal Audit does regularly make recommendations for improvement based on historical reviews, it is much less likely to contribute to process re-design or real innovation.

Some of the proposals, including the appointment of auditors, the oversight of continuous improvement and the proposal for a single Local Government Finance Agency appear to assume that 'one-size-fits-all.' Parramatta City Council has a strong track record of continuous improvement, an internal audit function that already meets most of the requirements proposed and has demonstrated an ability to achieve successful outcomes in negotiating loan facilities. If, as is likely, the sector is still characterised by organisations of vastly different sizes and characteristics, we would suggest that there should be sufficient flexibility and independence available in arrangements for those councils who can demonstrate sufficient scale, sound financial and asset management and a record of improvement and innovation.

The proposals in relation to shifting the funding model for larger councils from reliance on Financial Assistance Grants towards higher rates, fees and charges needs considerably more analysis to fully consider the financial implications for both local government and our communities.

In its previous submission to the Panel, Council noted the importance of "a more coordinated and holistic planning approach to the development of the assets, precincts and transport initiatives in the Regional Parramatta area." The release of the draft Metropolitan Plan, subsequent to that submission, has again affirmed the importance of Parramatta as one of the key 'city shapers' that will play an important role in shaping future growth across greater Sydney. There are still important questions that need to be considered in designing an appropriate solution to these issues.

As Council also noted in its previous submission, "The current and future needs of the community must play a central role when considering how services are delivered.... Service delivery and associated asset provision has the on-going challenge of ensuring services meet changing community needs, whilst operating in a tighter fiscal environment and maintaining assets at their optimal level. .... There is the potential for the boundaries of Local Government areas to be reviewed to better align with the delivery of both local as well as regional objectives .... in the case of Parramatta this could involve the identification of a centre, a clear local hinterland/catchment for the Parramatta CBD and linkages between important nodes that allows for effective planning. .... changes to local government in this sub-region could consider the strong connections between the Parramatta CBD and the global economic corridor to the north east of Parramatta, the lower Hills Shire areas to the north and the areas along Church Street to the south to the M4".

In its submission on the *Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney to 2031* Council has said "Parramatta City Council strongly supports the revised sub-regions as set out in the Draft Metropolitan Strategy. The principle of a centre servicing an economic catchment is a sound one; and should reflect the economic reality of the sub-regions, rather than a local parochial view or social aspirations. Council sees this as a more balanced sub-region, with a better mixture of social diversity. This sub-region needs to drive economic growth in Sydney in the foreseeable future. This sub region has the potential to extend the Global Economic Corridor as well as link both north-south and the east-west of Metropolitan Sydney in a positive way."

Resulting from the release of the Panel's paper, Council is of a view there are three possible options:

Option1: The suggested model in Council's previous submission with an LGA population of 250,000 to 300,000.

Option 2: A more northerly position LGA with a whole of city/ town centres approach that better aligns to sub-regional planning and the workforce population for Parramatta with an LGA population of 400,000 in 2011 or 524,000 in 2036.

Option 3: As proposed in the discussion paper with an LGA population of 465,000 in 2011 or 610,600 in 2036.

Council's preferred position is option 2.

While the paper emphasises the need to bolster the strategic capacity of local government and its status as a true partner to other levels of government as a driver for structural reform, in order to come to any conclusive views on the subject of amalgamations or other structural reform, there needs to be, at the very least:

- A clearer understanding of the various governance models proposed and how they can address local as well as regional needs
- Detailed analysis of the impact on the financial position, assets, service delivery and workforce implications of the proposals
- A much clearer idea of both the incentives and any disadvantages in moving forward with significant consolidation of the local government sector.

The paper lacks robust discussion on service delivery in terms of importance or consideration of models, given that it is essential for a vibrant and sustainable Council. A suggested model is the centres of excellence concept where a team, entity or organisation implements best practice around an area of focus or service to drive effective results. The key driver is specialising in a functional or service area and providing expertise in the planning, delivery and management of that function or service on behalf of a broader organisation or group of organisations.



## **PART 2 – KEY PROPOSALS AND OPTIONS**

Council makes the following comments in regard to the key proposals and options under the headings set out in the Panel's paper.

### **Sustainability and Finance**

Council supports the proposal to develop a standard set of sustainability benchmarks subject to appropriate consultation with Local Government in their development and recognition that individual Councils may diverge for very sound reasons.

Support is also given to the proposals for appointing appropriately qualified Chief Financial Officers and the strengthening of the guidelines for Delivery Programs. Both of these proposals are in line with Council's current practices.

Council believes the involvement of the Auditor General could have merit provided there is clarity of purpose and responsibility that would add value to the audit process.

The improvements and streamlining proposed for the rating system are generally supported. The proposal to relieve councils of the cost of pensioner rate concessions is strongly supported provided that any changes would not disadvantage pensioners. Council would support reviewing the rating concessions of government businesses and benevolent institutions that service areas outside the LGA so that part of the concession cost is borne by other beneficiary LGAs, however the mechanics of assessing catchments and relative contributions may be onerous.

As noted in Part 1, the proposals in relation to shifting the funding model of Financial Assistance Grants is not supported and needs considerably more analysis to fully consider the financial implications.

Council would support the establishment of a State-wide Local Government Finance Agency to reduce borrowing costs provided it can be shown that large councils such as Parramatta would not be disadvantaged and councils maintain their right to determine their level of borrowing.

Council derives 15% of total operating revenue from fees and charges and has progressively looked for additional opportunities and increased discretionary fees to reflect the costs of providing goods and services. However many statutory fees have remained constant over a number of years and should be reviewed and have mechanisms in place to adjust in line with cost movements.

Council supports the proposals in regard to TCorp's recommendations for financial management strategies which are consistent with Council's approach to its financial planning objectives.

## **Infrastructure**

Council generally supports these proposals with the exception of that relating to the focus of the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme being transferred to councils with low rating capacity. Council acknowledges the problems being faced by rural councils but is of the view that alternative funding options should be explored to address the infrastructure problems that exist in rural NSW.

## **Productivity and Improvement**

These proposals are generally supported subject to the following comments.

The development of performance benchmarks must be done with appropriate consultation with councils and recognise that individual councils may diverge in performance against benchmarks for very sound reasons.

The proposal to amend the Integrated Planning & Reporting guidelines to require regular service reviews based on best value principles should not result in the imposition of additional layers of monitoring or auditing.

Combining audit and risk management oversight with broader performance reporting and "improvement" does not seem to have a precedent outside local government. Arguably these functions require different skills and question the role of the Council and management in this process. Council supports continuing the existing guidelines for Audit and Risk Committees.

The concept of an Annual General Meeting is supported provided this is consistent with Council's position of being more accountable to the community and with less compliance/accountability requirement to the State Government.

## **Better Governance**

Council's proposal is for a fulltime Lord Mayor and Councillors with up to 20 Councillors under Councils preferred option 2 noted earlier in this submission. The number of representatives in other situations would be dependent on the representation model. Council believes further research is required around the ward v's "at large" councillor options but emphasises its opposition to the abolition of wards.

Council does not support the proposal to make ongoing professional development mandatory for Councillors. Council supports further work being undertaken by the joint working party on other governance issues and has no position currently on the other matters proposed for further consideration.

Council supports the Panel's proposal that Council should determine the organisational structure along with the appointment of the General Manager and involvement in Senior Staff appointments.

Council does not support limiting the terms of Mayors and Councillors



### **Role of Mayors**

Council supports the Panel's proposals in this area with the exception of making professional development mandatory and the proposal for popular election of mayors. Council is of the view that a council should determine how it elects its mayor.

### **Structural Reform**

Council supports a position of having full time councillors and therefore does not support the option of Local Boards.

Council's position regarding the Greater Parramatta proposal has been dealt with above.

Council supports the proposal for incentives for reform and suggests that these could include assistance with infrastructure investment e.g. light rail funding, regional and local planning powers and increased law and order authority and resources.

### **Implementation**

Council generally supports these proposals subject to ensuring that the creation of a Local Government Development Board does not cause any unnecessary overlap or duplication in its activities and those of the Division of Local Government and Local Government NSW.

Council has not taken a position on the reconstitution of the Local Government Boundaries Commission until there is some clarification of any proposals as to its proposed activities.

**INDEPENDENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW PANEL REPORT**  
**COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSALS/OPTIONS**

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
<b>Sustainability and Finance</b>		
Develop a standard set of sustainability benchmarks	Report recognises more work needed in financial benchmarks used by TCorp. How would benchmarks be set across such a divergent population and how would they be expected to drive behaviour?	Support the proposal subject to appropriate consultation with LG in development and recognition that individual Councils may diverge for very sound reasons.
Require all councils to appoint a qualified Chief Financial Officer	This has been Council practice for some time and is supported.	Support
Strengthen the guidelines for councils' 4-year Delivery Programs	Council's latest Corporate Plan gives effect to the suggested improvements in relation to long-term financial and asset management plans, eliminating operating deficits, aligning special rates to specific programs, community consultation, increased funding for infrastructure maintenance and renewal, increased borrowing via LIRS, review of rating structures and specific improvement initiatives in relation to efficiency, productivity, financial management and governance	Support – in line with current PCC practice
Place local government audits under the oversight of the Auditor General	Panel believes Auditor-General oversight needed for better quality audits and more consistent practice. Question whether this will be achieved and contrasts with other proposals for more capable councils with greater respect and responsibility. A one size fits all approach is not necessarily appropriate.	Support - there needs to be clarity of purpose and responsibility that would add value for the approach to have merit
Improve the rating system and streamline rate-pegging to enable councils to generate essential additional revenue	Proposals include: Reviewing pensioner concessions and their funding, increase rates on apartments, review concessions to government business properties and benevolent institutions which provide	Council does not support any changes that would disadvantage pensioners but would support the proposal to transfer its share of the cost of these social welfare

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
	<p>services beyond Council LGA, increases in fees and charges for some services.</p> <p>Rate pegging – allow an additional 3% on top of rate peg subject to Delivery Program process meeting certain criteria.</p> <p>Exemption from rate pegging where there is high performance in asset and financial management. IPART would oversight.</p>	<p>concessions to State/Federal Government.</p> <p>Council would support reviewing the rating concessions of government businesses and benevolent institutions that service areas outside the LGA so that part of the concession cost is borne by other beneficiary LGAs - however the mechanics of assessing catchments and relative contributions may be onerous.</p> <p>Support greater autonomy and flexibility in setting rates and the exemption from rate pegging for Councils implementing IPR effectively.</p>
<p>Progressive re-distribution of grant funding to provide greater assistance to those councils with limited rating bases, provided they are taking all possible steps to help themselves</p>	<p>Result is larger metro councils raising rates (and potentially fees and charges) to generate revenue to replace reduced grant funding.</p> <p>PCC 2012/13 Financial Assistance Grant – general purpose \$7.4M, roads \$1.5M.</p> <p>Making up for loss of say half FAG (\$4.5M) would require extra 5% on ordinary rates.</p>	<p>Do not support.</p>
<p>Establish a State-wide Local Government Finance Agency to bring down interest costs and assist councils make better use of borrowings</p>	<p>Panel claims that in Queensland, where this occurs, a borrowing rate of 3.65% exists compared with 6-8% for individual NSW councils. Council is currently negotiating major loan renewals at a significantly lower rate than that quoted for NSW councils.</p> <p>Clarification needed on the source and terms of the rate quoted in Queensland.</p>	<p>Support if it can be shown that as PCC would not be disadvantaged by the arrangement and Councils maintain the right to determine their level of borrowing.</p>
<p>Ongoing examination of supplementary revenue options</p>	<p>Council derives 15% of total operating revenue from fees and charges and has progressively looked for additional opportunities and increased</p>	<p>Support but recommend that statutory fees be reviewed and have mechanisms in place to adjust in line with cost</p>

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
	discretionary fees above CPI. Many statutory fees have remained constant over a number of years and should be reviewed.	movements.
TCorp, the Division of Local Government and Local Government NSW should conduct a series of seminars with councils to explain the TCorp findings and their implications		Support
<p>Adopt the TCorp recommendations and adjust policy-settings accordingly.</p> <p>TCorp recommends-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least breakeven operating results</li> <li>• Rate increases must address underlying costs not just expenditure increases</li> <li>• Medium term fixing of rates and charges</li> <li>• Priority to asset management planning</li> <li>• Enhance asset management capacity</li> <li>• Free up access to restricted funds as a source of financing</li> <li>• Increase borrowings</li> </ul>	<p>Council has recognised underlying costs and priority of asset management in seeking rate variations, operating result objectives and additional borrowing through LIRS opportunity.</p> <p>Current requirements to have a 4 year Delivery Program and a 10 year Financial Plan are at odds with the required annual fixing of rates and charges. Medium term fixing of rates etc. to align with Delivery Program is consistent with encouraging longer term financial planning.</p>	Support
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Maintain the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS) for at least 5 years, with a focus on councils facing the most severe problems	Most of the following infrastructure proposals are primarily directed at regional/country areas which are seen as not having the rating capacity to address the infrastructure backlog. As noted earlier, this would likely result in the redirection of grant funds and loan subsidies from councils such as PCC to rural councils.	Do not support as would result in an erosion of grant funds and loss of loan subsidies and increased rates for many urban councils. Alternative funding options should be explored to address infrastructure problems in rural NSW.
Pool a proportion of funds from the roads component of federal		

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
Financial Assistance Grants and the 'Roads to Recovery' program to establish a Strategic Projects Fund for roads and bridges to help reduce the infrastructure backlog		
Investigate the Queensland model of Regional Roads Groups, as well as options for cost savings through strategic procurement initiatives		
Require asset and financial management assessments of councils seeking special assistance		
Expand training in asset management and associated financial planning for councillors and staff	Further and on-going training is always useful for the development of the industry.	Support
<b>Productivity and Improvement</b>		
Develop a consistent data collection and performance measurement system for NSW councils along similar lines to the current Victorian initiative, and in accordance with the Destination 2036 Action Plan	Benchmarks yet to be developed and uncertain how they will necessarily drive behaviour. Some of these proposals seem to be at odds with the report's stated focus on moving away from 'compliance' to improvement and innovation by being prescriptive and subject to detailed oversight.	Support the proposal subject to appropriate consultation with LG in development of benchmarks and recognition that individual Councils may diverge for very sound reasons.
Commission a review by IPART of the regulatory and compliance burden on NSW local government		Support
A new sector-wide program to promote, capture and disseminate innovation and best practice	Panel suggests be driven initially by a LG Development Board. See <i>Implementation</i> section for details of Board.	Support
Amend the IPR Guidelines to introduce a requirement for regular service reviews based on 'best value' principles	Ongoing service reviews and continuous improvement are established at PCC and part of the Corporate Plan. As well as mandating service reviews as part of the IPR Guidelines there is considerable and potentially complicated oversight proposed – DLG , professional bodies, the proposed Local Government	Support as part of the IPR process but should not be necessary to impose other layers of monitoring or auditing.

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
	Development Board, Internal Audit and the Auditor General are all suggested as playing a role in monitoring and 'auditing' improvement.	
Strengthening of internal and performance audit processes – re-orient to adding value and improvement, mandatory committee, majority of independent members, exclusion of CEO from membership, bi-annual report to Council	Council's Audit & Risk Committee charter is in line with DLG guidelines. In terms of the report's recommendations re membership and reporting, it is also consistent. Combining audit and risk management oversight with broader performance reporting and "improvement" does not seem to have a precedent outside local government; arguably these functions require different skills and question the role of the Council and management in this process	Support continuing existing guidelines for Audit and Risk Committees.
Further consideration of the concept of a council Annual General Meeting	Supports Councils position of being more accountable to the community and less compliance/accountable to the State.	Support – the needs to be some trade off in terms of less compliance.
Prepare a NSW Local Government Workforce Strategy		Support
Explore areas in which the Local Government Award can continue to evolve to support an efficient and productive sector able to address future challenges		Support
<b>Better Governance</b>		
Amendment of the Local Government Act to clarify the different elements of the role of councillors	Panel sees a tension in roles of a Councillor as both a member of the governing body (board of directors) and a community representative. Avenues to resolve this tension are suggested in the following option.	
Amendment of the Local Government Act to provide additional governance options for larger councils including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a mix of ward and 'at large' councillors</li> </ul>		Councils' proposal is for fulltime Lord Mayor and Councillors with up to 20 Councillors under Council's preferred option with further research



PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a 'civic cabinet' model comprising the mayor and 'at large' Councillors, possibly fulltime, with portfolio responsibilities</li> <li>for very large Councils, wholly elected 'at large' Councillors with Local Boards</li> </ul>		around the ward v's at large councillor options. The level of representation would be dependent on the representation model.
A requirement for Mayors and General Managers to ensure that all councillors have access to adequate administrative and policy support		Support
Mandatory, ongoing professional development for councillors, linked to a requirement for each council to adopt and fund a councillor development program	Cost implications and not imposed at other levels of government	Do not support mandatory professional development.
Establishment of a joint working party on council governance with the Division of Local Government, Local Government NSW, Local Government Managers Australia and the Local Government Acts Task Force to consider other matters raised in the report, and to provide advice to the Panel for its final report.	<p>Matters raised for further advice from the joint working party include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring broad based representation</li> <li>Limiting the terms of Mayors and Councillors</li> <li>Options to attract "quality" candidates</li> <li>Councillor remuneration</li> </ul>	Support for further work but Council does not support limiting terms of Mayors and Councillors.
<p>Options suggested to improve mayor-council-management relations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarification as to the role of the General Manager and the Mayor</li> <li>Appointment and tenure of general managers</li> <li>Role of the Mayor and council in determining staff appointments and resources</li> </ul>	<p>The Independent Review Panel said:</p> <p><i>"Council's have a legitimate interest in how staff resources are allocated and hence the <b>Council should retain</b> its current power to approve the organisation structure on the advice of the General Manager, but the precise extent of its involvement needs to be</i></p>	Supports the Panel's position in that Council should determine the organisational structure along with the appointment of the General Manager and involved in Senior Staff appointments.

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
	<p><i>clarified."</i></p> <p><i>"... The Panel believe the balance (in this respect) needs to be tilted a little towards the prerogatives of the Mayor, but this should be done in a way that requires the Mayor and the General Manager to work together. This could confer a number of joint responsibilities in the area of strategic planning and financial management ... they could also be given joint responsibility for designing the senior levels of the organisation structure. As well, the Panel considers that the Mayor should be involved alongside the General Manager in the selection process for designated senior staff, and their performance reviews and any dismissal proceedings."</i></p>	
<b>Role of Mayors</b>		
<p>Strengthen the authority and responsibilities of mayors with a new legislative framework built around the mayoral roles suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal member of Council</li> <li>• Community leader</li> <li>• Propose committees, oversee Councillors</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> </ul>		Support

PROPOSAL/OPTION	BACKGROUND/ISSUES	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guiding the General Manager</li> <li>Develop and maintain strategic external relationships</li> </ul>		
The mayor becoming a full-time, well paid position in larger councils		Support
Mandatory ongoing professional development for mayors, including an initial specialised course to be completed within three months of election		Do not support mandatory professional development.
Popular election of all mayors of councils with a population of 20,000 or more		Councils should determine how the mayor is elected.
For consultation Referral of these options to the joint working party proposed in section 'Better Governance' for further consideration and advice to the Panel.		Support
<b>Structural Reform</b>		
Introduce the option of Local Boards to service small communities and to ensure local identity and representation in very large urban councils	Report talks about boards of 5-7 elected members at suburb or district level with some delegated service delivery functions.	Council has a position of full time councillors model so does not support this proposal.
Seek to reduce the number of councils in the Sydney basin to around 15, and create major new cities of Sydney, Parramatta and Liverpool, each with populations of 600-800,000	There have been 3 options detailed in the submission and a preferred position.	Support – as per Option 2 in submission.
Introduce a package of incentives for voluntary mergers that offers a higher level of support to 'early movers'	Suggested incentives for early movers are almost certainly insufficient to overcome systemic resistance and timing is probably unrealistic given lack of detail at this point.	Support – suggestions include infrastructure investment eg light rail; Regional and local planning powers; increased law and order authority and resources.
<b>Implementation</b>		

<b>PROPOSAL/OPTION</b>	<b>BACKGROUND/ISSUES</b>	<b>PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE</b>
Appoint a Local Government Development Board for a maximum period of 4 years with a brief to drive and support a concerted program of reform	<p>Panel says Board could comprise members appointed jointly by the Minister and President of Local Government NSW.</p> <p>Potential for overlap and duplication of effort with LG Development Board, DLG and LGNSW all involved in reform and development initiatives.</p>	Support subject to ensuring there is no unnecessary overlap or duplication in activities of DLG, LG Development Board and LGNSW.
Build on the new State-Local Government agreement to secure increased collaboration and joint planning between councils and State agencies		Support
Strengthen recognition of elected local government in the NSW Constitution		Support
Further strengthen the role of the Division of Local Government (DLG) in promoting and supporting innovation and development	<p>Panel believes DLG is perceived as having a primarily compliance role.</p> <p>Fulfilling this new role would require State to adequately resource the skills required at DLG.</p>	See above comments.
Detailed consideration of ways in which Local Government NSW can lead reform and development of the sector, and a new partnership with the State, in accordance with principles and provisions of the State-Local Agreement.		See above comments
For the longer term, reconstitute the Boundaries Commission as a proactive organisation that initiates and conducts regular reviews of local government structures and boundaries	Panel suggest an independent and impartial Commission as opposed to current situation of only operating at Ministerial request. Little detail on how Commission may operate.	Await clarification of any proposal before taking a position.

**APPENDIX B – RESPONSE FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS**

# AUBURN

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## AUBURN CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS CIVIC PLACE, 1 SUSAN STREET, AUBURN ON TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2015 COMMENCING AT 6.00PM

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#### PRESENT

His Worship the Mayor (Clr Oueik), Councillors Attie, Campbell, Simms, Yang and Zraika.

#### IN ATTENDANCE

General Manager, Deputy General Manager Indirect, Deputy General Manager Direct, Manager Corporate, Manager Community Development, Manager Strategy, Chief Financial Officer, Governance Coordinator, IT Service Desk Support Officer and Organisational Consultant.

#### APOLOGIES

*RESOLVED unanimously on the motion of Clr Zraika, seconded Clr Attie that an apology for the non-attendance of Clr Lam due to overseas business commitments, be noted.*



106/15      Disclosure of Interests  
C-27-08/03      MB : MW

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There were no disclosures of interest.

107/15      Fit for the Future Proposal  
C-29-52      MB : MW

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**RESOLVED unanimously on the motion of Cllr Simms, seconded Cllr Zraika:**

1. *That Council adopt the merger proposal between Burwood Council, City of Canada Bay Council and Auburn City Council, as in the best interest of its residents, given the NSW State Government's intention to compel amalgamations.*
2. *That Council authorise the General Manager to place the decision on public exhibition for a period of 28 days between 27 May and 24 June 2015.*
3. *That during the public exhibition period Council will deliver a community engagement program as outlined in this report.*
4. *That Council delegates the Mayor and General Manager to finalise and lodge the Council submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), as per Template 1 provided by the Office of Local Government, by 30 June 2015.*
5. *That in the event that either Burwood Council or City of Canada Bay Council decide to not proceed with the agreed merger proposal, Council delegates the General Manager to finalise and lodge a "stand alone" submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), as per Template 2 provided by the Office of Local Government, by 30 June 2015.*
6. *That in the event that the NSW State Government opt not to proceed with the implementation of structural reform in the Local Government sector, that Council reverts to a status quo position and proceeds to withdraw from this proposal.*


There being no further matters, the meeting was closed at 6.01pm.

CONFIRMED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

DATE:

## HOLROYD




# Holroyd City

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

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### IPART To Review 'Fit For The Future' Submissions

**4 May 2015 – Media Release**

Holroyd City Council Mayor Greg Cummings has welcomed an announcement by the Minister for Local Government Paul Toole that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) will lead the review of council Fit for the Future submissions.

Mayor Cummings said IPART's role in acting as the Expert Advisory Panel, supported by local government expert John Comrie, will allow for submissions to be assessed 'transparently and independently'.

"We will be using our submission as an opportunity to demonstrate how Holroyd meets the Terms of Reference for the Fit for the Future program, including an Improvement Plan moving forward," Mayor Cummings said today.

"As we have shown time and time again, Holroyd is financially sustainable, we can effectively deliver a range of broad services to our community and we have a successful track record in managing the infrastructure needed to meet the challenges of our LGA's growing population.

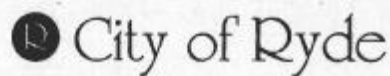
"In terms of scale, independent analysis from experts like Professor Brian Dollery, have shown that bigger councils don't make for better councils and that there is still no evidence that a merged mega Council will give the people of Holroyd any net economic or social benefits.

"Whilst the Holroyd community remains overwhelmingly opposed to a forced merger with Parramatta, Auburn and parts of Ryde and The Hills councils, Holroyd City Council supports the Government's reform of local government.

"Holroyd is committed to improving overall efficiencies, by examining potential boundary changes and working with other western Sydney councils to deliver shared services for our communities."

Mayor Cummings said Holroyd was working hard on its Fit for the Future submission, to be lodged by 30 June 2015.

To speak up and sign the petition against merging Holroyd Council, go to campaign website at [www.handsoffholroyd.com.au](http://www.handsoffholroyd.com.au) and say NO.



Lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep

Mr Greg Dyer  
General Manager  
Parramatta City Council  
PO Box 32  
Parramatta NSW 2124



19 February 2015

Our reference: CSG/14/3/14/7

Dear Mr Dyer

## **'Fit for the Future' – City of Ryde's Response**

I refer to the recent announcement by the Minister for Local Government on the 'Fit for the Future' initiative and the requirement for all Councils to lodge their completed templates with the Office of Local Government by 30 June 2015.

Council, at its Extraordinary meeting on 17 February 2015 considered the City of Ryde's response to this matter and resolved as follows:

- a) *That the City of Ryde reaffirm its rejection to the recommendations as detailed in the Independent Panel's final report that proposes to split the City of Ryde partly between Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn Councils with the balance being amalgamated with Councils to the east and north, comprising Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby Councils;*
- b) *That the City of Ryde complete Template 2 – Council Improvement Proposal, to demonstrate that the City of Ryde is sustainable in its own right;*
- c) *That in addition to completing Template 2, Council also endorse investigating a modified Joint Organisation (regional body) proposal to meet the State Government's scale and capacity criteria, on the basis that there are other Councils in northern Sydney interested in participating in this proposal with the City of Ryde;*
- d) *That the City of Ryde endorse undertaking a shared community engagement strategy with those Councils that confirm interest in exploring a modified Joint Organisation (regional body) proposal as detailed in part (c) above;*

Civic Centre 1 Devlin Street, Ryde NSW  
Ryde Planning and Business Centre  
1 Pope Street, Ryde (Below Ryde Library)

Post Locked Bag 2069, North Ryde NSW 1670  
Email [cityofryde@ryde.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cityofryde@ryde.nsw.gov.au)  
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Customer Service (02) 9952 8222  
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Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450

- e) *That Council endorse the General Manager writing to the Mayor and General Manager of the Councils that attended the Symposium, to confirm their Council's position by Wednesday 18 March 2015, in respect of parts (c) and (d) above;*
- f) *That the City of Ryde endorse a business case (cost benefit analysis) being undertaken of the Independent Panel's recommendation for the Councils of Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Willoughby and Ryde to amalgamate (costs to be on a shared funding basis); and*
- g) *That the General Manager write to the Mayor and General Manager of Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils to formally advise that the City of Ryde rejects the Independent Panel's recommendations for the western area of the City of Ryde to merge with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils and to advise that Council is exploring other options as detailed above.*
- h) *That the City of Ryde, as soon as possible, commence a community information strategy to bring the specific predicament of this Council to the attention of our community.*

Therefore, Council formally advises Parramatta Council that it does not support the recommendations by the Independent Panel for part of the City of Ryde's area to merge with Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn Councils and will not be seeking to complete a merger template that proposes a merger with any or all of those Councils.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] if you require any further information or should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
Gail Connolly  
General Manager

Mr Greg Dyer  
General Manager  
Parramatta City Council  
PO Box 32  
Parramatta NSW 2124

22 May 2015

Our Reference: CSG/14/3/14/7

Dear  Mr Dyer

**City of Ryde – Fit for the Future**

I am pleased to enclose a copy of the City of Ryde's *Fit for the Future* community information brochure and a recent resolution of Council regarding the establishment of a Joint Regional Authority (Joint Organisation) with Lane Cove and Hunter's Hill Councils.

The decisions by the City of Ryde, Lane Cove and Hunter's Hill Councils to establish a Joint Regional Authority (Joint Organisation) will allow the Councils to remain in place as local entities to deliver local services with proper representation. This is considered a superior option to that of amalgamation, and meets all of the State Government's objectives for local government reform, whilst retaining local identity and communities of interest.

Live polling has recently been conducted at public meetings in the three Council areas, where 88 per cent of attendees stated they were not supportive of forced amalgamations and more than 70 per cent supported exploring the creation of a Joint Regional Authority (Joint Organisation).

It was clear at these public meetings that residents considered that their respective Councils represented them well and were the voice of the people. Attendees at the meetings had major concerns regarding the reduced level of local representation that residents would have under the recommended mega-council structures.

If being *Fit for the Future* requires Councils with vision and leadership, the City of Ryde, Lane Cove and Hunter's Hill Councils have proven their credentials in their governance frameworks, financial prudence and innovative approach to the creation of a metropolitan Joint Regional Authority (Joint Organisation).

Please do not hesitate to contact me on  if you have any enquiries or wish to discuss the approach being taken by the City of Ryde.

Yours sincerely



Gail Connolly  
General Manager



**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING  
NO. 8/15 AT ITS MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2015****COUNCIL REPORTS****6 FIT FOR THE FUTURE UPDATE****RESOLUTION:**

- (a) That Council note the update on the actions taken by the General Manager in preparing Council's response to the Fit for the Future program, as a result of Council's resolution at its meeting 17 February 2015.
- (b) That Council endorse the General Manager continuing to finalise both Council's Template 2 submission – (Council Improvement Proposal) and the Joint Regional Authority proposal, (as detailed in the body of this report), in conjunction with Lane Cove and Hunter's Hill Councils.
- (c) That Council delegate to the General Manager the authority to provide a submission to IPART regarding Fit for the Future Assessment methodology on behalf of Council.
- (d) That Council note this matter will be reported back to Council at a meeting in June 2015.



## THE HILLS

THE  
HILLS  
Sydney's Garden Shire

### THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL

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ABN 76 26 034 494 656

29 April 2015

Greg Dyer  
Chief Executive Officer  
Parramatta City Council  
PO Box 32  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124



Our Ref: 155612574

Dear Greg

#### **Response to NSW Government's Fit for the Future process**

I refer to your correspondence on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 received by Council on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015. As I have been on leave, I apologise for the delay in responding.

In regard to Part A of your Council's resolution on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the following response is provided.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Council forwarded correspondence to Parramatta City Council in regard to The Hills Shire Council's position in regard to the NSW Government's Fit for the Future process. Council's position was unanimous and I attach for your information a further copy of that correspondence. Council's position has not changed in regard to this matter.

In regard to Part D of your Council's resolution, in particular the third point, I note that independent specialists have now been appointed and whilst both Auburn and Holroyd Councils have withdrawn from the process, Parramatta and the Hills are working with those consultants in regard to an analysis concerning shared services.

Whilst my Council has not has not determined a position in regard to shared services, the review presently being carried out will be referred to Council on completion.

I also note that on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015, correspondence was forwarded to your Council seeking data in regard to that part of Parramatta City Council which the Hills Shire would like incorporated into the Hills Shire Council. The correspondence also included data on that part of the Hills Shire which it was proposed to be transferred to Parramatta City Council. To date, we have not had a response to our correspondence.

Yours faithfully

**Dave Walker**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

Attached: Letter to Parramatta City Council re Independent Local Government Review  
Letter to Parramatta City Council re Fit for the Future

**Abstract**

Dear Robert

Yours faithfully

11/11/2019

Page 1 of 1

## ITEM **INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL - 20 ESSENTIAL STEPS**

<b>THEME:</b>	Proactive Leadership
<b>HILLS 2026 OUTCOME/S:</b>	PL 3 Our community is effectively governed.
<b>COUNCIL STRATEGY/S:</b>	PL 3.1 Integrate and align Council's activities with the Australian Standard for Risk Management principles and guidelines, provide legal services to Council and equip Council's elected representatives for their role in the community.
<b>GROUP:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE GROUP</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>GENERAL MANAGER</b> DAVE WALKER
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>GENERAL MANAGER</b> DAVE WALKER

### REPORT

There are a number of issues that are presently underway which will impact on the future of Local Government in NSW. The primary issue is the Independent Review Panel appointed by the State Government in early 2012 following representations by the NSW Local Government and Shires Association to assess and recommend on the future of Local Government in NSW with particular emphasis on sustainability, capacity building, local representation and most importantly a framework which will allow the best delivery of planning, infrastructure and community services into the future.

Since the appointment of the Independent Review Panel, a number of briefing/discussion papers have been issued. The most important of these being the future directions for NSW Local Government - 20 Essential Steps, released in late April 2013.

Whilst The Hills Shire Council has been ranked in the top 3 strongest Councils financially in the State and can demonstrate a very good track record in managing growth, delivery of infrastructure, working with State Government Departments where they are interested, it does not mean that The Hills Shire Council should be exempt from any review which leads to greater capacity building for the future.

After leaving WSROC several years ago, Council established an MOU with both Hawkesbury and Hornsby Councils. Whilst there have been no negative relations with either of the Councils, the level of interest in the MOU has been somewhat muted. However the appointment of the Independent Review Panel has at least created an agenda with a degree of interest particularly from Hornsby Council and as a result a high level commercial in confidence review has been carried out of the financial relationship between The Hills and Hornsby Councils, together with peripheral relationships with Ku-ring-gai and Hawkesbury. The report received will be the subject of a separate report. The purpose of this report is to comment on issues raised in the 20 Essential Steps document. Suffice to say that from the point of view of coordinating community services, infrastructure delivery, planning for the growth of Sydney, ensuring community of interest, capacity of building, financial sustainability and sound asset management, there would be few who would deny that Sydney has too many Councils, particularly in the inner region of Sydney. In determining the size and number of Councils, the issues raised



above should also be balanced against a possible benchmark framework. However as the current government and the previous government had a policy of no compulsory amalgamations then no benchmarks have been set.

### **1. Face the Challenges of Change**

It is difficult to refute the following comments from the Panel's report on page 6 (attached). *Whilst there are many in the sector who understand the need for change, there seems to be a lack of collective will to embrace a significant reform and loud voices that favour muddling through without taking the fundamental structural issues identified by the Barnett Committee four decades ago.* Many Councils in the state are already technically bankrupt and if they were trading as private enterprise, more will be so in the future. Whilst The Hills Shire Council should not be exempt from many reforms, it will be disappointing if the reforms imposed eventually on The Hills Shire Council were as a result of lack of action by those Councils that are not financially sustainable.

### **2. Create a Sustainable System**

Essential elements of an effective system of Local Government. The dot points as set out on page 7 of the Review Panel's Report clearly articulate what is required for an effective system of local government. Just as the dot points in box 3 on page 8 of report under the heading of key elements of strategic capacity, encapsulate what is required.

It is of particular note that the Independent Review Panel has on a number of occasions in the report, addressed the need for partnership with State and Federal Governments.

On the basis that the Panel is of the view that there is little likelihood of voluntary amalgamations, it is recommending a type of county council model in some form as opposed to ROC'S. It is felt that every encouragement should be given by the State Government to Local Government to amalgamate, merge or carry out boundary realignments where appropriate, as opposed to another layer of government bureaucracy.

### **3. Keep the Local in Local Government**

The Panel is aware of the financial challenges in Local Government, particularly of rural Local Government and it is suggesting once again mainly because of no compulsory amalgamations, the concept of local boards.

### **4. Confront Financial Realities**

As indicated above, this Council ranks amongst the top 3 in the State, the long term prognosis for overall industry in NSW is not good. The Panel recommends in its report a reconsideration of the distribution of the Federal Assistance Grants, particularly to help those "poor Councils" with particular emphasis on the rural Councils. Whilst it is acknowledged that many rural Councils will not be able to address their maintenance gap or infrastructure gap because of their poor rates base, any redistribution of the Federal Assistance Grant should be on the basis that it does not adversely affect any Council which can clearly demonstrate fiscal responsibility. The Commonwealth Grants Commission is presently reviewing this distribution, 20 of the 23 Councils who received the minimum grant have made a submission to the Review and have indicated that the percentage distributed on a per capita basis should be increased from 30% to 50% and the balance of 50% could be aimed towards the poorer Councils. The challenge is, how do you define poorer Councils. There appears to be no logic in that walking across Old Windsor Road will see The Hills Shire Council's \$19 per head increasing to \$52 per head for Blacktown Council. The matter is even further skewed when it is considered that the residents of the Blue Mountains City Council receive \$88 per head as opposed to The Hills Shire Councils \$19 per head. Some sort of unfettered removal of rates capping may not necessarily be the answer. What is the answer is responsible delivery of services to the community and Councils living within their means. The Hills Shire Council has

demonstrated its ability to do this over many years and is well respected in the community for doing so. Simply pouring more money into a barrel that has no bottom does not achieve a greater sustainable outcome.

#### **5. Ensure fiscal responsibility**

The panel sets out extremely well on pages of 14 and 15 of its report the requirements in regard to financial sustainability of a Local Government organisation. The report also highlights where there are many weaknesses within Councils.

#### **6. Revenue Base**

The panel recommends that Councils be given the ability to increase rates above the cap in certain situations where there is fiscal responsibility. This is as proposed by a previous IPART review. However simply increasing rates to fill a revenue gap is not sound or responsible fiscal management, any such increases should be strictly tied to a very robust set of criteria. The panel also mentions that in terms of supplementary revenue options, consideration be given to fees and charges and increased revenue from off street parking. The Panel also highlight the issue of tax increment financing. Particularly where there is development on the back of infrastructure provisions. However it is felt that this is adequately covered by section 94 contributions.

#### **7. Tackle the Infrastructure Backlog**

There are a number of salient points in this section of the Panel's report but no doubt many Councils in NSW will not take them on board. The Hills Shire Council is the first Council in NSW to tackle its infrastructure backlog and without debt.

#### **8. Promote innovation, productivity and competitiveness**

The report highlights on page 22 what are known as Victoria's best values principles. It would be highly recommended that these principles be introduced into the integrated planning framework with a requirement of all Councils to comply.

#### **9. Advanced Improvement and Accountability**

Whilst the Panel provides options for strength and internal performance building, State Governments to date have not necessarily taken any action or improvement in this area and at the same time have not identified those Councils that are financially sustainable and accountable. It would appear that one of the first steps needs to be recognition of responsible Councils. The report also mentions the IPART Review in terms of red tape, disappointingly IPART have made an interim report with 40 recommendations which only further enhance red tape. At a recent public forum as the only Council on the panel, concerns were expressed in this regard and the NSW office of small business has been astonished with the outcome of the review.

#### **10. Improved political leadership**

The main issue of concern in this section of the report is that at least the panel has addressed the issue of Council Remuneration and the following is quoted from their report. *The recent decision from the Remuneration Tribunal appear to understate and undervalue the role that Councils play. There is a need to shift from the volunteer mentality to one of professionalism.*

#### **11. Enhance the status of Mayors**

The previous Council conducted a referendum and as a result of the 2016 Elections there will be a popularly elected Mayor.



## **12. Revisit Council – Management Relations**

The report suggested that the terms of Councillors and Mayors should be limited to say, 3 terms. This appears to be undemocratic.

Whilst the 1993 Local Government Act attempted to separate policy from operational issues, the outcome in many ways has been a gap or a divide in certain situations of relationship between the Council and Senior Management. Whilst changes to legislation will not necessarily address this issue at the same time there appears to be many Councils where the separation is too wide.

## **13. Build strong regions**

An issue mainly for non metropolitan however the principles outlined in the report for major regional centres have some weight.

## **14. Reconfigure Rural Councils**

No doubt this will be a challenge, particularly in regard to the concept of Keeping Local in Local Government, representation, employment and economic development.

## **15. Reshape Metropolitan Governance**

Whilst the Panel recommends the possibility of 15 Councils within the Metropolitan area of Sydney, obviously considerable discussion would need to be held with communities and adjoining Councils prior to this being finalised. In the case of The Hills Shire Council, it is proposed that the area of Council south of the M2 be given to Parramatta and some consideration be given to a realignment of the Growth Centre boundaries. It is recommended that no change be made to the growth centres boundaries, as Council has planned for these growth centres in terms of its requirement for growth, housing numbers and population numbers. The proposal for the area of The Hills south of the M2 to go to Parramatta is put forward on 2 parameters. It will create a city within Parramatta of a broad socio economic mix and with resources needed to develop the second CBD. Socio economic mix should be outweighed by community of interest. In terms of the Parramatta being the second CBD of Sydney it is noted that Sydney City is very close to the harbour and it does not have boundaries extended in a way to take its CBD away from a peripheral point. The report proposes a major expansion of Parramatta to include Auburn, Holroyd, most of all of Ryde and areas of Hornsby and The Hills. Whilst the need for change is recognised, and a large part of the change should be based on capacity building, financial sustainability and community of interest, the advent of the M2 although a significant infrastructure asset has not removed the community of interest of those areas of population to the south of the M2. If some sort of road infrastructure barrier is to be used then what would be more appropriate would be Pennant Hills Road, James Ruse Drive and O'Briens Road, and if anything was to change, what should really occur is that the Parramatta area of Northmead be incorporated into The Hills Shire. However this will require significant discussions with Parramatta City Council.

## **16. Strengthen the Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra**

No comment

## **17. Establish a Western Region Authority**

No comment

## **18. Progress the State - Local Agreement**

Whilst such an agreement has merit, what is proposed is not often accepted at a Bureaucratic level, particularly in State Government Departments.



### **19. Refocused Local Government NSW**

Whilst the need for change is obvious and the panel in its current and previous report sets out a very good case for change, as the panel also highlights there is not high hopes of any significant change.

### **20. Drive and Monitor ongoing reform**

The Panel recommends the local development board to be established to oversee reforms. It is disappointing that there is already a Department of Local Government, a Local Government and Shires Association, a Boundary Review Commission and now there is a recommendation for another structure. It would appear all 3 existing structures could be merged into one.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is recommended that the Independent Review Panel be advised that much of what has been set out in their 20 challenges is productive and positive. However it is also expected that as long as change is voluntary the history of Local Government in NSW and also in Australia indicates there will be little or no change in the near future. However the Panel should also be advised that Council wishes to continue discussions with its neighbours of Hawkesbury, Hornsby and Parramatta.

### **IMPACTS**

#### **Financial**

This report has no direct financial impact upon Council's adopted budget or forward estimates.

### **Hills 2026**

The adoption of a new governance framework for Local Government based on many of the principles outlined in the Panel's recent report will result in a much stronger and better Local Government industry.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Independent Review Panel be provided with a copy of this report.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Future Directions for Local Government – 20 Essential Steps (64 pages)

**APPENDIX C – COUNCIL’S MAJOR PRIORITIES**

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

PARRAMATTA SQUARE						
<p>A transformational new 3 hectares precinct of high density urban living and commercial space, delivered over 6 phases. Once all phases are complete by 2020 the precinct will accommodate workers, residents, piazzas, retail, entertainment and dining venues, along with Council and community facilities.</p> <p>Council will effectively plan these major development projects to deliver attractive office, retail, residential and public space to accommodate population growth and meet demand for more jobs and better services.</p>						
Responsibility	Director Property & Significant Assets					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designs developed for all elements of Parramatta Square</li> <li>• Development Applications approved for all elements of Parramatta Square</li> <li>• Construction completed on 1 building in Parramatta Square</li> <li>• Construction commenced but not completed on 1 building in Parramatta Square</li> <li>• A program for the delivery of all Council facilities, including library</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation of Council facilities, including library and 30 Darcy Street office staff by end of July</li> <li>• PS1: Demolition complete. Completion anticipated 2016</li> <li>• PS2: Request for Development Proposals closed. Recommendation for preferred developer to Council June 2015</li> <li>• PS3: Demolition to complete in May. Development Application for basement levels is to be lodged June.</li> <li>• PS4: Expression of interest and design competition to provide options to Council in mid-2015</li> <li>• PS5&amp;6: Developers have been shortlisted. Development Application documents are currently under development</li> <li>• Public Domain: Designers appointed</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

4 | PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

CITY CENTRE						
<p>To create a vibrant and thriving City Centre. This will be done by supporting the delivery of attractive office, retail, residential and public space to accommodate more jobs and better services to meet the demand of population growth in one of Australia's fastest growing economies.</p>						
Responsibility	Director Strategic Outcomes and Development					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revitalised Centenary Square completed</li> <li>• A River City Strategy adopted and staged scheme underway to improve the river foreshore including terracing, moving the sewer pipe, and bringing back swimming. The next group of Design Parramatta priority projects delivered, improving Parramatta's streets, and public spaces</li> <li>• A review of the CBD planning framework completed, stimulating quality development</li> <li>• A review of the Parramatta Car Parking Strategy</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Parramatta re-opened to swimming in January for the first time since 1942 with hundreds enjoying this facility. An end of season Family Fun Day was held in March to mark the official end of the swimming season</li> <li>• The 'Activate Parramatta' initiative is delivering high quality shops to the city centre, with the Jamie Oliver Trattoria anticipated to open in late May adjacent to Centenary Square</li> <li>• Work continued on a number of key strategies, including the River Foreshore Strategy and the CBD Planning Framework</li> <li>• The Lennox Bridge Northern Portal was opened to pedestrians and cyclists in April. The Southern Portal on track for completion by 30 June 2015</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW | 5

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

PRECINCT RENEWAL						
Staged 5-10 year projects to drive renewal and increased development of the precincts surrounding Parramatta City Centre, including Westmead, Rydalmere, Camellia, Auto Alley, North Parramatta Precinct, Parramatta Road and Woodville Road to bring more jobs and housing to Parramatta. These precincts will be linked (by Light Rail, Ring Road and the River) to create "Greater Parramatta".						
Responsibility	Director Strategic Outcomes and Development					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing effective relationships with major land owners, agencies, institutions and developers to make the process happen</li> <li>Develop quality precinct master plans</li> <li>Advocate for investment (public and private) to implement actions</li> <li>Key redevelopment sites and infrastructure commenced this Council term</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued discussions with the Westmead Alliance on updating the MOU to support preparation of a Westmead Planning Strategy</li> <li>Camellia Growth Committee has been established, in conjunction with the State Government, to guide the preparation of a Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy. Several key precinct studies have been completed, including transport and access, contamination, social infrastructure and open space and flood studies. Consultation with stakeholders on the preliminary strategy is expected to commence in Quarter 4</li> <li>A review of the planning controls for the South Parramatta Heritage Conservation Area was completed and reported to Council in April</li> <li>The draft Auto Alley Planning Framework will be incorporated into the CBD Planning Framework and a report on the draft Strategy and Implementation Program is planned for April</li> <li>Staff continued to work on the strategies for the renewal of Parramatta Road and Parramatta North</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

6 | PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

TRANSPORT						
Improve transport connections for Parramatta: Connect our precincts, and connect people to jobs and the rest of the region. Focus on a Light Rail network and Regional and Local Ring Roads and a network of pathways linking our city to parks and recreation spaces with a focus along the river.						
Responsibility	Director Strategic Outcomes and Development					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment from State Government and private partners to build Western Sydney Light Rail</li> <li>Commitment from State Government for staged implementation of regional and Parramatta ring road and Westconnex on/off ramps</li> <li>Improved walkable network throughout the city</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council determined its preferred first route for the Western Sydney Light Rail</li> <li>Council is waiting for a decision from Government on the preferred route for the proposed Western Sydney Light Rail scheme</li> <li>Council plans to engage a consultant to assist in preparing an Integrated Transport Plan for the local government area, including opportunities to deliver enhanced local and regional ring road links. Process to engage consultant expected to commence in July.</li> <li>Discussions regarding the State Government's allocation of \$30 million for road improvements in the Parramatta LGA are focusing on the Church Street intersection with the M4 were undertaken</li> <li>27 footpath sections have been completed under Council's Pedestrian Access and Mobility Program, improving pedestrian infrastructure and better connecting people to places. The program is 87% complete</li> <li>Draft high level design concepts for proposed pedestrian and cycle routes have been prepared for a pilot project in Winston Hills were prepared. Council is also awaiting response from the Metro Greenspace Program to assist with audit of the proposed network</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW | 07



## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

DIGITAL CITY						
Leverage best available Information, Communications, Technology to create a Digital City with well-connected businesses and residents, clusters of knowledge capital and high skill jobs, and government and community organisations that efficiently service the community using digital and mobile technology.						
Responsibility	Chief Operating Officer					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligent City Strategy to provide a framework for investment in technology</li> <li>Improved connectivity in the CBD and neighbourhoods</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultant appointed and work has commenced on development of a Smart City Strategy, anticipated to be completed end of June. Stakeholder engagement and consultation is planned for Quarter 4. A draft strategy to be workshopped with Councillors and the ParraConnect Committee</li> <li>A number of Digital City actions have been placed on hold pending a Council resolution on new Smart City Strategy</li> <li>ParraSync contract in final draft stage</li> <li>Three additional functionalities to MyParra app have been developed to make doing business with Council easier for residents:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Facilities Booking Enquiry</li> <li>Name Change</li> <li>Rate Notice Address Change</li> </ol> </li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

8 | PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

CITY ACTIVATION						
Build positive experiences and perceptions of Parramatta as a dynamic, diverse and creative city, nurturing and delivering a program of high quality festivals, major events and street activities to celebrate the City's cultural life.						
Responsibility	Director City Services					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage people to be active in the life of the city</li> <li>Become a destination of choice for events, attracting new visitors to the City</li> <li>Support commerce and enterprise, and stimulate economic activity</li> <li>Enhance perceptions of Parramatta as the central CBD for all Western Sydney</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of Council Parramatta City Centre Lanes Strategy to create new lanes and enhance existing lanes, the Barrack Lane design has been completed with construction planned to commence in the second half of 2015</li> <li>Council continues to create and deliver an exciting program of major events, which this last quarter included the highlights of Australia Day - with over 25,000 visitors in spite of bad weather, Lunar New Year, and Sydney Festival in Parramatta. Visitor satisfaction data and impact studies follow each event to maximise the outcomes from these events for the community</li> <li>Event planning continued for Anzac Day 2015, the ongoing City Animation Continuous Trials, Parramatta Lanes Festival and more.</li> <li>A business model for the City's major events is being prepared and considered by Council. The model includes approaches to attract new and significant events through partnership arrangements</li> <li>Performing arts production will commence in Quarter 1 of 2015/16 with total joint funding of \$650,000 confirmed</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW | 9

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

SPORT AND RECREATION						
<p>We will encourage more active and healthier lifestyles by increasing participation in sport, physical recreation and other activities that improve health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Council can positively influence the health and wellbeing performance of the City through provision of recreation facilities and spaces, planning of the built and natural environment and influencing partners who provide a diversity of recreational opportunities and services to the local community.</p>						
Responsibility	Director City Services					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased participation in sports and activities that improve health and wellbeing</li> <li>Well planned and maintained open spaces, sport and recreation assets</li> <li>Integrated approaches to land use and transport planning to improve access to open spaces and recreational opportunities</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Lord Mayor's Healthy Generation Initiative was re-launched as part of Australia's Healthy Weight Week with cooking demonstrations in Centenary Square, followed by a free eight-week boot camp on the River Foreshore.</li> <li>There were 1,920 participants in activities linked to Council's strategy to increase membership numbers in local sports clubs and activities</li> <li>Residents continued to get active with Parramatta's Aquatic Centres receiving 118,440 visits (up compared to Q3 in 2013 / 2014), the Woodville Golf Course 5,436 visits (slightly down compared to Q3 in 2013 / 2014) and over 2,300 visits to Council's Public Halls and Community Centres</li> <li>Council continues to see a growth of Swim School with 3,925 enrolments throughout the term (up approximately 30% on Q3 in 2013/2014)</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

10 | PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

A DESTINATION FOR SPORT AND CULTURE						
<p>Enhancing Parramatta's position as a destination for Sport and Culture. Influence other agencies and undertake the development of precincts, facilities and partnerships which maintain and enhance the City of Parramatta as the central sporting and entertainment destination for Western Sydney, with particular focus on Parramatta Stadium, Riverside Theatres and other regional facilities.</p> <p>These facilities provide locations for regular major sporting events within the City, create a significant positive impact on the City's brand, reinforce the cultural and sporting identity of the City and create day to day activation and vibrancy. There are economic, social, recreational and cultural outcomes from these facilities for residents, business owners, workers and visitors within the City and across the Greater Western Sydney region. The reach of such activity can range from international exposure through to regional brand awareness. All of these outcomes enhance Parramatta's reputation as a destination of choice.</p>						
Responsibility	Director City Services					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased recognition of Parramatta's position as a sport and entertainment destination</li> <li>Increased visitors to Parramatta's sport and cultural facilities</li> <li>Increased opportunities for local residents and businesses to benefit from significant sporting and entertainment events being held in Parramatta</li> <li>An agreed precinct masterplan and advocacy program for development of sport and recreation facilities in North Parramatta</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council welcomed the State Government announcement of \$10 million funding to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta as part of wider announcement to developing an arts and cultural hub in western Sydney, including support for a resident arts company at Riverside Theatres</li> <li>To support the planning of the city's sports precinct development Council continued to forge strategic partnerships with sporting institutions, including Australian Turf Club, Parramatta Park Trust, GWS Giants, Rams and Cricket</li> <li>Work continues to prepare an Arts Culture and Entertainment Plan including the North Parramatta Cultural precinct, the development and funding of the Riverside Theatre Master Plan, supported by Arts NSW funding</li> <li>Parramatta Stadium upgrade funding agreement executed and first instalment of Council's contribution paid</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW | 11

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION						
Ongoing consultation with the community will continue to shape Council's priorities, supported by improved engagement and communication strategies and processes.						
Responsibility	Chief Operating Officer					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved stakeholder engagement measured by survey</li> <li>Parramatta Brand is recognised measured by survey</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An expansion of Community Voice panel by 200 members, bringing a total of 1,900 panel members that will assist Council in understanding the aspirations of our communities</li> <li>Staff training has been prepared on Stakeholder Engagement Policy and Staff Toolkit and there will be roll-out in May to ensure staff understand and can apply best practice engagement methods when delivering initiatives and projects in the community</li> <li>Council's refreshed city branding campaign - 'We're Building Australia's Next Great City' - was launched to the business community at the State of the City event in March 2015. Various brand / communication tools are now being rolled-out to showcase the city</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

12 | PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

PROVIDING GREAT SERVICES TO OUR COMMUNITY						
Maintain or improve the quality of Council's core services across the Parramatta Local Government area by planning for additional capacity and resources to meet challenges of growth, continuously improving Council's operational processes and functions and putting the customers at the heart of service delivery.						
Responsibility	Chief Operating Officer					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Operations Centre with greater service delivery capacity</li> <li>Sustained implementation of service improvements and operational capacity improvements to deliver better, more efficient public services</li> <li>Smarter ways to do business with our customers using technology</li> <li>Continuous improvements to the customer experience</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rydalmere Operations Centre operative 2 March</li> <li>Met or exceeded majority of Customer Contact KPIs and customer feedback results remain strong</li> <li>Telephony upgrade implemented in Customer Contact Centre and across facilities</li> <li>Review of Customer Contact Centre processes underway</li> <li>8 enhancements planned for self-service portal, including the Resident Parking Scheme Renewal process</li> <li>Roll out of customer focus training across staff</li> <li>Council consistently ranked in the Top Ten external benchmarking survey</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW | 13



## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY						
The Council will prepare and execute a range of financial management strategies to ensure its financial position remains strong. Council's business practices will deliver maximum value for money and services will be efficient, underpinned by well managed assets that benefit the whole Parramatta community.						
Responsibility	Chief Financial Officer					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net operating position is in surplus</li> <li>• Prudent financial management of Council resources, debt and insurance, alongside strong record of delivery of our Major Priorities</li> <li>• Business practices that ensure value for money and unlock efficiencies</li> <li>• Returns on Council investments exceed benchmark by 10 per cent</li> <li>• Equitable and efficient rating system</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015/16 and 2016/17 Budget projections included in draft Corporate Plan to Council on 27 April 2015</li> <li>• Strong financial performance over the last quarter and projected to continue over the balance of year</li> <li>• Long Term Financial Plan updated and to be presented to Council in June</li> <li>• Investment returns continue to exceed benchmark despite the market softening</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

14 | PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL JANUARY-MARCH 2015 QUARTERLY REVIEW

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

ENSURING PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL IS 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE'						
In September 2014, following consideration of the recommendations of the Local Government Independent Review Panel, the State Government announced its Local Government reform package – 'Fit for the Future'. Every council has been asked to look at its current situation and consider the future needs of its community and the recommendations of the Independent Panel. Councils' submissions on how they will be 'Fit for the Future' must be made to the Government by 30 June 2015.						
Responsibility	Chief Executive Officer					
What we will achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A considered response to the Local Government reform proposals that reflects a detailed analysis of Council's position and reflects the views of our community.</li> </ul>					
How are we progressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Fit for the Future Response Committee was formed last year and has considered the Independent Review Panel's recommendations and other options for reform.</li> <li>• In February Council resolved its strategy to complete its submission to the State Government due by 30 June 2015. As a result, consultation has been commenced with a number of Councils to discuss reform options, an independent analysis of various scenarios will be undertaken and a community consultation strategy and plan put in place.</li> <li>• In April Council launched its community consultation initiative seeking comment on four proposed options. Feedback from the community together with the outcomes of consultation with other Councils and the results of the independent analysis of options will be considered by Council in May when it determines its formal response to the State Government.</li> </ul>					
Link to Strategic Objectives	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	CONNECTIVITY	PEOPLE & NEIGHBOURHOODS	CULTURE & SPORT	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

The following sections provide a more detailed report against the actions, projects undertaken and services delivered against the Council's Major Priorities during the January to March 2015 Quarter.





**APPENDIX D – COMMUNITY RESEARCH**



# Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan

Last updated Friday, 6 March 2015

Prepared by Media & Communications and Research & Consultation Units



## BACKGROUND

In 2012 an Independent Local Government Review Panel was appointed by the State Government to look at options for local government structures, boundary changes and governance models.

The Panel, led by Professor Graham Sansom, completed the review in October 2013 and its recommendations and report were exhibited for public comment in early 2014.

The Independent Panel made recommendations for every Council in NSW. For Parramatta City Council, the Panel recommended merging with **Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the Hills.**

On 10 September 2014, NSW Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Local Government Paul Toole announced funding of up to \$1 billion to ensure NSW has strong, modern councils to deliver the housing, jobs and local infrastructure people need.

The package includes \$153 million for Sydney councils to assist those who decide to merge. It also includes reforms to address financial sustainability, efficiency, services, infrastructure, assets and governance.

All NSW Councils have been requested to undertake a self-assessment, and then prepare a road map to become 'Fit for the Future' and submit it to the State Government by 30 June 2015.

Fit for the Future is the NSW Government's response to the findings of the independent review of local government.

Further details at: <http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au>

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- To position Parramatta City Council as a leading Council who will confidently take the City forward and adapt to any changes proposed by the State Government.
- To inform the community about the 'Fit for the Future' process and what has been proposed for Parramatta City Council.

- To seek community feedback and engagement on what they would like to see achieved for Parramatta City Council as part of the 'Fit for the Future' process.

## **KEY MESSAGES**

- As the demographic and geographic centre of Sydney, Parramatta is the key to managing Sydney's growth. Parramatta is committed to meeting the growing needs of its residents, workers and visitors.
- Council is open to working with our stakeholders to find the best ways to service and plan for the future of our communities.
- Parramatta supports a coordinated approach to the development of assets, precincts and transport initiatives that will service a regional Parramatta area.
- As part of any review, the responsibilities of local government areas should be considered to ensure they align with the delivery of local and regional objectives.
- Detailed analysis of our financial position, assets, service delivery and workforce implications will ensure Council continues to deliver high quality services and facilities now and into the future.
- We are committed to engaging with our community to ensure they understand the process and are given the opportunity to have their say.

## **CITY MESSAGING**

- Parramatta's position and potential makes it a critical part of Western Sydney's future and key to helping Sydney remain a sustainable, liveable and Global City.
- Parramatta is the driving force and heart of Australia's most significant economic region, a vibrant home for diverse communities and a centre of excellence in research, education and enterprise.
- The City of Parramatta is implementing plans that will transform and rejuvenate the CBD and Riverbank areas – we're building Australia's next great city.
- These projects will help realise Parramatta's potential and bring economic, social and environmental benefits to Parramatta, Western Sydney and Greater Sydney.

## **KEY MILESTONES**

- Fit for the Future committee formed – October 2014
- Report to Council seeking permission to consult with neighbouring councils and community, and undertake options analysis – February 2015
- Ongoing consultation with the Fit for the Future committee regarding development of proposal – 1 April – June 2015
- Community consultation to begin – 12 April 2015
- Community consultation ends – 30 April 2015
- Options analysis complete – by 13 May 2015
- Councillor workshop on results and findings – 18 May 2015
- Report to Council to adopt final response – 22 June 2015
- Fit for the Future submission due – 30 June 2015



## STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION, RISK AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Council's approach to stakeholder engagement is built on the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum for Public Participation. This spectrum outlines five levels of community engagement, with the lowest level of engagement being 'Inform', while 'Empower' involves the greatest level of public participation in decision making processes. The following matrix also identifies the level of impact or risk the project or program will likely have upon stakeholders. Generally speaking, the higher the level of impact, the greater the level of stakeholder engagement that is required.

Identified Stakeholder	Details	Stakeholder Impact/Risk level	Approach
<b>Local residents</b>	Council has a resident population of 174,500 (2011 Census). Note the diversity of population and need to provide translated information.	Medium-High	Inform, Consult
<b>Ratepayers</b>	Owners or occupiers of rateable property in the council area. May not necessarily reside in the local government area, or be affected by a change in service provision.	Medium-High	Inform, Consult
<b>Local businesses</b>	Council has 153,000 businesses in the local government area.	Medium	Inform, Consult
<b>Adjoining local government areas/Councils</b>	State Government has proposed merging with to Auburn, Holroyd, Ryde (part of) and The Hills Shire (part of).	Medium	Inform, Consult
<b>General public</b>	Visitors, workers to the City.	Low	Inform
<b>Parramatta City Council staff</b>	Council has 822 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working at locations and services dispersed across the LGA.	Medium	Inform, Consult
<b>Union staff members</b>	United Services Union, Professionals Australia (LGEA), Development and Environmental Professionals Association (DEPA).	Medium	Inform, Consult
<b>Councillors</b>	Fit for the Future committee members, and adopters of approach to community consultation and report findings.	Medium	Inform, Consult





## PROPOSED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Communication tools	Details	Comments	Critical timelines	Responsibility	Target audience	Engagement opportunity	Cost
<b>Stakeholder Consultation</b>							
<b>Online feedback form</b>	Creation of online feedback. Forum for general community feedback.	Provides another avenue for community consultation. Feedback will be collected but will not form part of the survey results.	Available from April	Website Coordinator	Local residents, adjoining Council areas, ratepayers, businesses	Consult	N/A
<b>Telephone survey</b>	<p>Random sampling of population by telephone to gain specific information for statistical validation.</p> <p>Call advising info pack coming – then call back to complete survey over the phone.</p>	<p>Professionally administered. Provides input from cross-section of stakeholders. Higher response rate than mail-based surveys.</p> <p>Additional costs for mailing information pack.</p>	13 – 30 April	Research & Consultation	Residents and ratepayers, businesses	Consult	\$50,000

Communication tools	Details	Comments	Critical timelines	Responsibility	Target audience	Engagement opportunity	Cost
<b>Focus group</b>	Message testing forum with randomly selected members of target audience. Can also be used to obtain input on decisions.	Use a skilled focus group facilitator to conduct the session.	May	Research & Consultation	Residents and ratepayers, businesses	Consult	\$30,000

Digital Media							
<b>Website presence</b>	Information on PCC website about the Fit for the Future process. Explain what has been suggested for PCC, and the process we have to follow. Option to include online survey.	Information to be added and updated for the duration of the informing/consultation period.	Live with basic information from 30 January 2015	Web Administrator	General public	Inform, Consult	N/A
<b>Social media</b>	Facebook and Twitter - (PCC)	Regular updates on progress of Fit for the Future Committee. Opportunities for feedback on suggestions and the preferred option. Promotion of the preferred option.	April/May	Digital Communications Officer	General public	Inform, Consult (due to the interactive nature of this medium)	N/A
<b>Digital screens in Customer Contact Centre</b>	Static information on approach, process, consultation.	Information on Council's approach to Fit for the Future, detail opportunities for engagement	April  Ongoing	Digital Communications Officer	General public, PCC staff, local businesses, local residents and ratepayers	Inform	N/A
Promotion and Collateral							
<b>DL Flyer inclusion in Rates Notice</b>	45,000 flyers included with Rates Notice  eflyer to be sent to email databases available.	Perforated attachment to Rates Notice. Advises ratepayers that we will be asking for feedback soon.	3 April	Publications Coordinator	Ratepayers only	Inform	\$4,000

Additional flyers available at key customer points including Library, Community centres etc.							
<b>Parra Pulse</b>	Parra Pulse is a free community newsletter produced quarterly by Council.	Promote that community feedback is wanted. Promote services that Council offers. Encourage survey participation.	April-June edition	Communications Officer	Local residents and ratepayers	Inform	N/A
		Announce preferred option. Let residents know they can still have their say.	July-September edition				
<b>Information Pack with covering Letter</b>	70 000 A4 booklets printed externally.	Pack to be sent with covering letter Lord Mayor and in envelope.	10 April	Publications Coordinator	Local residents and ratepayers	Inform	\$7,900
	Cover letter and envelope as distribution.						
	Translation assistance provided on reverse of pack.	Additional packs available in key customer areas.					
<b>Advertising</b>							
<b>Print advertising</b>	Print Ads to target Parramatta Advertiser, Northern District Times and Parramatta Sun. Possibly Hills Shire Times as well	Consider standalone advertisements, or the use of Council's double page spread in NewsLocal.	Key points during the campaign	Publications Coordinator	General community, local residents, ratepayers, local businesses	Inform	\$7,800

<b>Facebook advertising</b>	Facebook offers targeted advertising based on location, age and interests.	Facebook ads are charged as "pay per click" A daily or campaign limit can be set and it is recommended to set the campaign limit at \$1,000	Key points during the campaign	Digital Communications Officer	General community	Inform, Consult	\$1,000
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Media						
Media Releases	<p>Minimum 3 Media Releases:</p> <p>Announce options that Council is considering. Provide background and seek public input. Launch web page</p>	<p>Releases to be distributed to both local and metro media (television news, radio news, radio talk, print)</p> <p>Target media:</p> <p>Local media: Parramatta Advertiser, Parramatta Sun, Auburn Review, Northern District Times, Hills Shire Times</p> <p>Metro daily newspapers: Sydney Morning Herald, The Daily Telegraph, The Australian</p> <p>Government and business publications if relevant</p>				
	<p>Release detailing a range of services that Council provides, reminding public of chance to provide feedback</p> <p>Announce preferred option that has been selected following public consultation. Include any survey results</p>		April/May/June	Media Advisors	Local residents and ratepayers, General public	Inform N/A
LM Column	<p>Announce options that Council is considering. Seek public input as per media release</p> <p>Announce preferred option that has been selected following public consultation. Include any survey</p>		April/May	Media Advisors	Local residents and ratepayers	Inform N/A

results						
WSBA, WSBC and PS Business	Announce options that Council is considering. Seek public and business input as per media release.	April/ May	Media Advisors	Business Community	Inform	N/A
	Announce preferred option that has been selected following public consultation. Include any survey results					
Targeted Media Liaison	Offer preferred option decision (depending on news value) as exclusive to major metro newspaper. Most likely SMH.	June	Media Advisors	General public, local residents and ratepayers	Inform	N/A
Internal Communications						
Lift lobby Plasma Screens	Screens will promote the initiative to staff.	Key points during the campaign starting April	Media & Communications Officer	PCC staff	Inform	N/A

<b>All staff email from the CEO</b>	Letter from CEO Greg Dyer to all staff detailing the Fit for the Future process.		March and when option decided	Office of the CEO	PCC staff	Inform	N/A
<b>Leadership Team briefing note</b>	Discuss approach at Leadership Team Meeting.  Develop talking points for Leadership Team to cascade information to their teams.		April Leadership Team Meeting	Media & Communications Officer  Leadership Team	PCC staff	Inform	N/A
<b>CEO Forum</b>	Progress update for staff at upcoming CEO Forums		March CEO Forum  June/July CEO Forum	Executive Team	PCC staff	Inform	N/A
<b>Customer Contact Centre, PHVIC, Libraries</b>	Provide key messages, information for customer facing staff who may receive enquiries.	Detail where to find information, dates of consultation, mechanisms for feedback	April	Media Advisors	General community, Local residents and ratepayers	Inform	N/A
<b>Intranet presence</b>	Develop Fit for the Future site on staff intranet dedicated to staff focussed information regarding Fit for the Future.		Developed in March	Media & Communications Officer	PCC staff	Inform	N/A
<b>Online resource for staff questions</b>	Create an email box or intranet based discussion space for staff to discuss Fit for the Future.	Opportunity to responsive to staff concerns. Feedback will serve to reinforce/add to communications for staff.	Developed in March	Media & Communications Officer	PCC staff	Consult	N/A



<b>Direct Union communication</b>	Email/Letter from HR/CEO advising union staff members of process Council is undertaking.	Proactive approach to avoid miscommunication between union and staff.  Acknowledges other channels they can contribute/receive information.	April	Human Resources	Staff Unions	Inform	N/A
<b>Total costs to stakeholder engagement and communications plan (itemised budget below)</b>							<b>\$100,700</b>

**SPOKESPERSON/S**

Lord Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, Committee Members (where appropriate).

**PLAN EVALUATION**

- Survey response rate
- Media coverage generated
- Advertising Space Rate (ASR)
- Audience reach
- Social media conversations (positive/negative/neutral)

**KEY PROJECT CONTACTS**

Kathleen Sales

Media & Communications Team

Research and Consultation Team

## Telephone Survey

**Parramatta City Council  
Fit for the Future Phone Recontact**

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Micromex Research – could I speak to [insert name] please?

We spoke to you a week or so ago on behalf of Parramatta City Council and you agreed to participate in our research about local government reform.

**Q1.** Have you received the information pack that was specifically sent to you by Council after our earlier phone call?

- ☐ Yes (Continue)  
☐ No (Request that they check with others to see if it was received/reschedule call-back time)

**Q2.** Have you had a chance to read the information pack?

- ☐ Yes (Suggest they have it handy to refer to during survey – Ask Q1)  
☐ No (Offer them time to read and reschedule a call-back)

**Q1.** In total, how long would you have spent reading or looking through the information pack? Please don't include the time spent reading the version that was sent to you after our earlier phone call. *Prompt*

Record minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2.** In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas? *Prompt*

- ☐ Very satisfied  
☐ Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat satisfied  
☐ Not very satisfied  
☐ Not at all satisfied

**Q3.** And how important is your local council to you? *Prompt*

- ☐ Very important  
☐ Important  
☐ Somewhat important  
☐ Not very important  
☐ Not at all important

**Fit for the Future - Preamble**

In late 2014 the State Government released its 'Fit for the Future' program which requires NSW councils to consider merger options with neighbouring councils to reduce the number of metropolitan councils.

The argument for the merger is that bigger councils could be more efficient in the delivery of services, whilst an argument against the merger is that bigger councils will be less responsive to community needs.

Parramatta City Council is considering four scenarios and they would like to obtain your views on each to assist in preparing their submission to the Government.  
[ASK RESPONDENT TO REFER TO THE 4-PAGE BROCHURE]



#### SCENARIO 1 - SHARED SERVICES

Please refer to Scenario 1 on the second page of the brochure [PURPLE].

This scenario is for Parramatta and neighbouring councils' to maintain their current boundaries and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across council areas.

**Q4. How supportive are you of Parramatta City Council maintaining its current size and elected representatives but working with neighbouring councils to provide some shared services?**

*Prompt*

- ☐ Completely supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

#### SCENARIO 2 - NEW COUNCIL

Referring to Scenario 2 on the second page [ORANGE]...

This option is for Parramatta City Council to consider merging with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of The Hills, as suggested by the NSW Government. This would create a new local government area, a centralised administration and service delivery.

**Q5. How supportive are you of Parramatta City Council joining with other councils to create a new council? *Prompt***

- ☐ Completely supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

#### SCENARIO 3 - NEW BOUNDARIES

Now, please refer to Scenario 3 on the third page of the brochure [GREEN].

This scenario is for Parramatta and neighbouring councils to continue to exist as separate councils with minor geographic boundary changes to support improved services to local communities.

[For example, if 2 houses in a street are in one Council area, and the rest are in another Council area, it could make sense to have them in the same Council area.]

**Q6. How supportive are you of Parramatta City Council to continue as it is with minor boundary changes? *Prompt***

- ☐ Completely supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive



#### SCENARIO 4 - A STRONG ECONOMIC REGION

Referring to Scenario 4 of your brochure [BLUE]...

Parramatta City Council could create a new, larger council area to reflect Parramatta region's role in becoming Sydney's second CBD.

[For example, by growing into a larger area and not influenced by current Council boundaries, this could realise Parramatta's potential and bring economic, social and environmental benefits to Sydney.]

**Q7.** How supportive are you of Parramatta City Council creating a larger local government, with improved financial and organisational capacity? *Prompt*

- ☐ Completely supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

**Q8a.** I'd now like you to rank all four scenarios in order of preference. Which of the four scenarios is your most preferred? And which is your next most preferred scenario?...

	1 <sup>st</sup> preference	2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	3 <sup>rd</sup> preference	4 <sup>th</sup> preference
Scenario 1 - Shared services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scenario 2 - New council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scenario 3 - New boundaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scenario 4 - A strong economic region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q8b.** Why do you say that?

.....

**Q8c.** Now, there is also an option to combine the ideas described in Scenario 1 and 4. That is for Parramatta City Council to create a larger local government, as described in Scenario 4, and then working with neighbouring councils to share services across these larger, newly-formed councils. How supportive are you of this option? *Prompt*

- ☐ Completely supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

**Q9.** Overall, how useful did you find Council's brochure in explaining the Fit for the Future project and the four scenarios that Council is considering? *Prompt*

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not very useful
- ☐ Not at all useful



Finally, some questions about you...

**Q10. How many years have you lived in the Parramatta Council Local Government Area? *Prompt***

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6 months to 2 years
- ☐ 3 – 5 years
- ☐ 6 – 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**Q11. Do you own or rent your property?**

- ☐ I/We own/are currently buying this property
- ☐ I/We currently rent this property

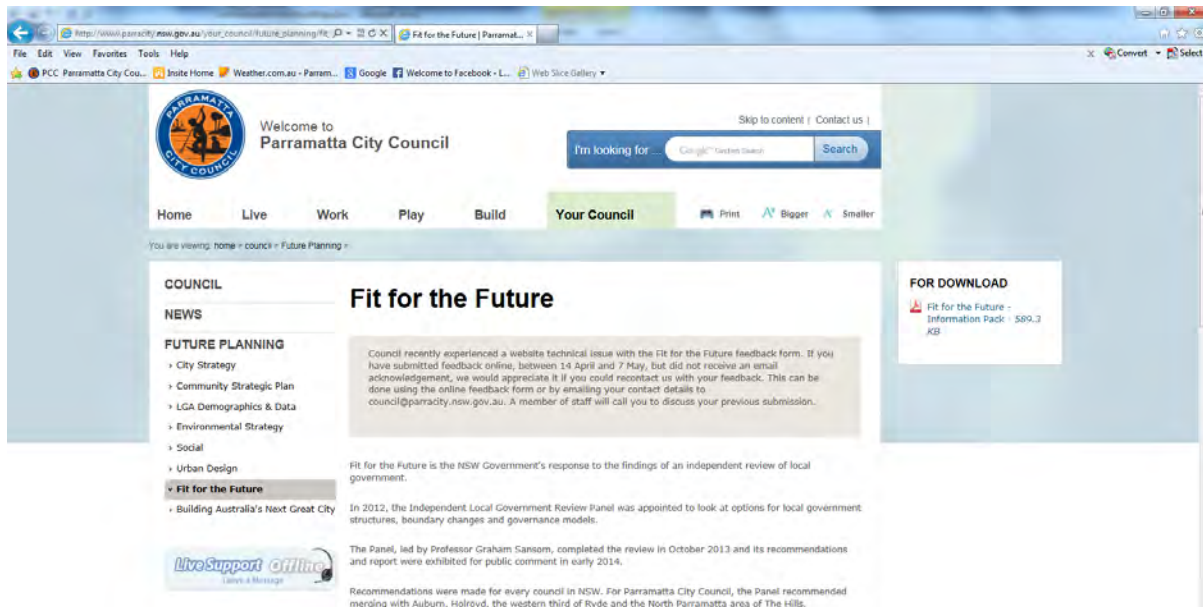
**Q12. Do you own a business or work in the Parramatta Council Local Government Area?**

- ☐ I/We currently own a business in Parramatta
- ☐ I/We currently work in Parramatta

Thank you for your time and assistance. This market research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act, and the information you provided will be used only for research purposes. Just to remind you, I am calling from Micromex Research on behalf of Parramatta City Council (if respondent wants our number, it is 1800 639 599).



## Council Website



## Social Media





## Council Information Pack



### FIT FOR THE FUTURE/COUNCIL MERGERS

Since 2011, Local Government reform has been on the State Government's agenda. On 10 September 2014 the NSW Premier and NSW Local Government Minister announced record funding of up to \$1 billion to ensure NSW has strong councils under the Fit for the Future program. The program provides funding to assist councils who decide to merge. It also includes reforms to address financial sustainability, efficiency, services, infrastructure and assets and governance.

#### INDEPENDENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

In 2012, the Independent Local Government Review Panel was appointed to look at options for local government structures, boundary changes and governance models.

The Panel completed the review in October 2013 and its recommendations and report were exhibited for public comment in early 2014. Recommendations were made for every council in NSW.

For Parramatta City Council, the Panel recommended merging with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the The Hills.

#### FIT FOR THE FUTURE

The program requires councils to make a submission to the NSW Government by June 2015 responding to the findings of the Independent Local Government Review.

For Parramatta City Council, this means considering merging with neighbouring councils or a change of boundary lines.

The Government has indicated that only those councils which make submissions will have a role in any proposed boundary changes that the Government may make.

The State Government's criteria for submissions for Fit for the Future are:

- Suitable scale and capacity
- Financial sustainability
- Efficiency
- Infrastructure, services and capability.

Further details on Fit for the Future are available at [www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au).

#### IMPACT ON RATES

Rates are calculated on land value and would not necessarily go up or down due to these changes. Given a change proposal would be intended to produce more efficiency, including by way of shared resources, services and facilities, it is likely that the efficiency gains achieved by any proposed change could allow for the provision of improved services and infrastructure.

#### WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

In considering the NSW Government's recommendations, Parramatta City Council is evaluating four options as part of the Fit for the Future process and is consulting with the community on these options. Have your say on the following recommendations. Visit [www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture)

## SCENARIO 1 SHARED SERVICES

Parramatta and neighbouring councils maintain their current boundaries and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across council areas.



### What does this mean?

- Parramatta City continues as one local government area, with its own elected council
- The Parramatta local government area remains at its current size with a total population of 190,000
- Parramatta City Council works with neighbouring councils to share costs and resources. This may include jointly delivering services to the community, such as libraries and waste collection, or providing back office functions, such as human resources and payroll, or the purchase of goods and services.

### Some facts to consider

- Shared service is not a government initiative. It's simply a term that describes a way of working
- Local political representation would be kept
- Plans outlined in Parramatta City Council's Corporate Plan including policies, priorities and services can be maintained
- Because councils carry out similar functions and common activities; shared services are one way they can achieve greater efficiencies.

## SCENARIO 2 NEW COUNCIL

A new council is created, merging Parramatta with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the The Hills as suggested by the NSW Government.



### What does this mean?

- Three councils and parts of two councils would be merged into one organisation, with one elected council and a centralised administration and service delivery
- The Parramatta local government area becomes part of a larger local government area
- The combined population of the new local government area would be approximately 442,000. It is estimated that this population will rise to 558,500 by 2031.

### Some facts to consider

- Creating this new council area has been suggested by the NSW Government as part of the Independent Local Government Review
- A merged local government area would be represented by one group of elected Councillors
- The coordination of major regional planning and delivery of regional infrastructure projects may be easier and/or more efficient in one larger organisation
- The larger council would have more resources and enhanced capacity to deliver a more diverse range of services
- Parramatta City Council has approached neighbouring councils to formally obtain their view on a merger in whole or part with Parramatta City Council. Any merger would require their agreement and willing participation.



## SCENARIO 3 NEW BOUNDARIES

Parramatta and neighbouring councils continue to exist as separate councils with minor geographic boundary changes to support improved services to local communities.



### What does this mean?

- Clear, logical boundaries that enable effective service delivery and removal of some current anomalies
- Improved planning and regional coordination
- No change to service delivery.

### Some facts to consider

- Local political representation would be kept
- Plans outlined in Parramatta City Council's Corporate Plan including policies, priorities and services can be maintained.

## SCENARIO 4 A STRONG ECONOMIC REGION

A new, larger council area would be created to reflect Parramatta region's role in Global Sydney.



### What does this mean?

- A larger local government with improved financial and organisational capacity
- A local government that reflects changing urban development patterns and the increased demands of becoming Sydney's second CBD
- Ability to plan key centres and achieve broader regional and state planning outcomes.

### Some facts to consider

- Parramatta is a key area for the future growth of employment and population as part of effective planning for metropolitan Sydney
- Parramatta's position and potential makes it a critical part of Western Sydney's future and key to helping Sydney remain a sustainable, liveable and global city
- The City of Parramatta is implementing plans that will help realise Parramatta's potential and bring economic, social and environmental benefits to Parramatta, Western Sydney and Greater Sydney.

# HAVE YOUR SAY

While the NSW Government will make the final decision about how Parramatta's local government area will be shaped, your input can make a difference.

Go to [www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture) to submit your feedback. Telephone surveys, selected at random, will be conducted with households in the local government area later this month. Your responses will be used in Parramatta City Council's submission to the NSW Government.

## HINDI

यदि आपको यह सूचना-पत्र समझने में सहायता चाहिए तो कृपया TIS को 131 450 पर फ़ोन करें और उनसे कहें कि आपकी तरफ से पैरामाटा कस्टमर सर्विस को 9806 5050 पर फ़ोन करें। यह सेवा सोमवार से शुक्रवार, सुबह 8.30 बजे से शाम 4.30 तक उपलब्ध है।

## ARABIC

إذا كنت بحاجة للمساعدة في ترجمة هذه النشرة، اتصل بـ TIS على الرقم 131 450 واطلب منهم الاتصال نيابة عنك بخدمة زبائن باراماتا على الرقم 9806 5050 من الإثنين إلى الجمعة بين الساعة 8:30 صباحاً و 4:30 مساءً.

## CHINESE

如果你需要翻译协助阅读这份新闻简报，请联系 TIS，电话 131 450，要求他们代表你接洽巴拉玛打市议会顾客服务处，电话 9806 5050。顾客服务处的工作时间是每星期一至星期五，上午8:30至下午4:30。

## FILIPINO

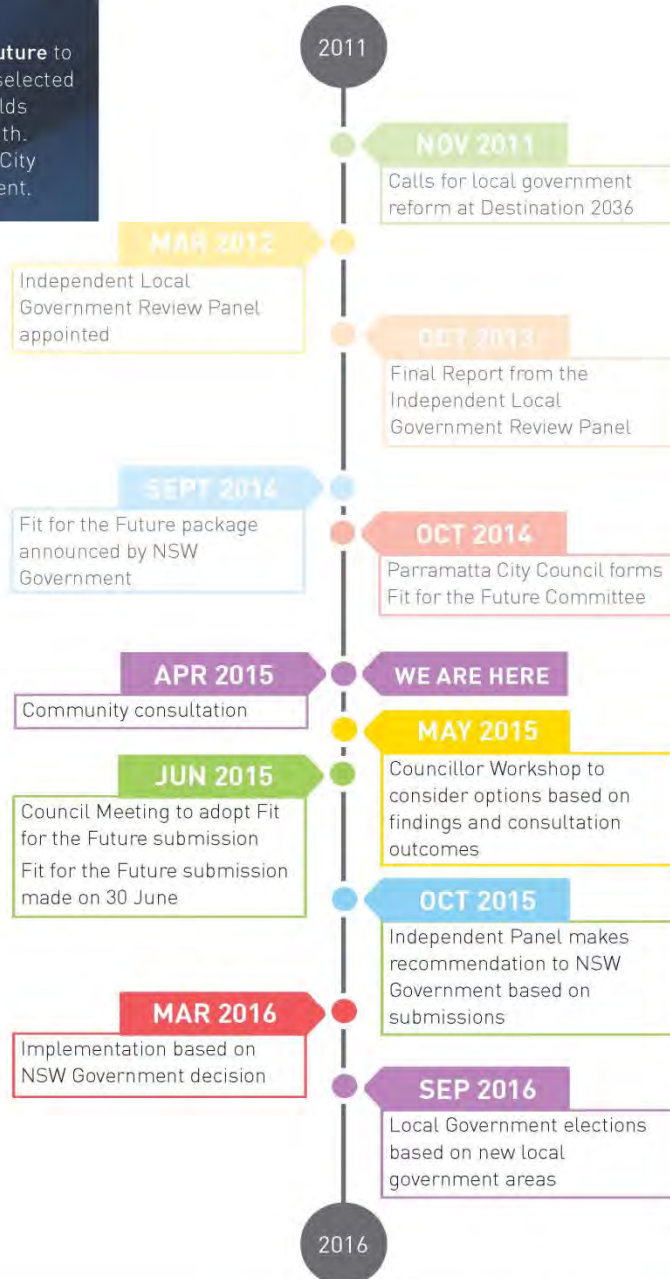
Kung kailangan ninyo ng tulong sa pagpapaliwanag tungkol sa maliit na pahayagang ito, maaari kayong tumawag sa TIS sa 131 450 at hilingin sa kanila na kausapin, para sa inyo, ang mga Serbisyo sa Kliyente ng Parramatta sa 9806 5050, Lunes hanggang Biyernes, 8:30n.u.-4:30n.h.

## KOREAN

본 소식지와 관련해 통역 지원이 필요하신 경우, TIS (131 450)에 전화하여 Parramatta Customer Service (9806 5050)를 연결해 달라고 요청하시면 됩니다. 업무시간은 월요일에서 금요일, 오전 8시 30분부터 오후 4시 30분까지입니다.

## TIMELINE

The following timeline shows how Parramatta City Council is responding to the Fit for the Future program requirements.



All information in this pack is available on Parramatta City Council's website: [www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture)  
If you have any further questions, please email [council@parracity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@parracity.nsw.gov.au) or call Council on 9806 5050.

## Rates Notice



# FIT FOR THE FUTURE



## SHAPING THE CITY OF PARRAMATTA

As the demographic and geographic centre of Sydney, Parramatta is the key to managing Sydney's growth.

Parramatta is committed to meeting the growing needs of its residents, workers and visitors.

Fit for the Future is a program by the NSW Government which asks councils to consider merging with neighbouring councils while also demonstrating how they will be strong and efficient for the long term.

Councils must now make a submission to the NSW Government by 30 June 2015 to outline how they will become Fit for the Future.

Parramatta City Council will be engaging with the community to ensure they understand the Fit for the Future process and are given the opportunity to have their say.

A comprehensive community engagement package is being developed for consultation in late April 2015.

In the meantime, community members can contribute feedback online and obtain further information at [www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture).

**PARRAMATTA**  
WE'RE BUILDING AUSTRALIA'S NEXT GREAT CITY

# FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Parramatta City Council is considering the following options as part of the Fit for the Future process:

1. Parramatta and neighbouring councils maintain their current boundaries and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across council areas.
2. A new council is created, merging Parramatta with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the The Hills as suggested by the NSW Government.
3. Parramatta and neighbouring councils continue to exist as separate councils with minor geographic boundary changes to support improved services to local communities.
4. A new, larger council area would be created to reflect the Parramatta region's role in Global Sydney.

The following timeline shows how Parramatta City Council is responding to the Fit for the Future program requirements.



# FIT FOR THE FUTURE



CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED UNDER THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAM. AS PART OF THIS PROGRAM, COUNCILS ARE BEING ASKED TO CONSIDER MERGING WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS.

Parramatta City Council is evaluating the following four options as part of the Fit for the Future process:

1. Parramatta and neighbouring councils maintain their current boundaries and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across council areas.
2. A new council is created, merging Parramatta with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the The Hills as suggested by the NSW Government.
3. Parramatta and neighbouring councils continue to exist as separate councils with minor geographic boundary changes to support improved services to local communities.
4. A new, larger council area would be created to reflect the Parramatta region's role in Global Sydney.

Information packages were sent to residents and ratepayers recently about the four options. Information was also provided in our community newsletter, Parramatta Pulse and on Rates Notices.

A telephone survey of residents, selected at random from across the local government area, will be conducted by an independent research company on behalf of Council in early May.

Residents are also invited to submit feedback until the end of May online at [www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture).

Written feedback can be sent to:  
Office of the Chief Operating Officer  
PO Box 32  
Parramatta NSW 2124

**PARRAMATTA** WE'RE BUILDING **AUSTRALIA'S NEXT GREAT CITY**



### CONSULTATION PLANS FOR FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Fit for the Future is the NSW Government's response to the findings of an independent review of local government. In 2012, the panel was appointed to look at options for local government structures, boundary changes and governance models.

Under the review, the panel has recommended Parramatta City Council merge with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the Hills. Council is working with stakeholders to find the best ways to service and plan for the future of our communities. Work is underway to analyse the various options that could be available in addition to the mergers suggested by the panel.

Council is committed to engaging with the community to ensure they understand the process and are given the opportunity to have their say. A comprehensive community engagement package has been developed and is currently being distributed to all households and businesses in the Parramatta LGA.

Community members can contribute feedback online and obtain further information at [parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture). Telephone surveys, selected at random, will also be conducted with households later this month.



# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 14 April, 2015

## Getting Parramatta Fit for the Future

Parramatta City Council is seeking feedback from the community about possible boundary changes and council mergers as part of the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' process.

Four options will be presented for community consultation and the response will help form Council's submission to the Government, which is due by the end of June.

"Council is passionate about meeting the growing needs of its residents, workers and visitors. We already have a strong long-term financial management plan and continue to provide high quality services, programs, events and facilities for our community," Lord Mayor of Parramatta Cr Scott Lloyd said.

"The NSW Government wants us to consider merging with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the Hills. While this is one of the options we are considering, we are also exploring the prospect of shared services, minor boundary changes and a larger Council to discover what will best service this region.

"We are committed to engaging with our community to ensure they understand the process and are given the opportunity to have their say."

Information packs will be distributed to all households in the LGA from this week. There will also be a telephone survey with households selected at random and residents will be able to complete an online feedback form.

The options being presented to residents are:

- Parramatta and neighbouring councils maintain their current areas and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across Council areas.
- A new Council would be created, merging Parramatta with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde and the North Parramatta area of the Hills as suggested by the NSW Government.
- Parramatta and neighbouring councils continue to exist as separate councils with minor geographic boundary changes to support improved services to local communities.
- A new, larger Council area would be created to support the future role of the Parramatta region.

**PARRAMATTA**  
WE'RE BUILDING AUSTRALIA'S NEXT GREAT CITY





Fit for the Future is the NSW Government's response to an independent review of local government designed to help strengthen and improve the services councils provide to their local communities.

The Government has announced funding of up to \$1 billion to assist councils who decide to merge.

All NSW councils have been requested to undertake a self-assessment, prepare a road map to become 'Fit for the Future' and submit it to the NSW Government by 30 June 2015.

"While no decisions have been made on any proposed mergers, Parramatta supports a coordinated approach to the development of assets, precincts and transport initiatives that will service a regional Parramatta area," Cr Lloyd said.

"Council is working with stakeholders to find the best ways to service and plan for the future of our communities."

Community members can contribute feedback online and obtain further information at [www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture).

For further information on Fit for the Future visit [fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au).

**For media enquiries please contact: Parramatta City Council Media Advisor Alice Coote**

**t: 02 9806 5803**

**m: 0427 905 885**

**e: [acoote@parracity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:acoote@parracity.nsw.gov.au)**

**PARRAMATTA**  
WE'RE BUILDING AUSTRALIA'S NEXT GREAT CITY



### Council works to meet Fit for the Future requirements

A committee has been formed and community consultation is about to occur.

Changes to local government have been recommended under the NSW Government's Fit for the Future program. As part of this program, councils are being asked to consider merging with neighbouring councils to help strengthen local communities.

All councils must make a submission to the NSW Government mid-year 2015 detailing their financial and services sustainability to meet the needs of communities into the future.

While the NSW Government has made recommendations, Parramatta City Council believes there are other options to merging with Auburn, Holroyd, parts of Ryde and the Hills to consider:

- A shared services arrangement where councils maintain current boundaries and work together to provide some common services across council areas
- Minor geographic boundary changes to Parramatta and neighbouring councils to support improved services to local communities

- A larger council area to support the future role of the Parramatta region in Greater Sydney.

A committee has been established to drive the internal process while ensuring we meet the required deadline.

As the demographic and geographic centre of Sydney, Parramatta is the key to managing Sydney's growth. We are committed to meeting the growing needs of its residents, workers and visitors.

We are committed to engaging with the community to ensure they understand the Fit for the Future process and are given the opportunity to have their say. Residents, businesses and ratepayers will be informed and invited to provide feedback later this month.

Further information is available at [parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://parracity.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture)

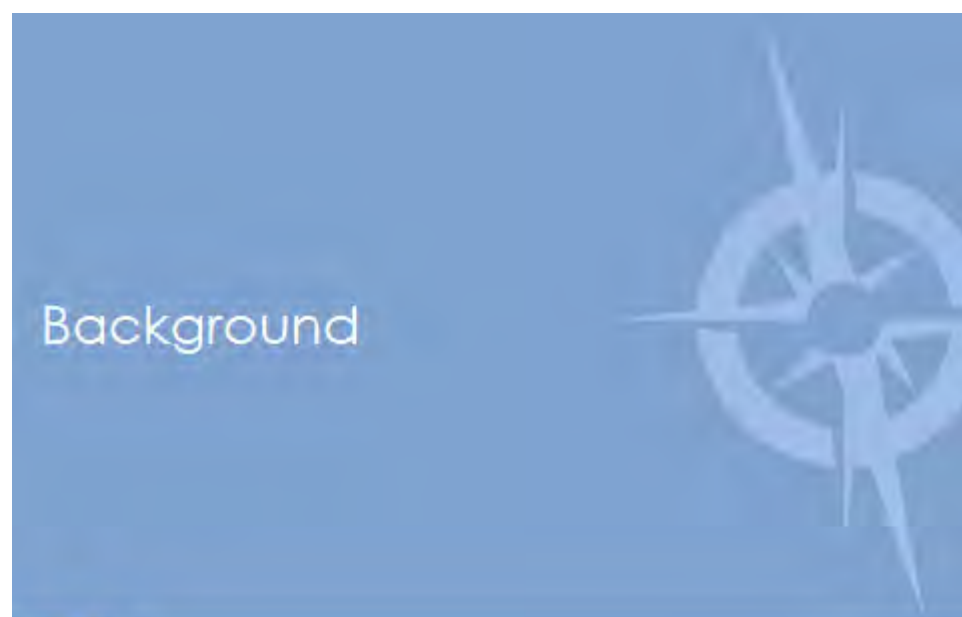




## Telephone Survey Report



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## Methodology & Sample

### Research Design

This study consisted of a three-stage methodology:

- Stage 1: Initial recruitment of 1,040 Parramatta residents via random phone survey, collection of several 'pre' measures
- Stage 2: Mail-out by Council of a brochure explaining the various amalgamation options
- Stage 3: Recontact telephone interviews with 601 of the initial 1,040 recruits, collection of numerous 'post' measures.

### Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Parramatta City Council, developed the questionnaire. Council developed the information pack sent to residents.

### Data collection period

- Initial telephone recruitment: 7<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- Council mail-out of information packs: 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2015
- Telephone recontact interviewing (CATI): 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015



## Methodology & Sample

### Sample

N=601 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 601 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.0% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=601 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.0%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.0%. This means, for example that the answer "yes" (42%) to the awareness question could vary from 38% to 46% and the answer "no" (58%) could vary from 51% to 59%.

As the raw data has been weighted to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of Parramatta City Council, the outcomes reported here reflect an 'effective sample size'; that is, the weighted data provides outcomes with the same level of confidence as unweighted data of a different sample size. In some cases this effective sample size may be smaller than the actual number of surveys conducted.

### Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the *NMRS* Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

### Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

### Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.



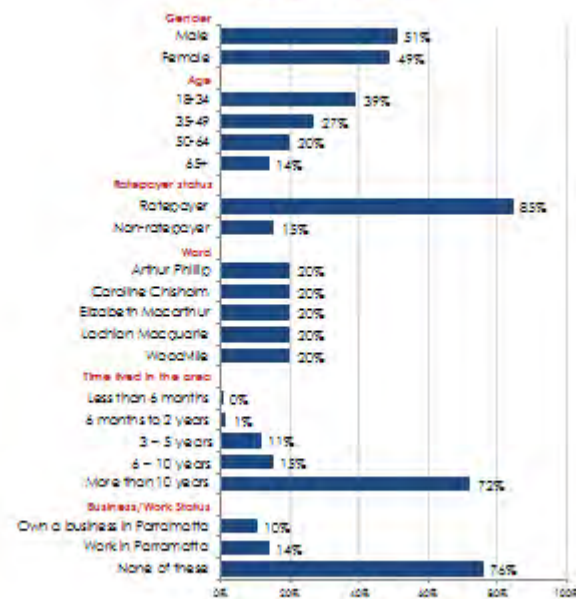
# Sample Profile



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research

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of Parramatta City Council and wards were also weighted to ensure equal representation

## Sample Profile



Scale: 0-100%

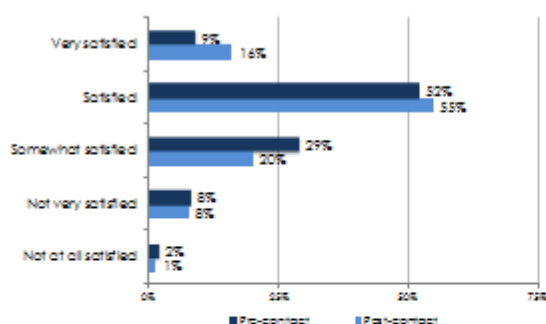
# Detailed Findings



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## Overall Satisfaction with the Performance of Council

Q2. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?



	Pre-Contact	Post-Contact
Mean rating	3.58	3.76▲

▲ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating (Recontact)	3.76	3.63	3.90	3.73	3.66	3.82	3.98	3.78	3.68

	Caroline Christolm	Arthur Phillips	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	3.97	3.81	3.85	3.46	3.73

Base: N=401

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

71% of residents post-contact were 'satisfied' to 'very satisfied' with the performance of Council compared to 61% pre-contact.

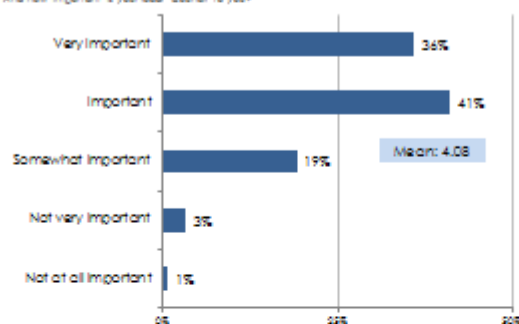
Satisfaction with Council after receiving the information pack was significantly higher than prior to receiving the information



## Perceived Importance of Local Council

Q2: (Recontact survey)

And how important is your local Council to you?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	4.08	3.95	4.22	3.96	4.18	4.14	4.14	4.08	4.09

	Caroline Osholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	4.19	4.06	4.09	3.91	4.17

Base: N=601

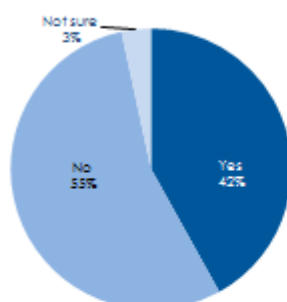
Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important

77% of residents indicated that their local Council was 'important' to 'very important'

## Awareness of Potential Amalgamation

Q1a: (Recruitment survey)

Prior to this call were you aware of the potential merger of Parramatta City Council with other councils?



	Caroline Osholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Yes	38%	33%	55%	51%	33%
No	60%	63%	44%	47%	59%
Not sure	3%	4%	1%	2%	8%

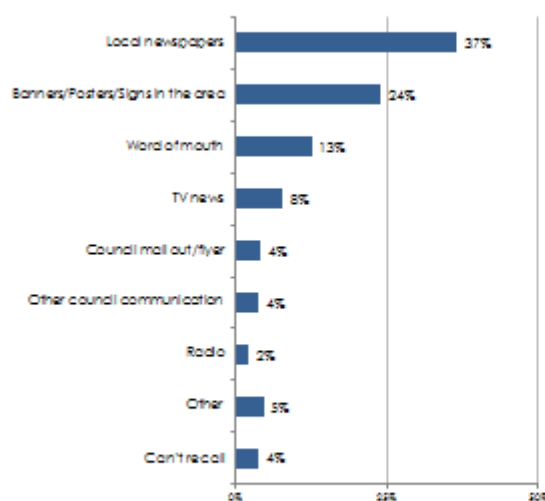
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Yes	42%	48%	33%	31%	53%	39%	53%	44%	28%
No	55%	48%	62%	65%	44%	57%	43%	52%	70%
Not sure	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	2%

Base: N=601

42% of residents had prior awareness of the potential merger of Parramatta City Council with other councils

## Means of Becoming Aware of Proposal

Q1b. (Recruitment survey) Where did you first hear about the proposal to potentially merge Paramatta City Council with other Councils?



Other	Count
Sydney Morning Herald	3
Another council's information	2
Social media	2
Marylands Library	1
Online/Internet	1
<b>Other Council communication</b>	<b>Count</b>
Council meeting	2
Council website	2
Beacon information	2
<b>Word of mouth</b>	<b>Count</b>
Friends	10
Colleagues	6
Council staff/Councillors of other councils	6
Family	3
Other residents	2
Can't say/don't remember	2

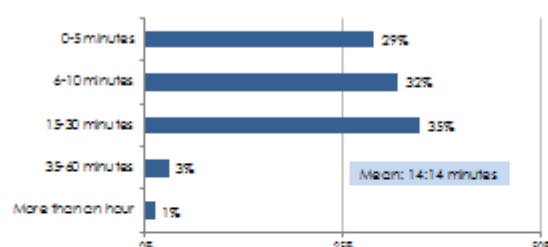
Base: N=222

Of those who were aware of the potential merger, 37% first became aware of the proposal via 'local newspapers', followed by 'banners/posters/signs in the area' (24%)

## Responses to Council Brochure

Time Spent Reading Supplied Information Pack

Q1. (Recruitment) In total, how long would you have spent reading or looking through the information pack?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Average time spent reading (minutes:seconds)	14:14	13:53	14:37	11:13 ▼	12:10	18:17 ▲	20:52 ▲	14:26	13:11

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Average time spent reading (minutes:seconds)	13:56	16:35	12:38	14:03	13:58

Base: N=401

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of time spent reading (by group)

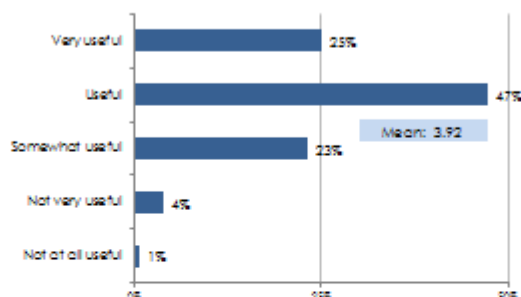
On average, residents spent approximately 14 minutes reading or looking through the information pack.

Residents aged 50+ spent significantly more time reading the information pack, whilst residents aged 18-34 spent significantly less time doing so

## Responses to Council Brochure

### Perceived Usefulness of Supplied Information Pack

Q6. Overall, how useful did you find Council's brochure in explaining the Fit for the Future project and the four scenarios that Council is considering?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.92	3.95	3.89	4.05	3.78	3.82	3.98	3.90	4.04

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillips	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	3.83	3.97	3.86	3.87	4.07

Base: N=401

Scale: 1 = not at all useful, 5 = very useful



72% of residents found Council's brochure 'useful' to 'very useful' in explaining the Fit for the Future project and the four scenarios that Council is considering

## Fit for the Future – Preamble

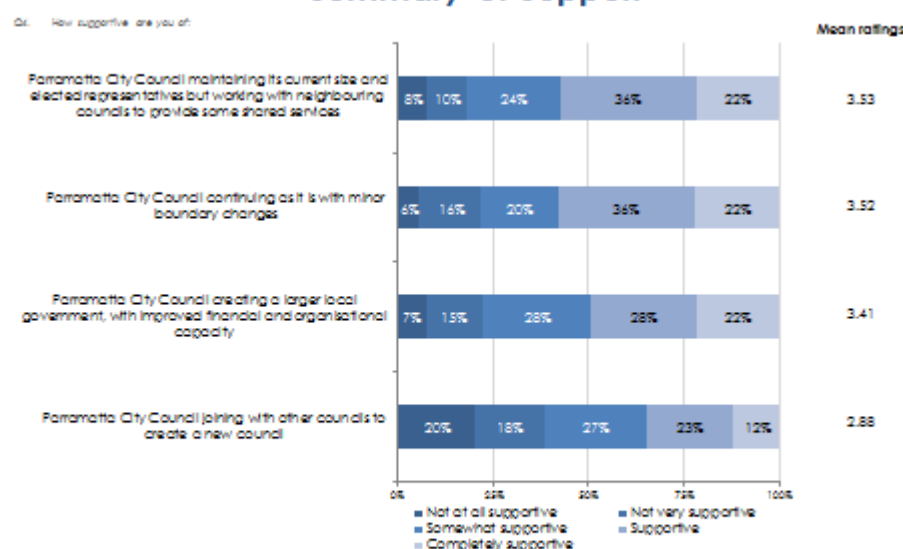
In late 2014 the State Government released its 'Fit for the Future' program, which requires NSW councils to consider merger options with neighbouring councils to reduce the number of metropolitan councils.

The argument for the merger is that bigger councils could be more efficient in the delivery of services, whilst an argument against the merger is that bigger councils will be less responsive to community needs.

Parramatta City Council is considering four scenarios and they would like to obtain your views on each to assist in preparing their submission to the Government.



## Summary of Support



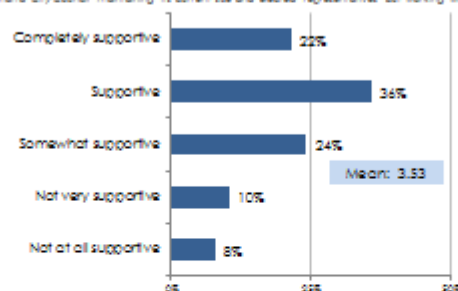
Base: N=401

Residents were most supportive of Parramatta City Council 'maintaining its current size and elected representatives but working with neighbouring councils to provide some shared services' and 'continuing as it is with minor boundary changes'

## Support for Scenario 1: Shared Services

This scenario is for Parramatta and neighbouring councils to maintain their current boundaries and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across council areas.

Q1. How supportive are you of Parramatta City Council maintaining its current size and elected representatives but working with neighbouring councils to provide some shared services?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.53	3.41	3.65	3.66	3.37	3.46	3.56	3.53	3.54

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	3.56	3.52	3.44	3.53	3.58

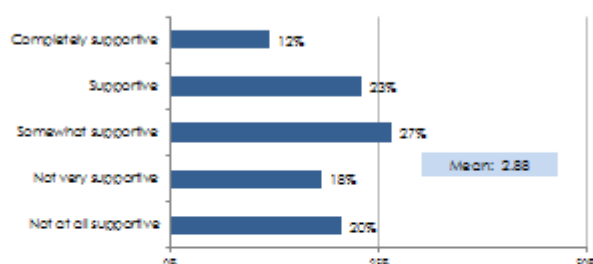
Base: N=401

58% of residents were 'supportive' to 'completely supportive' of Parramatta City Council maintaining its current size and elected representatives but working with neighbouring councils to provide some shared services

## Support for Scenario 2: New Council

This option is for Paramatta City Council to consider merging with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde, and the North Paramatta area of The Hills, as suggested by the NSW Government. This would create a new Local Government Area, a centralised administration and service delivery.

Q2. How supportive are you of Paramatta City Council joining with other councils to create a new council?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	2.88	2.96	2.80	2.99	2.87	2.71	2.81	2.93	2.61

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	2.74	2.58	2.91	2.83	3.32▲

Base: N=401

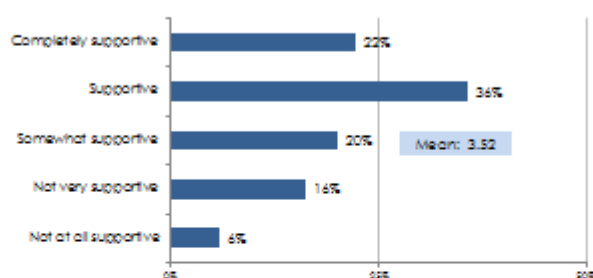
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

35% of residents were 'supportive' to 'completely supportive' of Paramatta City Council joining with other councils to create a new council.  
Residents in Woodville were significantly more likely to be supportive.

## Support for Scenario 3: New Boundaries

This scenario is for Paramatta and neighbouring councils to continue to exist as separate councils with minor geographic boundary changes to support improved services to local communities.

Q3. How supportive are you of Paramatta City Council continuing as it is with minor boundary changes?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.52	3.48	3.57	3.74	3.30	3.39	3.54	3.53	3.50

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	3.69	3.96▲	3.46	3.51	2.99▼

Base: N=401

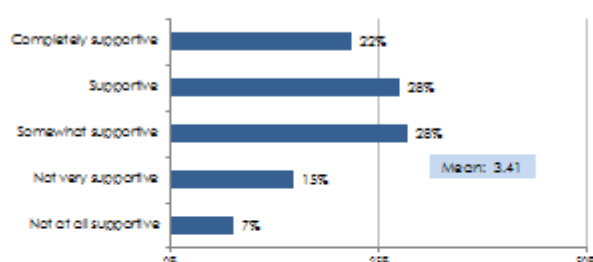
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

58% of residents were 'supportive' to 'completely supportive' of Paramatta City Council continuing as it is with minor boundary changes.  
Residents in Arthur Phillip were significantly more likely to be supportive, whilst residents in Woodville were significantly less likely.

## Support for Scenario 4: A Strong Economic Region

Paramatta City Council could create a new, larger council area to reflect the Paramatta region's role in becoming Sydney's second CBD.

Q7. How supportive are you of Paramatta City Council creating a larger local government, with improved financial and organisational capacity?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.41	3.41	3.42	3.54	3.36	3.37	3.22	3.36	3.72

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	3.18	3.38	3.35	3.21	3.93

Base: N=401

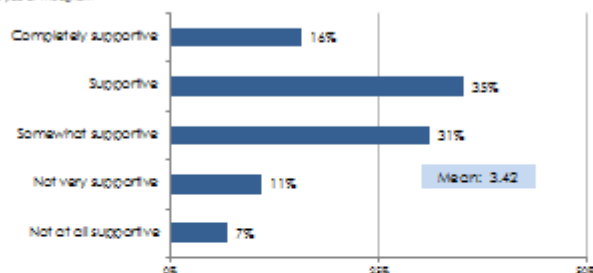


50% of residents were 'supportive' to 'completely supportive' of Paramatta City Council creating a larger local government, with improved financial and organisational capacity

## Support for Alternative Option

Now, there is also an option to combine the ideas described in Scenario 1 and 4. That is for Paramatta City Council to create a larger local government, as described in Scenario 4, and then working with neighbouring councils to share services across these larger, newly-formed councils.

Q8. How supportive are you of this option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.42	3.37	3.48	3.72▲	3.38	3.10▼	3.14▼	3.39	3.62

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Mean rating	3.35	3.39	3.23	3.39	3.56

Base: N=401

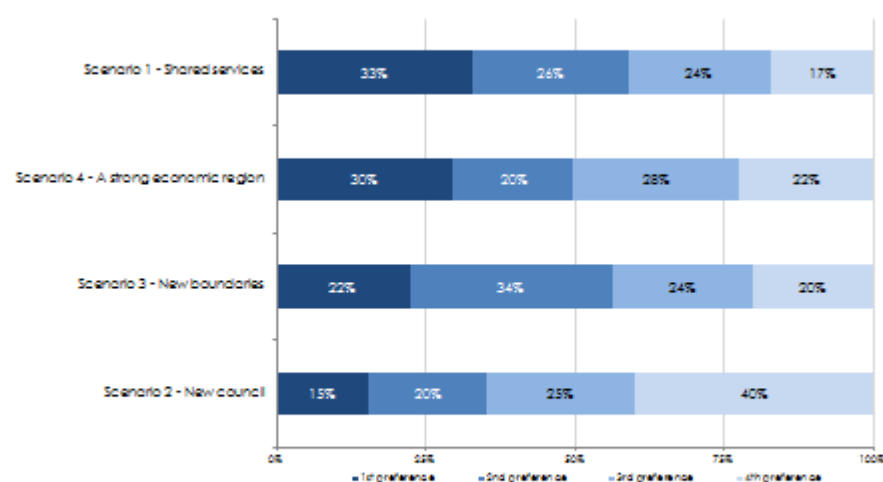
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



51% of residents were 'supportive' to 'completely supportive' of Paramatta City Council creating a larger local government area, and then working with neighbouring councils to share services across these larger, newly-formed councils

## Proposed Options – Ranked Preference

Q6a: I'd now like you to rank all four scenarios. In order of preference. Which of the four scenarios is your first preferred? And which is your next most preferred scenario?



Base: N=401

33% of residents rated 'Scenario 1 – Shared Services' as their first preference, followed by 'Scenario 4 – A strong economic region' (30%)

## Proposed Options – Preference – By Ward

Q6a: I'd now like you to rank all four scenarios. In order of preference. Which of the four scenarios is your first preferred? And which is your next most preferred scenario?

CAROLINE CHISHOLM	1st preference	2nd preference	3rd preference	4th preference
Scenario 1 - Shared services	43%	22%	23%	12%
Scenario 2 - New council	14%	25%	14%	48%
Scenario 3 - New boundaries	23%	40%	19%	17%
Scenario 4 - A strong economic region	20%	13%	44%	23%

ARTHUR PHILLIP	1st preference	2nd preference	3rd preference	4th preference
Scenario 1 - Shared services	25%	34%	34%	14%
Scenario 2 - New council	12%	35% ▼	25%	28%
Scenario 3 - New boundaries	30%	42%	18%	10%
Scenario 4 - A strong economic region	30%	24%	23%	21%

ELIZABETH MACARTHUR	1st preference	2nd preference	3rd preference	4th preference
Scenario 1 - Shared services	22%	34%	15%	27%
Scenario 2 - New council	21%	18%	32%	27%
Scenario 3 - New boundaries	29%	25%	32%	14%
Scenario 4 - A strong economic region	28%	21%	21%	30%

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by ward)



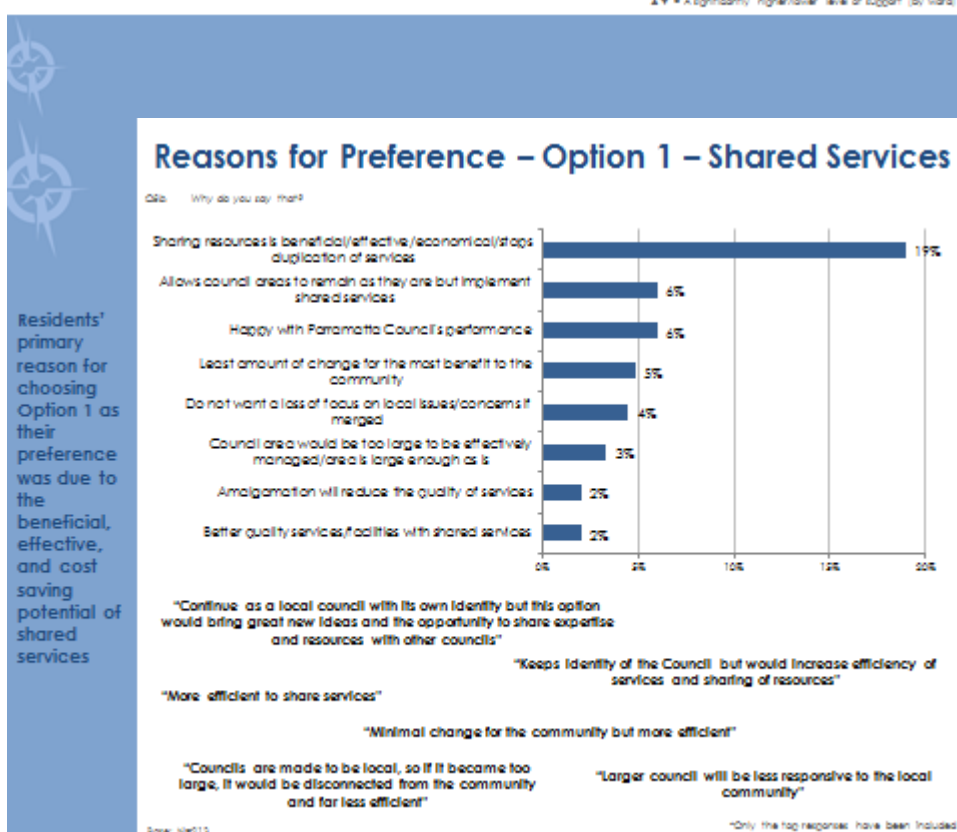
## Proposed Options – Preference – By Ward

Q6a: I'd now like you to rank all four scenarios. In order of preference. Which of the four scenarios is your first preferred? And which is your next most preferred scenario?

LACHLAN MACQUARIE	1st preference	2nd preference	3rd preference	4th preference
Scenario 1 - Shared services	44%	34%	20%	13%
Scenario 2 - New council	18%	14%	24%	39%
Scenario 3 - New boundaries	15%	48%	20%	20%
Scenario 4 - A strong economic region	24%	17%	32%	28%

WOODVILLE	1st preference	2nd preference	3rd preference	4th preference
Scenario 1 - Shared services	27%	24%	28%	20%
Scenario 2 - New council	13%	34%	24%	29%
Scenario 3 - New boundaries	13%	17% ▼	27%	41% ▲
Scenario 4 - A strong economic region	46%	24%	19%	11%

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by ward)

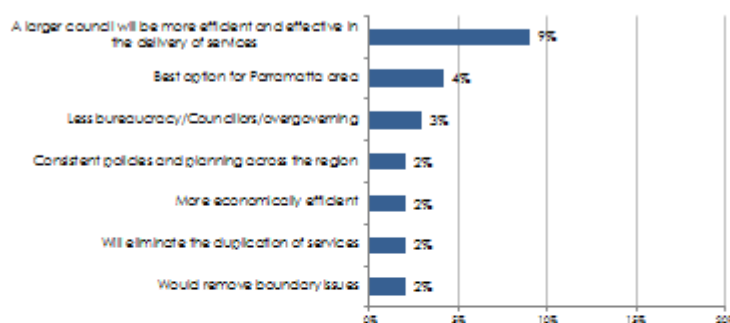




Residents' primary reason for choosing Option 2 as their preference was the potential for a larger council to be more efficient and effective in the delivery of services

## Reasons for Preference – Option 2 – New Council

Q16 Why do you say that?



"Believe bigger council would give better services"

"There are too many councils already, having fewer will make service delivery more successful"

"Larger council will have more resources at its disposal"

"Best option for progress in the Paramatta area"

"Gives the best long term benefit for the residents"

"Less bureaucracy with a more centralised council area"

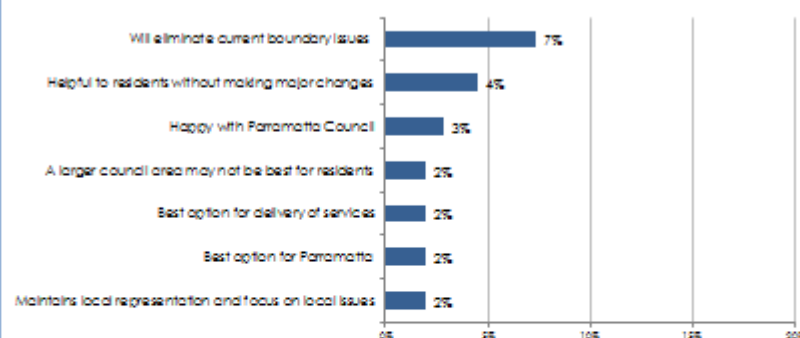
"Boundaries included in the new councils would be more efficient"

Base: N=111

\*Only the top responses have been included

## Reasons for Preference – Option 3 – New Boundaries

Q16 Why do you say that?



"Makes sense if half of a street belongs to one council and the other to another to combine them both under one council"

"A logical change of community boundaries is the best option"

"It allows for Paramatta to stay the way it is for the most part and it's also good for boosting efficiencies"

"Paramatta Council is quite efficient, so it should stay as it is and not merge"

"A larger council will not necessarily look after residents"

Base: N=114

\*Only the top responses have been included



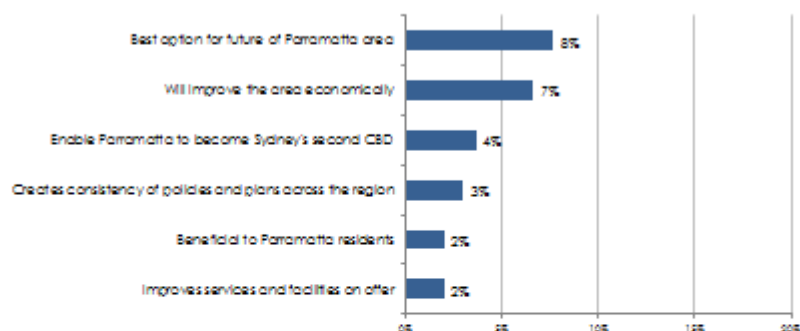
Residents' primary reason for choosing Option 3 as their preference was the potential to eliminate boundary line issues that currently exist



Residents' primary reason for choosing Option 4 as their preferred option was they believed it is the best option for the future of the Parramatta area

## Reasons for Preference – Option 4 – A Strong Economic Region

Q5b Why do you say that?



"Best option for the progress of the Parramatta area"

"Ensures Parramatta a strong future and identity"

"Having a larger area is going to be something that is beneficial for the Parramatta area, this will allow us to have a strong region"

"A big amalgamation will allow Parramatta to become the Sydney area's second economic centre"

"Everyone falls under the same rules, policies, and services so there would be less conflicting ideas between councils and residents"

Base: 10/123

\*Only the top responses have been included

## Conclusion & Recommendations



micromex  
research

## Conclusion

1. Prior to the research less than half of the residents were aware of the State Government's recommendation to merge Parramatta with other councils
2. Relative support was strongest for Parramatta and neighbouring councils to maintain their current boundaries and separate elected representatives but work together to provide some common services across council areas (82% were somewhat supportive – very supportive)
3. Forced preference indicated that the 'Shared Service' option (33%) and the 'A Strong Economic Region' (30%) were closely aligned in first choice popularity
4. The 'Shared Service' option was preferred because it essentially offered a continuation of the status quo in terms of representation and scale, with the added benefit of regional efficiencies
5. The 4<sup>th</sup> option 'A Strong Economic Region' was seen as an opportunity to create a brighter future for Parramatta by linking economic and community benefits
6. Only 15% of residents preferred the State Government's recommendation of merging with Auburn, Holroyd, the western third of Ryde, and the North Parramatta area of The Hills



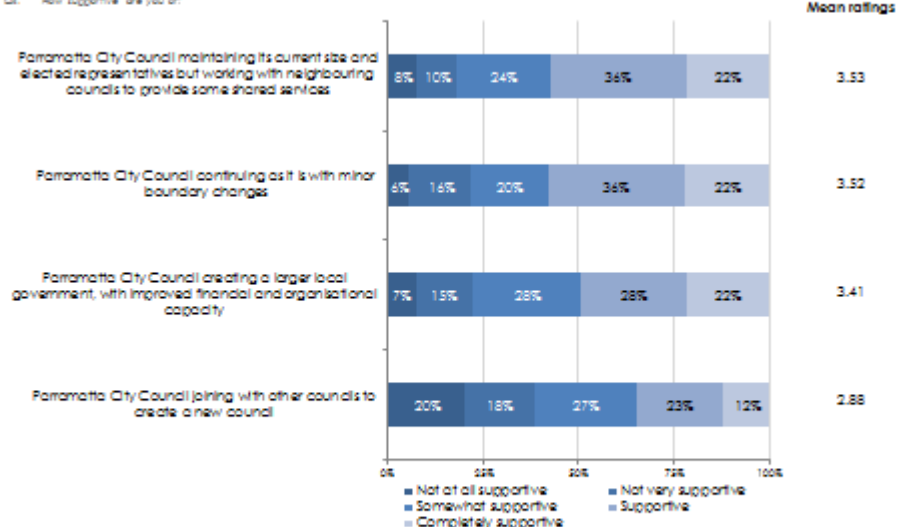
Engaging residents in the decision making process was measurable driver of satisfaction. 'Satisfaction with Council' significantly increased between recruitment and recontact.

# Appendix



## Summary of Support

Q1. How supportive are you of:



Residents were most supportive of Parramatta City Council 'maintaining its current size and elected representatives but working with neighbouring councils to provide some shared services' and 'continuing as it is with minor boundary changes'

## Sample Sizes by Subset

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	401	307	294	234	162	120	84	308	93

	Caroline Chisholm	Arthur Phillip	Elizabeth Macarthur	Lachlan Macquarie	Woodville
Base	120	120	120	120	120

\*Due to weighting, totals may not equal the total sample of N=401





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