

Fit for the Future

Consultation Report



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL



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CONSULTATION REPORT

Council conducted extensive community consultation on the topic of *Fit for the Future*, with a particular focus on four scenarios resolved by Council at its meeting held on 9 March 2015.

The following four scenarios were considered for community consultation:

- 1) Willoughby stand-alone
- 2) Willoughby and North Sydney merger
- 3) Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove merger
- 4) Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunter's Hill, Mosman and part Ryde (eastern two thirds) merger

Feedback was sought using a variety of methods, with details of each summarised within this document.

Summary of Results

1st Preference					
	Telephone Survey (606 responses)	Hard Copy Survey (2043 responses)	Online Survey (153 responses)	Staff Survey (146 responses)	Total by Scenario
1) Willoughby stand-alone	329	835	69	80	1313 (44.5%)
2) Willoughby and North Sydney merger	96	301	22	14	433 (14.7%)
3) Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove merger	114	622	42	28	806 (27.3%)
4) Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunter's Hill, Mosman and part Ryde (eastern two thirds) merger	42	211	17	12	282 (9.6%)
Prefer not to indicate a preference	25	17	3	12	57 (1.9%)
No response entered	0	57	0	0	57 (1.9%)
Total	606	2043	153	146	2948

2nd Preference*					
	Telephone Survey (579 responses)	Hard Copy Survey (2043 responses)	Online Survey (153 responses)	Staff Survey (146 responses)	Total by Scenario
1) Willoughby stand-alone	63	208	63	59	393 (13.3%)
2) Willoughby and North Sydney merger	272	631	22	13	937 (31.7%)
3) Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove merger	136	451	41	28	656 (22.2%)
4) Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunter's Hill, Mosman and part Ryde (eastern two thirds) merger	30	153	17	11	211 (7.1%)
Prefer not to indicate a preference	78	155	3	12	248 (8.4%)
No response entered / 2nd preference same as 1st preference	0	445	7	23	475 (16.1%)
Total	579	2043	153	146	2948

* In the telephone survey those who did not indicate 1st preference were not asked if they had a second preference

Combined 1st and 2nd Preference**					
	Telephone Survey	Hard Copy Survey	Online Survey	Staff Survey	Total by Scenario
1) Willoughby stand-alone	392	1043	132	139	1706 (32%)
2) Willoughby and North Sydney merger	367	932	44	27	1370 (25.7%)
3) Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove merger	250	1073	83	56	1462 (27.4%)
4) Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunter's Hill, Mosman and part Ryde (eastern two thirds) merger	72	364	34	23	493 (9.2%)
Prefer not to indicate a preference	103	172	6	24	305 (5.7%)
Total					5336

** This table does not include responses where the 2nd preference was identical to the 1st preference. It also does not include submissions with no response entered.

Consultation Methods

Information Pack and Hard Copy Reply Paid Survey

Ratepayers were mailed an *Information Pack* including a hard copy reply paid survey by the submission date. Council received 2,043 hard copy survey responses during the consultation period which were entered into Council's online survey system in order to collate results.

Hard copy surveys were also available to the community at the Dougherty Community Centre, Chatswood Library and at Council's Customer Service Centre. It should be noted that hard copy surveys were able to be completed anonymously, allowing the possibility for individuals to complete more than one survey if they desired.

It is important to note that 170 people who responded to the hard copy, online and staff survey made direct reference to the information pack and the Fit for the Future criteria when explaining why they choose their preferred scenario.

Telephone Survey

IRIS Research was commissioned by Council to conduct research amongst the area's residents in relation to the NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* reform program. To attain the views of those that make up Willoughby Local Government Area, a comprehensive telephone-based poll among the area's residents was used.

A random sample of households was selected by IRIS Research for the telephone based survey with 606 residents participating. This is a statistically representative sample for the City of Willoughby.

The main findings of the survey are outlined hereafter:

Most preferred option

Results showed that over half of all residents in the telephone survey (54.3%) indicated their most preferred option was for Willoughby Council to remain by itself. This was significantly the most preferred option.

The second highest 'most preferred' option was for Willoughby to merge with North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils (18.7%). This was closely followed by only merging with North Sydney (15.8%). Refer to **Attachment 4c** of the submission for the full report.

Have Your Say Willoughby Online Survey

A dedicated *Fit for the Future* consultation page was set up on the *Have Your Say Willoughby* site. The consultation page provided detailed information about the *Fit for the Future* proposal, the ability to download documents and links to relevant websites. All marketing material guided people to the consultation page and over 2,000 registered users of *Have Your Say Willoughby* were emailed to inform them about this resource.

The site also featured an online survey which mirrored the telephone and hard copy survey. In total 153 online survey responses were received. To participate in the survey participants were required to be a registered user of the *Have Your Say Willoughby* site.

Citizens Panel

Council recruited members of the community to take part in a deliberative Citizens' Panel with the charge of reporting back to Council on their preferred scenario in relation to *Fit for the Future*. A community engagement specialist from Straight Talk consultancy was engaged by Council to assist plan and facilitate the Panel. Below is an excerpt from the *Citizens' Panel Report* which summarises the process and recommendations of the Panel.

A group of 22 residents of Willoughby accepted the invitation by Council to participate in a Citizens Panel charged with making a recommendation to Council on the preferred Fit for the Future Scenario.

The group met for a total of 13 hours between Thursday 4 June and Saturday 13 June 2015.

The following methodology was adopted:

- *Presentation by Council officers of information underpinning the Fit for the Future parameters.*
- *Team building activities to facilitate communications.*
- *Presentation of additional financial and other information.*
- *Access to Council's website to read relevant documents such as the Independent Panel's Report and contribute to on line forum.*
- *Discussion of benefits and disadvantages of each of the Fit for the Future scenarios.*
- *Deliberation on each and selection of the preferred Scenario.*

Recommendation

The Panel's recommendation is Scenario 1; Willoughby Council – no amalgamation.

The reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

- *Known entity - mostly comfortable with current operations.*
- *Level of representation ie. Councillor to Citizen ratio is appropriate.*
- *Good mix of commercial, residential and environmental elements.*
- *Financial prospects look sound.*
- *Alternate business model of other scenarios unknown.*
- *Benefits of amalgamation not clear and alternative regional organisation of some services not presented and explored.*
- *Enables Willoughby Council to focus on its own strategy ie. to grow as second CBD.*

The Panel recognises that limitations of this recommendation may include the following:

- *Could limit long term purchasing power.*
- *Could limit negotiation power with the State Government.*
- *Affect synergy with adjoining councils.*
- *Inadequate sharing of resource costs.*
- *Amalgamation imposed with no opportunity to influence solution.*

Qualifications to recommendation:

The recommendation of the panel was made with the following qualifications:

- *Not enough information about pros and cons of each Scenario in the Fit for the Future analysis – in particular from other local government areas.*
- *Not clear that any of the scenarios meet the Fit for the Future criteria.*
- *No data on the operational model for amalgamations.*
- *State Government drivers or agenda not clearly explained.*
- *Wider governance/strategic issues between State and Local Government also need to be addressed.*
- *Local Government should have power to make local decisions.*
- *Options already exist for councils to co-operate and achieve savings.*
- *Amalgamation scenarios did not consider compatibility of merging councils.*

- *Recommendation of Scenario 1 does not preclude a need for change or improvement.*
- *Regional representation is important and should include State Government.*
- *Benefits of amalgamation can be achieved by councils working more closely.*
- *Regional body will address, influence and assist with funding of large projects.*

The full Citizens' Panel Report can be found in **Attachment 4b** of the submission to this report.

Mail and Email Submissions

Council received 44 submissions regarding *Fit for the Future* by mail and email. Feedback from these submissions is summarised in the table below.

Preferred Scenario 1	Preferred Scenario 2	Preferred Scenario 3	Preferred Scenario 4	Did not indicate a preference for any scenario
11	3	4	5	11

Staff Survey

A survey was made available to staff in both online and hard copy format. In total 146 responses were received for the staff survey. Detailed results are summarised in the *Consultation Summary* at the beginning of this document.

Other Submissions

Council received a submission from the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations which was considered when developing the community consultation plan and influenced the preparation of information provided to the community.

Other Activities

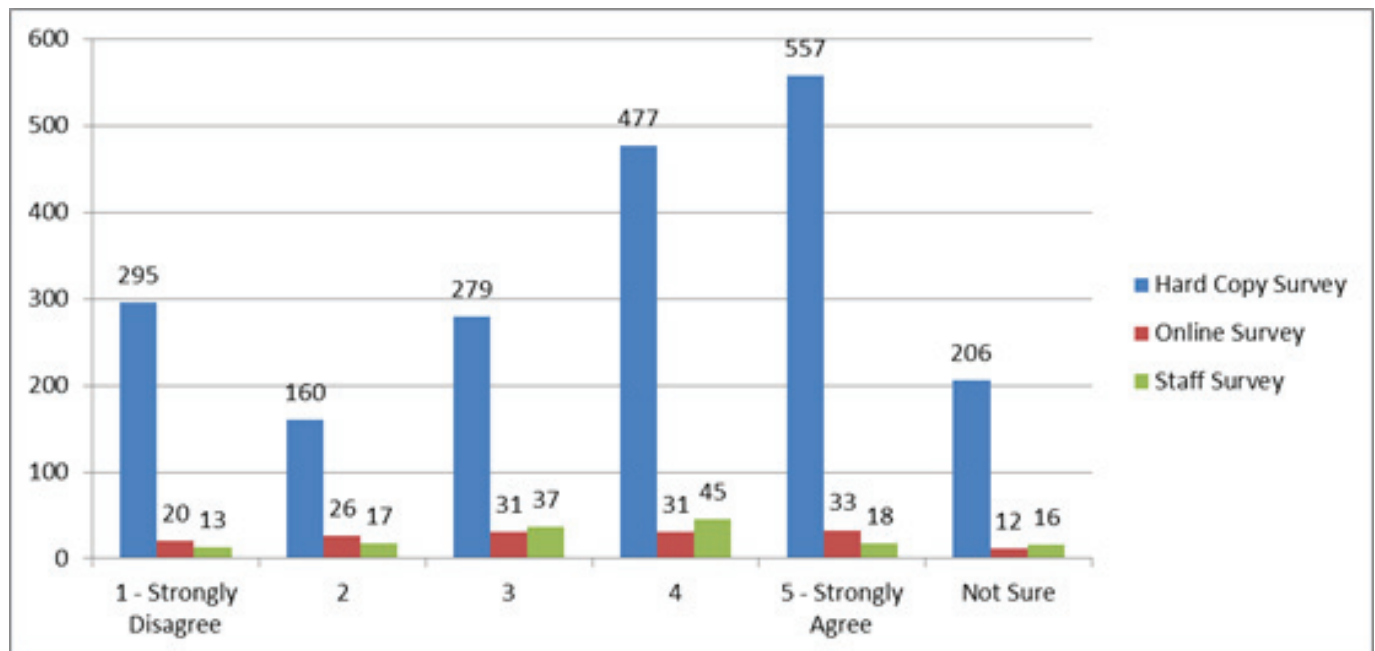
Council undertook a number of activities to ensure the community was adequately informed about the scenarios being considered by Council as well as to raise awareness of the broader issue of local government reform. These activities included:

- **Information Stalls** – Five information stalls were held at two locations for a total of ten hours during the consultation period. Staff were available to answer questions from the community, hand out information and provide an opportunity for members of the public to complete hard copy surveys.
- **Advertisements in the North Shore Times** – Council placed a number of advertisements in the North Shore Times newspaper including a full page advertisement on 8 May 2015. Advertisements advised the public of the online consultation page, dates for public information sessions and opportunities to express interest to participate in the Citizens' Panel.
- **Social Media** – A targeted social media campaign was undertaken on Council's social media accounts updating the community on *Fit for the Future* activities and inviting people to provide feedback.
- **Council Website** – A prominent banner appeared on Council's website directing visitors to the Have Your Say Willoughby Fit for the Future consultation page.
- **Media Release** – Media releases were published on 12 September 2014 and 19 May 2015 updating the media on Willoughby Council's activities in relation to Fit for the Future. A third media release is scheduled for late June 2015.
- The Mayor and General Manager attended the Federation of Progress Associations meeting on Saturday 30 June to provide information and answer questions regarding *Fit for the Future*.

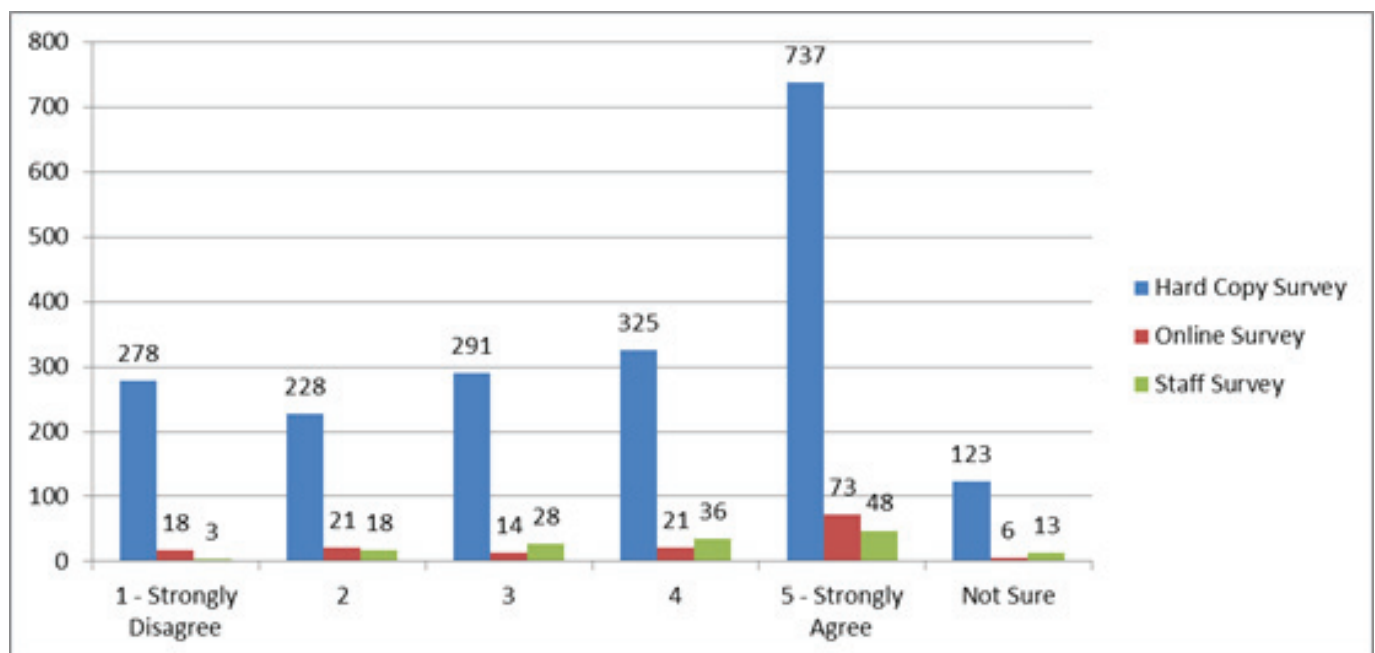
Additional Questions

Surveys also included general questions to ascertain perceptions about larger councils. The results are summarised hereafter.

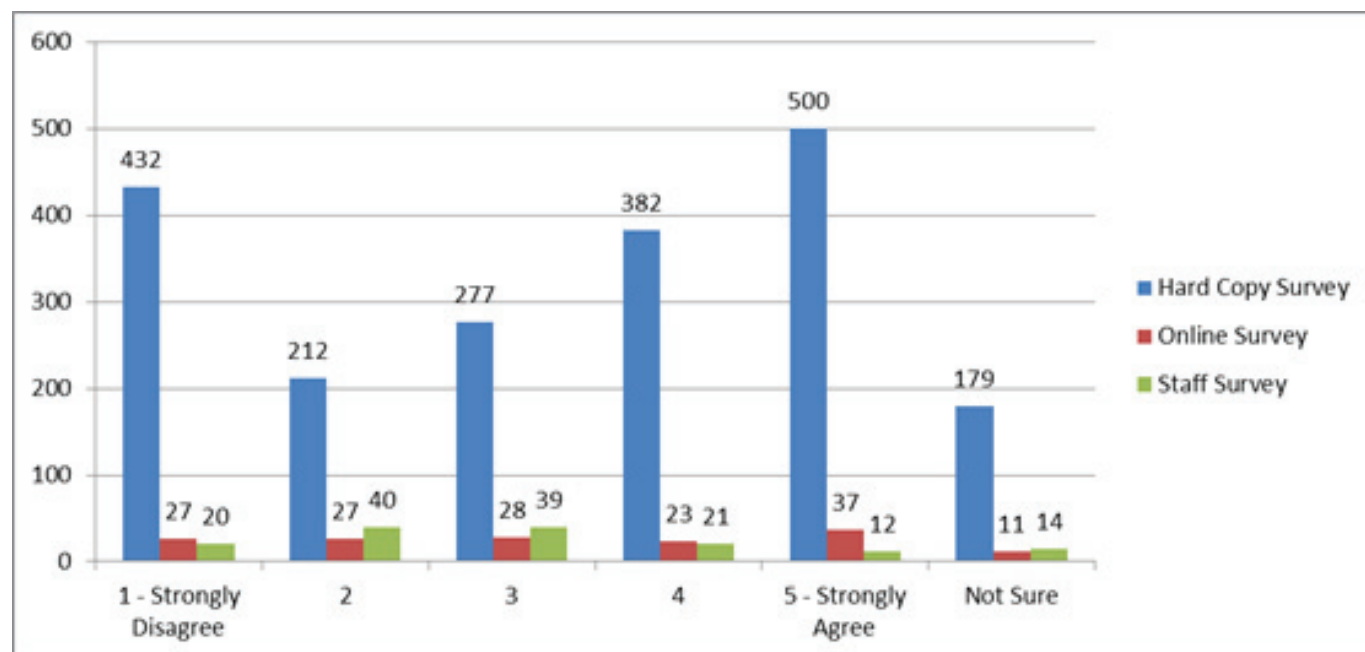
Larger local councils will have more influence with State agencies/government (and other partners)



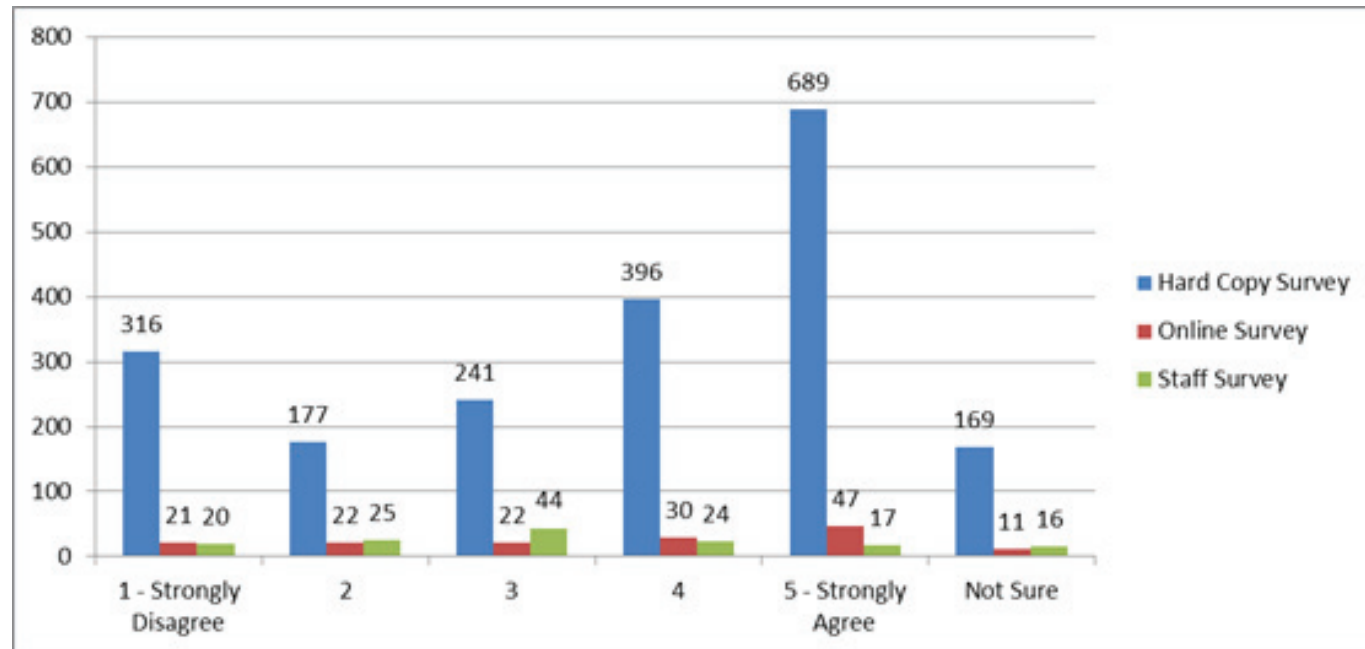
Representation for local residents in an amalgamated council will be reduced



Larger local councils could deliver better services for residents and communities



A larger local council could save money



Below is a summary of responses to the same questions as part of the telephone survey. Responses are represented in the form of low, medium and high agreement.

	(%) Low Agreement	(%) Medium Agreement	(%) High Agreement	(%) Can't Say	Mean / 5
Representation for local residents in an amalgamated Council will be reduced	22.0	19.4	55.2	3.4	3.52
Larger local Councils will have more influence with State agencies/Government (& other partners)	20.2	22.7	53.4	3.8	3.43
A larger local Council could save money	24.5	24.9	45.8	4.9	3.29
Larger local Councils could deliver better services for residents and communities	41.3	19.5	36.1	3.1	2.90

Qualitative Feedback

Below is a summary of qualitative feedback outlining the main reasons why people choose their preferred scenario.

Telephone Survey

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby Council by itself'

Sample size = 329	%
Happy with status quo / not broken so no need to fix	38.6
Local Councillors know the area / need to have local knowledge	13.8
Can't see any improvement if amalgamation happens / services most likely would diminish	9.8
Would become too big and lose its local identity / wouldn't get a say	9.7
Smaller is better and easier to manage	7.1
Area is big enough now	6.9
Demographics and issues don't match up with other Councils / unique area	1.9
Would become too big and would result in bigger problems	1.9
Don't want other Councils to burden Willoughby	1.1
Need more information	1.0
Would get swallowed up	0.2
No response given	7.0
Other	0.9

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby and North Sydney Councils'

Sample size = 96	%
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	40.2
Makes the most sense	21.7
Don't want to get too big	14.3
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	12.8
Council needs help	2.2
Area is big enough now	0.8
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	0.7
Need more information	0.4
No response given	5.7
Other	1.1

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove'

Sample size = 114	%
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	40.3
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	23.5
Makes the most sense	19.9
Don't want to get too big	8.5
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	7.1
Council needs help	0.7

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils'

Sample size = 42	%
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	52.0
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	24.4
Makes the most sense	12.3
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	5.6
Council needs help	4.8
Don't want to get too big	0.9

Combined Online, Hard Copy and Staff Surveys

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby Council by itself'

Sample Size = 718	%
Happy with status quo / not broken so no need to fix	27.2
Would become too big and lose its local identity / wouldn't get a say	15.0
Other	11.1
Can't see any improvement if amalgamation happens / services most likely would diminish	9.7
Local Councillors know the area / need to have local knowledge	9.5
Would become too big and would result in bigger problems	9.3
Area is big enough now	6.1
Smaller is better and easier to manage	5.2
Don't want other Councils to burden Willoughby	4.6
No response given	0.8
Demographics and issues don't match up with other Councils / unique area	0.6
Need more information	0.4
Would get swallowed up	0.4

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby and North Sydney Councils'

Sample Size = 251	%
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	31.9
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	31.1
Don't want to get too big	12.7
Other	11.6
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	8.4
Makes the most sense	3.6
Need more information	0.4
No response given	0.4

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove'

Sample Size = 564		%
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better		33.3
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.		17.2
Ability to meet Fit for the Future criteria/targets		15.8
Other		15.1
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together		6.9
Don't want to get too big		6.2
Makes the most sense		5.3
No Response		0.2

Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils'

Sample Size = 200		%
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better		65.0
Other		18.5
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together		10.0
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.		3.5
Makes the most sense		3.0

Fit for the Future

Citizens' Panel Report

13th June 2015



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL



Fit for the Future

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Fit for the Future

Citizens' Panel Report

1 Introduction

A group of 22 residents of Willoughby accepted the invitation by Council to participate in a Citizens Panel charged with making a recommendation to Council on the preferred Fit for the Future Scenario.

The group met for a total of 13 hours between Thursday 4 June and Saturday 13 June 2015.

The following methodology was adopted:

- Presentation by Council officers of information underpinning the Fit for the Future parameters.
- Team building activities to facilitate communications.
- Presentation of additional financial and other information.
- Access to Council's website to read relevant documents such as the Independent Panel's Report and contribute to on line forum.
- Discussion of benefits and disadvantages of each of the Fit for the Future scenarios.
- Deliberation on each and selection of the preferred Scenario.

2 Recommendation

The Panel's recommendation is Scenario 1; Willoughby Council – no amalgamation.

The reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

- Known entity - mostly comfortable with current operations.
- Level of representation ie. Councillor to Citizen ratio is appropriate.
- Good mix of commercial, residential and environmental elements.
- Financial prospects look sound.
- Alternate business model of other scenarios unknown.
- Benefits of amalgamation not clear and alternative regional organisation of some services not presented and explored.
- Enables Willoughby Council to focus on its own strategy ie. to grow as second CBD.

The Panel recognises that limitations of this recommendation may include the following:

Fit for the Future

- Could limit long term purchasing power.
- Could limit negotiation power with the State Government.
- Affect synergy with adjoining councils.
- Inadequate sharing of resource costs.
- Amalgamation imposed with no opportunity to influence solution.

3 Panel Results

This is a consensus decision based on the following table:

Option Considered	Whole Hearted Endorsement	Agreement with a minor point of contention	Do not like, but will support	Serious disagreement
1 (Willoughby alone)	6	7	4	1
2 (Willoughby and North Sydney)	-	1	16	2
3 (Willoughby and North Sydney, Lane Cove)	1	1	16	1
4 (Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Mosman, Hunters Hill, Part of Ryde)	2	3	1	14

*Not all panellists participated in the voting



Fit for the Future

4 Qualifications to recommendation

The recommendation of the panel was made with the following qualifications:

- Not enough information about pros and cons of each Scenario in the Fit for the Future analysis – in particular from other local government areas.
- Not clear that any of the scenarios meet the Fit for the Future criteria.
- No data on the operational model for amalgamations.
- State Government drivers or agenda not clearly explained.
- Wider governance/strategic issues between State and Local Government also need to be addressed.
- Local Government should have power to make local decisions.
- Options already exist for councils to co-operate and achieve savings.
- Amalgamation scenarios did not consider compatibility of merging councils.
- Recommendation of Scenario 1 does not preclude a need for change or improvement.
- Regional representation is important and should include State Government.
- Benefits of amalgamation can be achieved by councils working more closely.
- Regional body will address, influence and assist with funding of large projects.

5 Ideas to improve Willoughby City Council and local government under all scenarios

The Citizens' Panel recommendation does not mean maintaining status quo, and there are many issues that need to be dealt with under all scenarios.

5.1 Rights and Responsibilities

- Local councils need a clear Charter. This would set out both rights and responsibilities, clear areas of decisions, and accountabilities and key success areas.
- Strengthening skills and professionalism of the councillors.
- Local councils need to be made up of people sharing similar values, demographics, economic and social composition.
- Local councils should not be dominated by political parties, vested financial interests, such as developers – we need transparency and mechanisms to remove interests that are conflicted and agenda driven.



Fit for the Future

- Having agreed a charter with citizens, NSW Government should not be permitted to override decisions that are made locally under the charter.

5.2 Revenue

- There are options in the Revitalising Local Government Report for restructuring revenue that should be addressed under all scenarios .
- These includes being able to raise rates more equitably.

5.3 Cross-Council Collaboration

- Some benefits of amalgamation can be achieved by councils working more closely together in a structured fashion.
- The Citizens' Panel recommends the creation of regional cross-council bodies to address and influence strategic issues including:
 - Facilitation of major projects and regional resource development.
 - Population planning and resourcing of community facilities such as schools and sporting facilities – shared use, optimisation of investment, adequacy of resourcing.
 - Traffic and parking – cooperation between councils to ensure optimal flows and avoid simply moving bottlenecks.
- There needs to be a mechanism to cover collaboration with State Government and State authorities, such as Transport, State Rail, RMS and Sydney Water.
- Councils can find opportunities to collaborate and share resources to save money and achieve better outcomes eg. IT and purchasing, without the need to amalgamate.
- Develop a mechanism for considering boundaries as circumstances change.
- Councils must consider the impact of their decisions beyond their immediate boundaries: cross border collaboration is essential.
- Issues affecting communities interfacing on boundaries should be dealt with holistically.

5.4 Democracy and representation

- We want to see a strong community representation under all scenarios: Local issues, local representation, local solutions.





Insight for
Business & Government

Willoughby Council 'Fit for the Future' Community Engagement Survey

Prepared for



Prepared by
IRIS Research Ltd

May 2015

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Executive summary

This report presents the results of Willoughby City Council's 'Fit for the Future' Survey, 2015. IRIS Research was commissioned by Willoughby Council to conduct research amongst the area's residents in relation to the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' reform program. The survey sought to attain the preferences of residents and businesses towards 4 'Fit for the Future' options, that ranged from Willoughby Council remaining as it is, to merging with other Councils.

To attain the views of those that make up Willoughby Local Government Area, a comprehensive telephone-based poll among the area's residents was used.

A random sample of households was selected by IRIS Research for the telephone based survey with 606 residents participating.

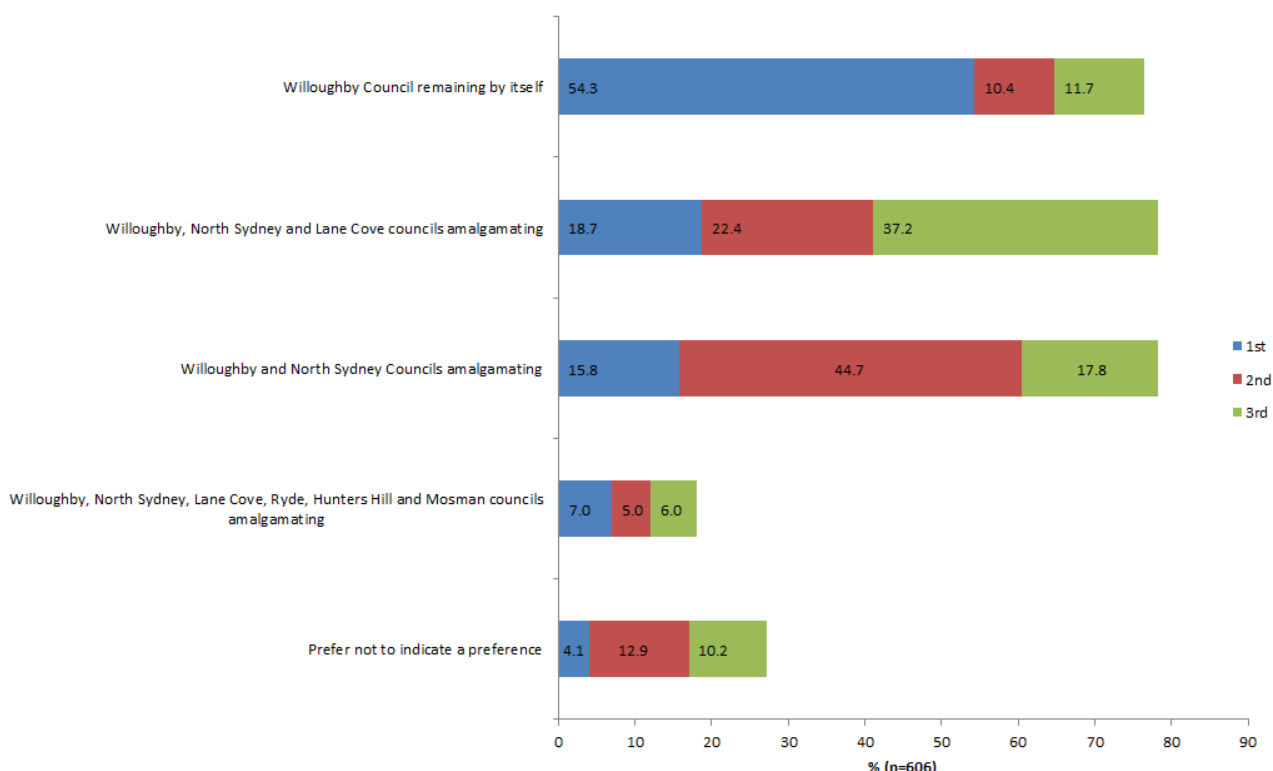
The main findings of the survey were:

Most preferred option

Results showed that over half of all residents surveyed (54.3%) indicated their most preferred option was for Willoughby Council to remain by itself. This was significantly the most preferred option.

The second highest 'most preferred' option was for Willoughby to merge with North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils (18.7%). This was closely followed by only merging with North Sydney (15.8%).

Graph E.1: Preferences for 'Fit for the Future' program



Most preferred option when status quo is removed

Table E.1 shows the preferred options selected by respondents if the option of 'Willoughby Council remaining by itself' was excluded as a viable preference. To calculate the table below, those residents that nominated 'Willoughby Council remaining by itself' as their most preferred option, had their second preferred option reallocated to essentially become their first selection.

Table E.1: Most preferred Option with reassignment of status quo option

n=606	%
Willoughby and North Sydney Councils amalgamating	50.8%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove councils amalgamating	28.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils amalgamating	8.0%
Prefer not to indicate a preference	12.9%

When the data was extrapolated in this way, having Willoughby amalgamate with North Sydney was by far the most preferred option (50.8%).

Preferences for 'Fit for the Future' program

Table E.2 shows the cumulative responses given by residents to their preferences for the 'Fit for the Future' program.

Table E.2: Preferences for 'Fit for the Future' program

	1st option	1st & 2nd options	1st, 2nd & 3rd options
Willoughby Council remaining by itself	54.3%	64.7%	76.4%
Willoughby and North Sydney Councils amalgamating	15.8%	60.5%	78.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove councils amalgamating	18.7%	41.1%	78.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils amalgamating	7.0%	12.0%	18.0%
Prefer not to indicate a preference	4.1%	17.0%	27.2%

As mentioned previously, the stand out most preferred option for residents is for Willoughby to remain by itself (54.3%). When factoring in the second round of responses, the results are closer in that 64.7% are happy for Willoughby to remain by itself, but a similar proportion (60.5%) mentioned Willoughby Council amalgamating with North Sydney Council.

Table E.3: Frequency of various first preferences

	1st Preference
Willoughby remaining by itself + Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils	73.0%
Willoughby remaining by itself + Willoughby and North Sydney Councils	70.1%
Willoughby remaining by itself + Willoughby, North Sydney, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman Councils	61.3%
Willoughby remaining by itself + prefer not to indicate a preference	58.4%
Willoughby and North Sydney + Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils	34.5%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils + Willoughby, North Sydney, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman Councils	25.7%
Willoughby and North Sydney + Willoughby, North Sydney, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman Councils	22.8%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils + prefer not to indicate a preference	22.8%
Willoughby and North Sydney + prefer not to indicate a preference	19.9%
Willoughby, North Sydney, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman Councils + prefer not to indicate a preference	11.1%

Agreement Statements

Willoughby residents were asked to rate their level of agreement toward 4 statements concerning being part of a larger Council area. Of the 4 statements put to residents, 3 attained mean agreement scores in the 'medium' range. Residents showed most agreement with the statement 'Representation for local residents in an amalgamated Council will be reduced', with over half of the residents surveyed (55.2%) providing a 'high' agreement score.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

IRIS Research was commissioned by Willoughby Council to conduct research amongst the area's residents in relation to the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' reform program. The survey sought to attain the preferences of residents towards 4 'Fit for the Future' options, that ranged from Willoughby Council remaining as it is, to merging with other Councils.

To attain the views of those that make up Willoughby Local Government Area, a comprehensive telephone-based poll among the area's residents was used.

1.2 Study Objectives

The objective of the poll was to:

- Identify the preferred 'Fit for the Future' option amongst Willoughby Local Government Area residents.

1.3 Survey Response

The table below shows the compliance rate achieved for the entire sample. The compliance rate is the number of refusals as a proportion of completed surveys plus refusals. A compliance rate of 64% is considered a good result for a community survey.

Table 1.1 Survey compliance rate

Response sequence	Outcome
Interviews	606
Refusals	338
<i>Valid contacts (Excludes disqualified – businesses, out of area, under 16yrs etc)</i>	944
Compliance rate	64%

1.4 Survey Accuracy

When analysing results for the entire sample, the maximum error rate will be about $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% confidence level, assuming a proportional response of 50%. Put another way, we can be confident that if the survey were to be repeated there would be a 95% chance that the new result would lie within $\pm 4.0\%$ of the result achieved in this survey.

1.5 Mean Scores

Given that IRIS undertakes many residents' surveys such as this; we are able to benchmark mean scores. As such, mean importance and satisfaction scores can be further classified as being a low, medium or high score based on this experience. Table 1.3.1 highlights the mean classifications.

Table 1.3.2: Classification of mean scores

Mean importance scores	
0 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.99	Medium
4.00 – 5.00	High

Mean satisfaction scores	
0 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.74	Medium
3.75 – 5.00	High

Survey Results

2 Resident Telephone Survey

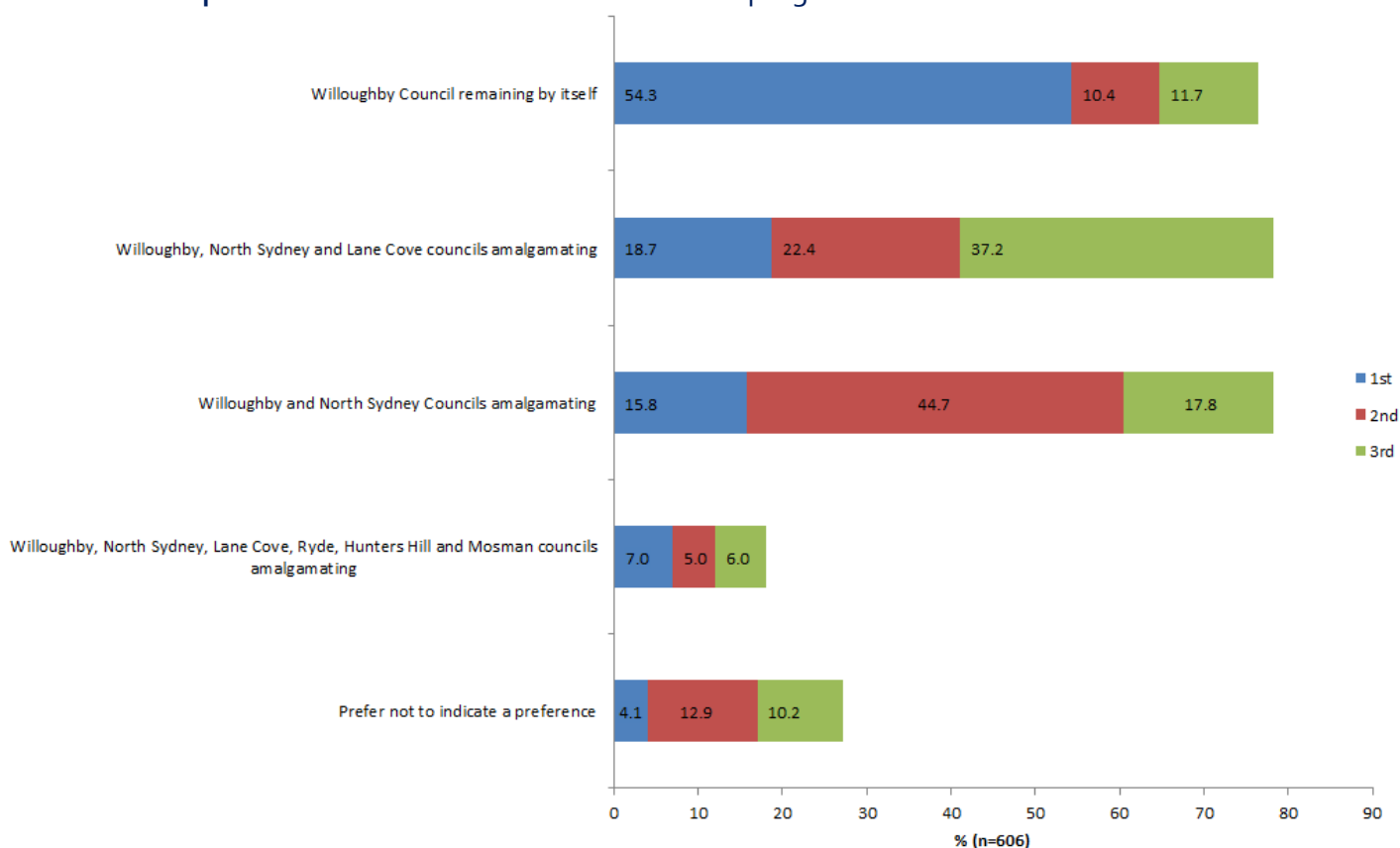
The NSW State Government released its 'Fit for the Future' program, which requires most NSW Council's to consider amalgamation options with neighbouring councils. This section looks at the views held by Willoughby Council residents as measured by IRIS' telephone survey.

2.1 Order of preferences

Section 2.1 of this report highlights the options that residents were prepared to accept with regards to the 4 possible amalgamation options they were presented with.

Question: Which is your most preferred option? Followed by 2nd and 3rd

Graph 2.1: Preferences for 'Fit for the Future' program



Graph ranked by 1st preference

Question: Which is your most preferred option? Followed by 2nd and 3rd

Table 2.1 shows the cumulative responses given by residents to their preferences for the 'Fit for the Future' program.

Table 2.1: Preferences for 'Fit for the Future' program

	1 st option	1 st & 2 nd options	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd options
Willoughby Council remaining by itself	54.3%	64.7%	76.4%
Willoughby and North Sydney Councils amalgamating	15.8%	60.5%	78.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove councils amalgamating	18.7%	41.1%	78.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils amalgamating	7.0%	12.0%	18.0%
Prefer not to indicate a preference	4.1%	17.0%	27.2%

Ranked by highest result after 2nd choice of options

Key Results:

- Over half of all residents surveyed (54.3%) indicated their most preferred option was for Willoughby Council to remain by itself.
- When factoring in the second round of responses, almost two thirds (64.7%) of residents wanted Willoughby to remain by itself. This was only slightly more than the 60.5% that indicated Willoughby and North Sydney Councils should amalgamate after taking into account 1st and 2nd preferences.
- After 1st and 2nd preferences were factored in, two fifths of residents (41.1%) felt Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove should amalgamate; significantly less than the Willoughby and North Sydney option.

2.2 First Mentioned Option by Suburb

Table 2.2 shows the most preferred option broken up by Suburb.

Table 2.2: Most preferred Option by Suburb

Column %	Artamon	Castle Cove	Castlecrag	Chatswood	Chatswood West	Lane Cove North	Middle Cove	Naremburn	North Willoughby	Northbridge	Roseville	St Leonards	Willoughby	Willoughby East
Willoughby Council remaining by itself	62.7%	53.1%	41.4%	63.9%	57.1%	55.6%	72.2%	45.5%	64.3%	42.9%	62.5%	33.3%	47.5%	42.9%
Willoughby and North Sydney councils amalgamating	6.8%	25.0%	31.0%	11.6%	21.4%	11.1%	11.1%	18.2%	28.6%	20.2%	7.5%	16.7%	14.9%	33.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove councils amalgamating	15.3%	18.8%	6.9%	17.0%	7.1%	33.3%	11.1%	27.3%	0.0%	21.4%	12.5%	50.0%	27.7%	9.5%
Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill & Mosman	10.2%	3.1%	13.8%	2.7%	14.3%	0.0%	5.6%	6.1%	7.1%	9.5%	12.5%	0.0%	5.9%	14.3%
Prefer not to indicate a preference	5.1%	0.0%	6.9%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	6.0%	5.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%
Sample size	59	32	29	147	14	9	18	33	14	84	40	6	101	21

Red cells highlight areas of interest

Key Results:

- Analysis by suburb showed residents that were interviewed from Castlecrag, Northbridge, St Leonards, Willoughby and Willoughby East were least likely to mention Willoughby Council remaining by itself as their most preferred option.
- A higher proportion of residents from Castle Cove, Castlecrag, Chatswood West, North Willoughby, Northbridge and Willoughby East indicated Willoughby Council should amalgamate with North Sydney Council.

2.3 Excluding Status Quo

Table 2.3 shows the preferred options selected by Willoughby residents if the option 'Willoughby Council remains by itself' was excluded as a viable preference. To calculate the table below, those residents that preferred for 'Willoughby Council remaining by itself' (54.3%) had their second preferred option reallocated as their first preference.

Table 2.3: Most preferred Option with reassignment of status quo option

n=606	%
Willoughby and North Sydney Councils amalgamating	50.8%
Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove councils amalgamating	28.3%
Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils amalgamating	8.0%
Prefer not to indicate a preference	12.9%

Key Results:

- If the status quo was not an option, then half of the residents surveyed (50.8%) would prefer for Willoughby and North Sydney Councils to amalgamate.

2.4 Main reasons for selecting 'most' preferred option – Resident Phone Survey

Question: What are the main reasons you chose your MOST preferred option?

Table 2.2: Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby Council remaining by itself'

Sample size = 329	%
Happy with status quo / not broken so no need to fix	38.6
Local Councillors know the area / need to have local knowledge	13.8
Can't see any improvement if amalgamation happens / services most likely would diminish	9.8
Would become too big and lose its local identity / wouldn't get a say	9.7
Smaller is better and easier to manage	7.1
Area is big enough now	6.9
Demographics and issues don't match up with other Councils / unique area	1.9
Would become too big and would result in bigger problems	1.9
Don't want other Councils to burden Willoughby	1.1
Need more information	1.0
Would get swallowed up	0.2
No response given	7.0
Other	0.9

Not surprising, the top response given as to why this was the most preferred option was because residents are happy with the status quo as they feel Council is doing a good job.

Table 2.3: Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby and North Sydney Councils'

Sample size = 96	%
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	40.2
Makes the most sense	21.7
Don't want to get too big	14.3
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	12.8
Council needs help	2.2
Area is big enough now	0.8
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	0.7
Need more information	0.4
No response given	5.7
Other	1.1

The main reason given for wanting to amalgamate with North Sydney Council is because it is seen as a similar area, with similar needs that is close in proximity and the match up would simply work.

Table 2.4: Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby, North Sydney and Lane Cove'

Sample size = 114	%
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	40.3
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	23.5
Makes the most sense	19.9
Don't want to get too big	8.5
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	7.1
Council needs help	0.7

The main reason given for wanting to amalgamate with North Sydney and Lane Cove Councils is because they are seen as similar areas, with similar needs that are close together and the match up would simply work.

Table 2.5: Main reasons for choosing 'Willoughby, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman councils'

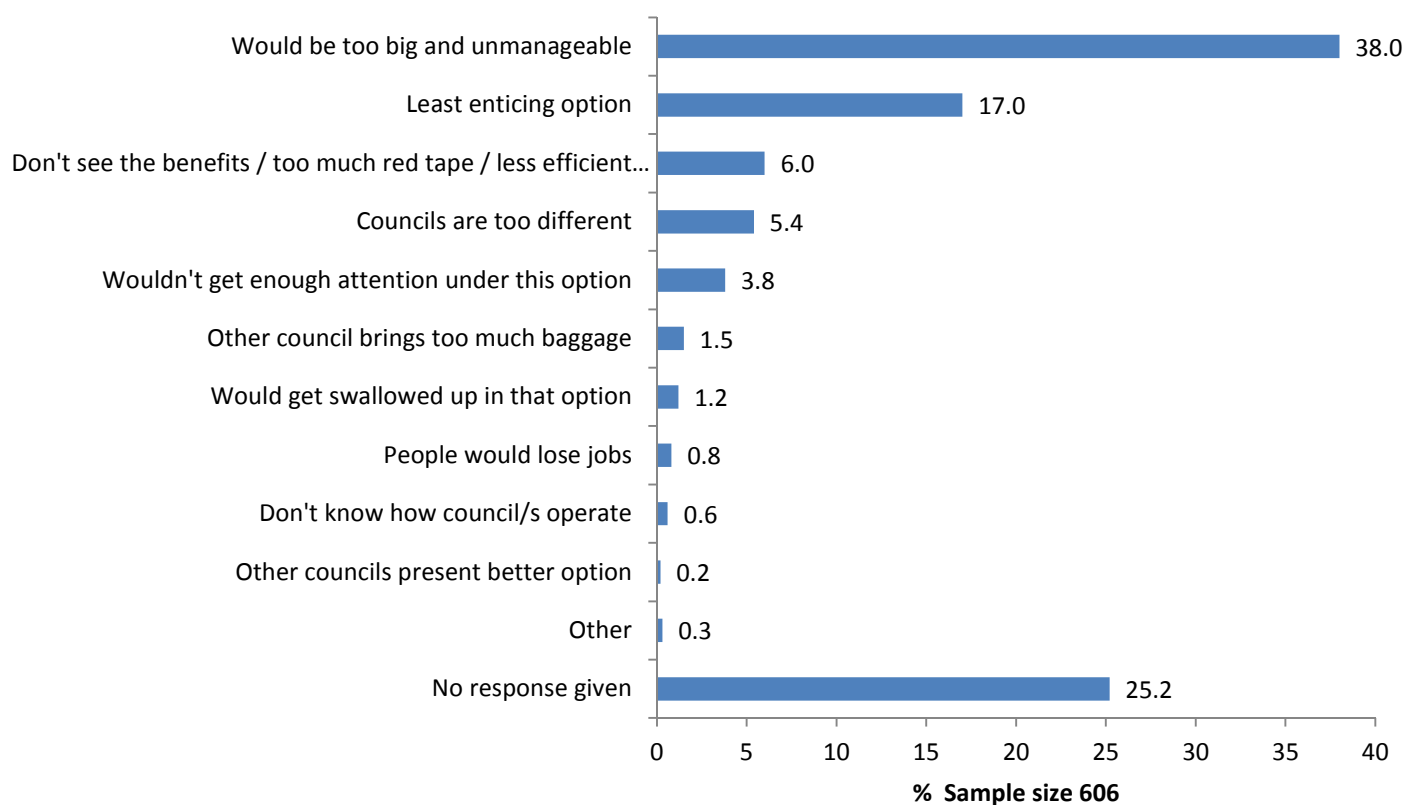
Sample size = 42	%
Need to save cost / economies of scale / financially better	52.0
Access to a bigger budget / stronger together	24.4
Makes the most sense	12.3
Similar area, similar needs, close together. It works.	5.6
Council needs help	4.8
Don't want to get too big	0.9

The overwhelming reason given by respondents for preferring Willoughby to merge with North Sydney, Lane Cove, Ryde, Hunters Hill and Mosman Councils is because it would save costs, produce economies of scale and would make the area financially better off.

2.5 Main reasons for selecting 'least' preferred option

Question: What are the main reasons you chose your LEAST preferred option?

Table 2.9: Main reasons for LEAST preferred



Key Results:

- Close to two in five residents (38.0%) were concerned that having a number of Council's come together to become one, would result in an entity that was too big and unworkable to achieve any outcome of benefit for the amalgamated area.

2.6 Agreement statements

Willoughby residents were asked to rate their level of agreement toward 4 statements concerning being part of a larger Council area. The results are shown in table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Agreement statements

	(%) Low Agreement	(%) Medium Agreement	(%) High Agreement	(%) Can't Say	Mean / 5
Representation for local residents in an amalgamated Council will be reduced	22.0	19.4	55.2	3.4	3.52
Larger local Councils will have more influence with State agencies/Government (& other partners)	20.2	22.7	53.4	3.8	3.43
A larger local Council could save money	24.5	24.9	45.8	4.9	3.29
Larger local Councils could deliver better services for residents and communities	41.3	19.5	36.1	3.1	2.90

Key Results:

- Of the 4 statements put to residents, 3 attained mean agreement scores in the 'Medium' range. Residents showed most agreement with the statement 'Representation for local residents in an amalgamated Council will be reduced', with over half of the residents surveyed (55.2%) providing a 'high' agreement score.
- The lowest agreement came for the statement 'Larger local Councils could deliver better services for residents and communities', with one in three residents (36.1%) providing a 'high' agreement score and 41.3% providing a 'Low' agreement score.



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