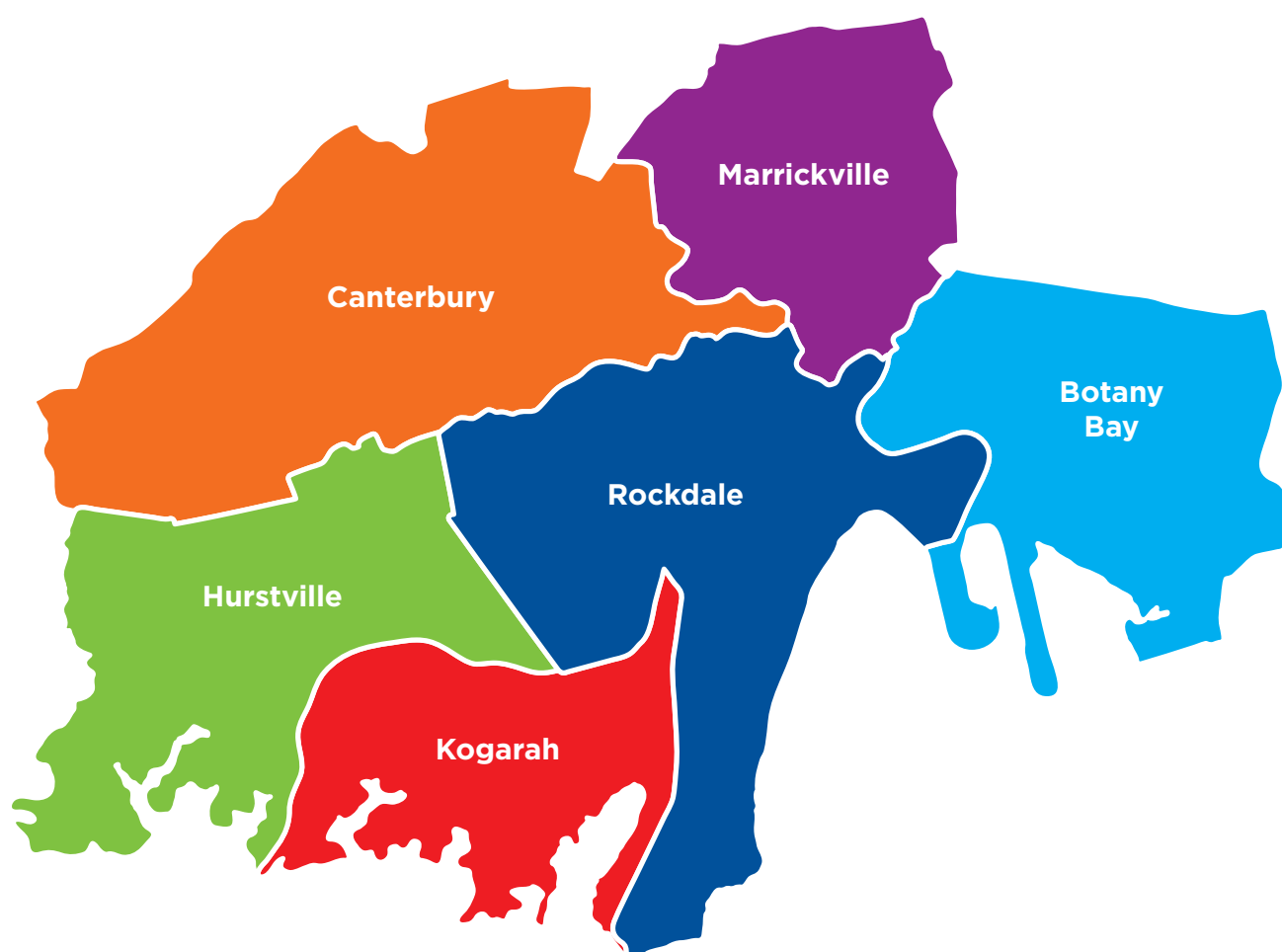


# ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE



## STAFF ENGAGEMENT

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# 1 Background

The staff engagement program was undertaken to inform and engage Council staff about the State Government's proposed amalgamation of Rockdale City as part of its Fit for the Future initiative.

The four key objectives to the Rockdale City's Future staff engagement were:

- 1** Inform staff about the State Government's Fit for the Future initiatives and in particular the proposed amalgamation of New South Wales councils and direct people to appropriate and accurate channels of information;
- 2** Inform staff of Council's response;
- 3** Encourage discussion within Council about the proposed options for Rockdale City; and
- 4** Seek staff feedback on Rockdale City's options.

The results were intended to inform Council's decision making and feed into Council's Fit for the Future submission. These will be considered along with the results of Rockdale City's Future community engagement.

## 2 Methodology

Over an eight month period Council employed a variety of methods to inform staff of the Fit for the Future Program and Council's progress. These included:

- ◆ Four information sessions on the State Government's Fit for the Future initiative held by the General Manager at the Depot and the Administration Building;
- ◆ Periodic information updates on the Corporate Portal;
- ◆ Information mailed with payslips to the outdoor team;
  - ◆ Message from the General Manager (Appendix A)
  - ◆ Briefing session Questions and Answers fact sheet (Appendix B)
- ◆ Discussions during team meetings with Managers.

The staff consultation commenced on Wednesday 8 May, the Rockdale City's Future survey (Appendix C) was distributed to each Rockdale City Council staff email address (Appendix D).

The following amalgamation options were presented to staff for their consideration:

- ◆ Rockdale City Council stand-alone (with an Improvement Program);
- ◆ Rockdale and Hurstville Councils merge;
- ◆ Rockdale and Kogarah Councils merge;
- ◆ Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils merge (St George Council);
- ◆ Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils merge (St George + Canterbury Council); and
- ◆ Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Councils merge (Bayside/Airport Council).

The primary instrument for engagement was the survey which was distributed via email and hard copy attached to payslips. The survey asked staff to:

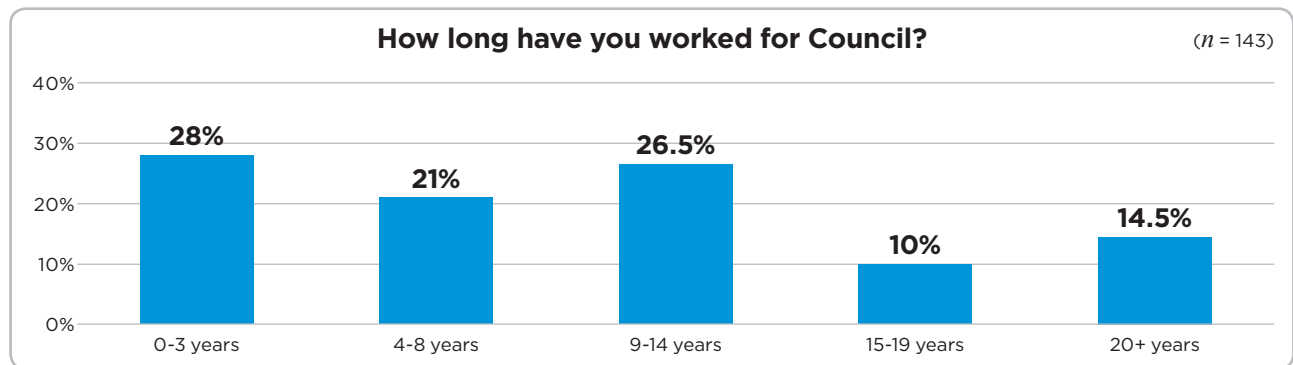
- ◆ Identify their level of support for amalgamations;
- ◆ Rank the proposed amalgamation options;
- ◆ Consider how service delivery to the community may be impacted in any merger;
- ◆ Identify the most important considerations in any merger; and
- ◆ Identify the challenges in any merger.

Responses to open ended questions were coded using industry standard methodology, grouping similar answers and ensuring that responses can be analysed in non-subjective manner. The coded responses are presented in this document in chart form and discussed in the body of the report. The complete list of responses to open ended questions are appended to this document (Appendix E).

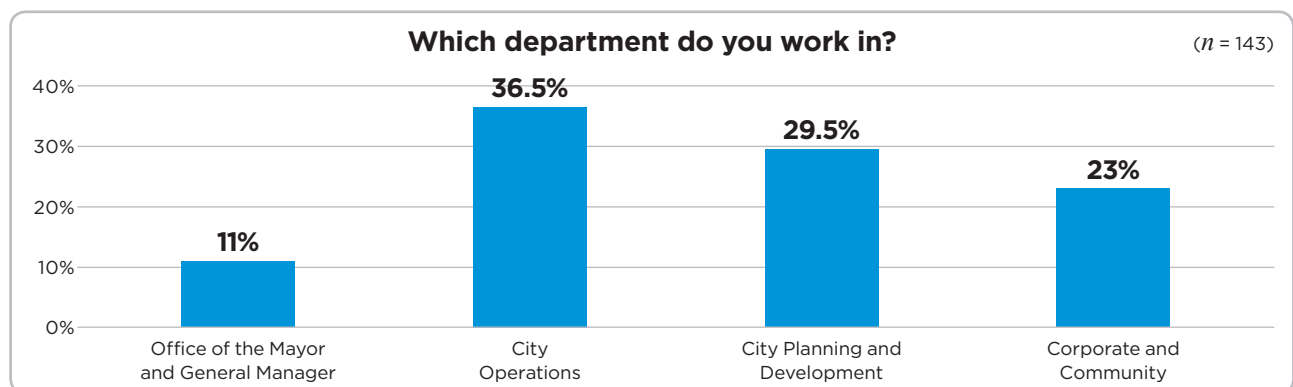
# 3 Demographics

42% (143) of Rockdale City Council staff completed the Rockdale City's Future staff survey.

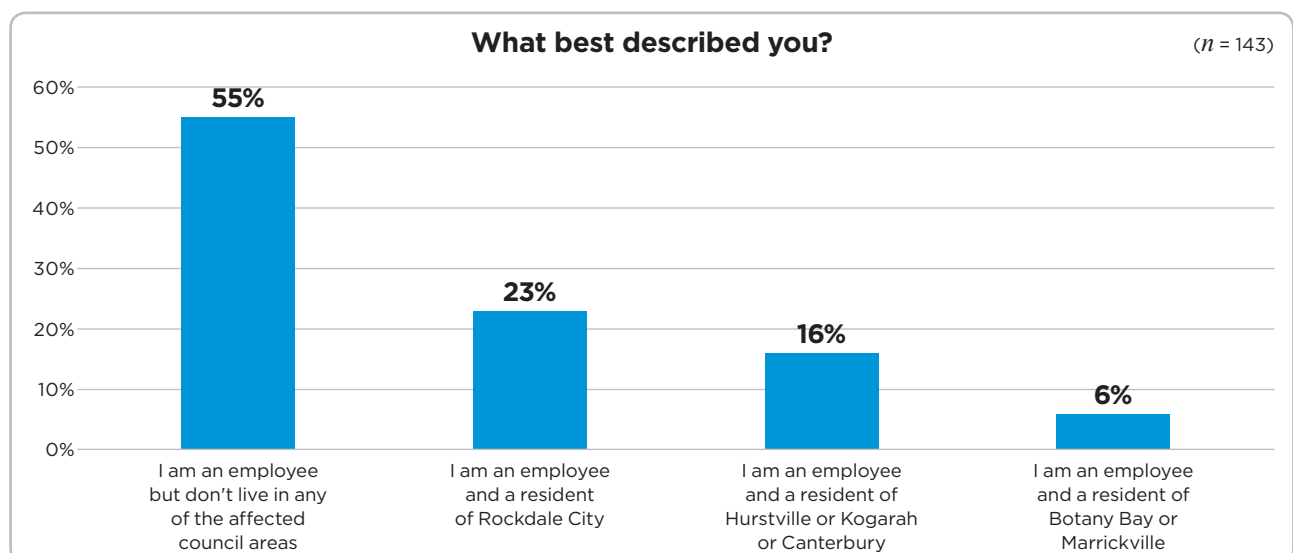
The length of employment was represented well with 28% being employed for 3 or less years, 26.5% employed for 9 to 14 years and 24.5% of respondents have worked for Rockdale City Council for 15 years or more.



A reasonable representation of respondents across the departments was received with the highest number 36.5% of responses received from the City Operations Department. The City Operations Department is the largest Council department within Council.



45% of respondents who completed the survey reside in one of the affected Council areas, with the majority residing in the Rockdale City area.



# 4 Executive Summary

Respondents were supportive of the State Government's proposed amalgamations, with more than half (55.6%) indicating a level of support. Many believed amalgamations would increase resources and improve Council's sustainability.

Although there was considerable support for the proposed amalgamations the preferred option as nominated by just over half (56.4%) of respondents was that Rockdale City Council stand-alone with an Improvement Program. There was a strong feeling amongst respondents that with the implementation of an Improvement Program Council would be financially sustainable and could meet the State Government's Fit for the Future benchmarks.

The least preferred option was the proposed merger of Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils with 44.9% of respondents ranking the option in sixth place. Many believed the region would be too large to effectively deliver Council services and maintain customer guarantees of service.

Maintaining or improving Council's service levels was a recurring theme. Only 22% believed Council's services would improve primarily through economies of scale. Those said that did an increase in resources and number of staff would enhance the quality of services delivered to the community.

Respondents anticipate that the community would expect an improved level of service if their residential and business rates increase in a merged Council. 37% of respondents stated a larger Council would be less effective at maintaining service levels due to the increased demands of a larger community and a greater area to service.

Respondents identified streamlining the individual council and team cultures as the biggest challenge facing merged Council. The amalgamated Council's culture and brand are closely linked to the community's sense of belonging and identity which was also considered important by respondents.

Job security and staffing was expected to be the second biggest challenge during amalgamations. The primary concern for respondents was the security of their positions including their position description and the anticipated workload of a merged Council.

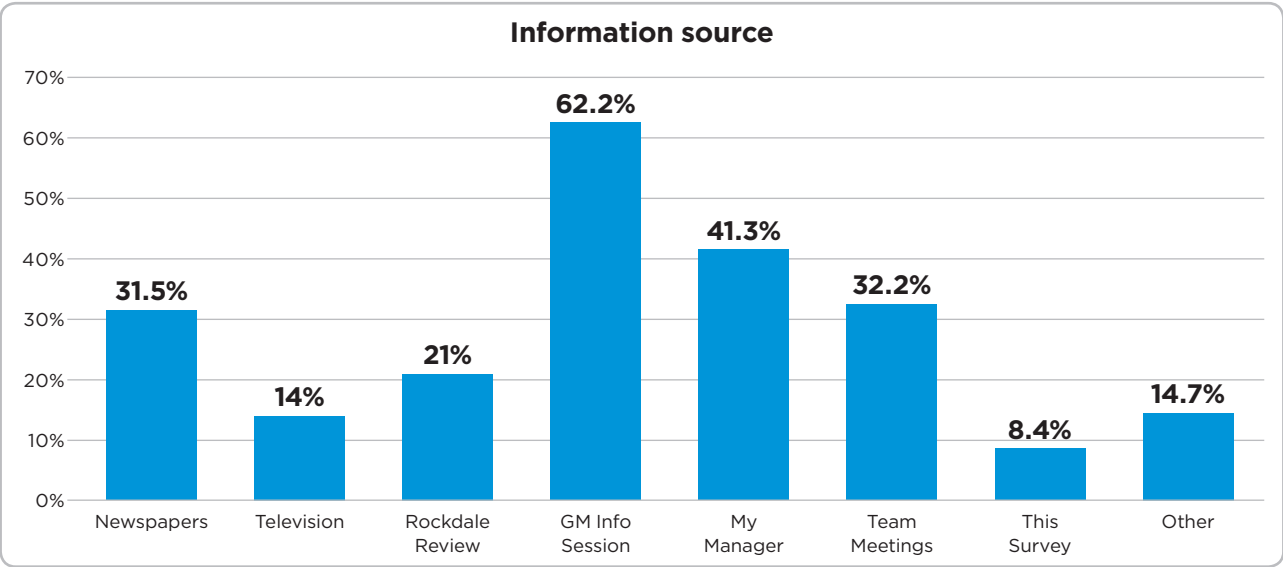
Minimising the impact of amalgamations on the community was identified as the third biggest challenge and maintaining service levels was the second most important theme.

Respondents felt the community should not experience a decline in service levels, with many believing a merged Council should be able to improve levels of service as a result of the increase in resources.

# 5 Results

## 5.1 AWARENESS OF FIT FOR THE FUTURE

When asked how they found out about the State Government’s Fit for the Future Program 62.2% respondents identified the General Manager’s Information Sessions as the primary information source. The other significant avenues for information included managers and team meetings. This suggests a good level of communication within Council about Fit for the Future.

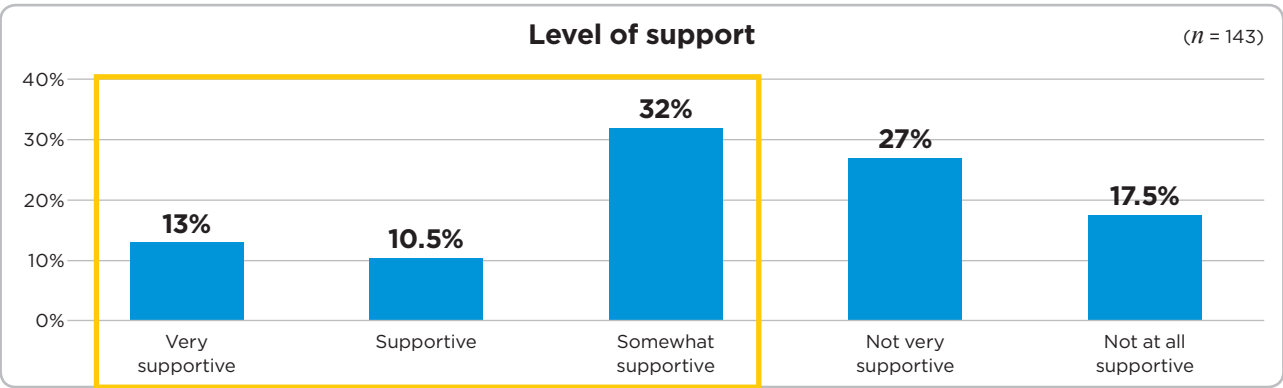


Total frequency doesn't equal 100% as multiple responses were chosen

## 5.2 LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS

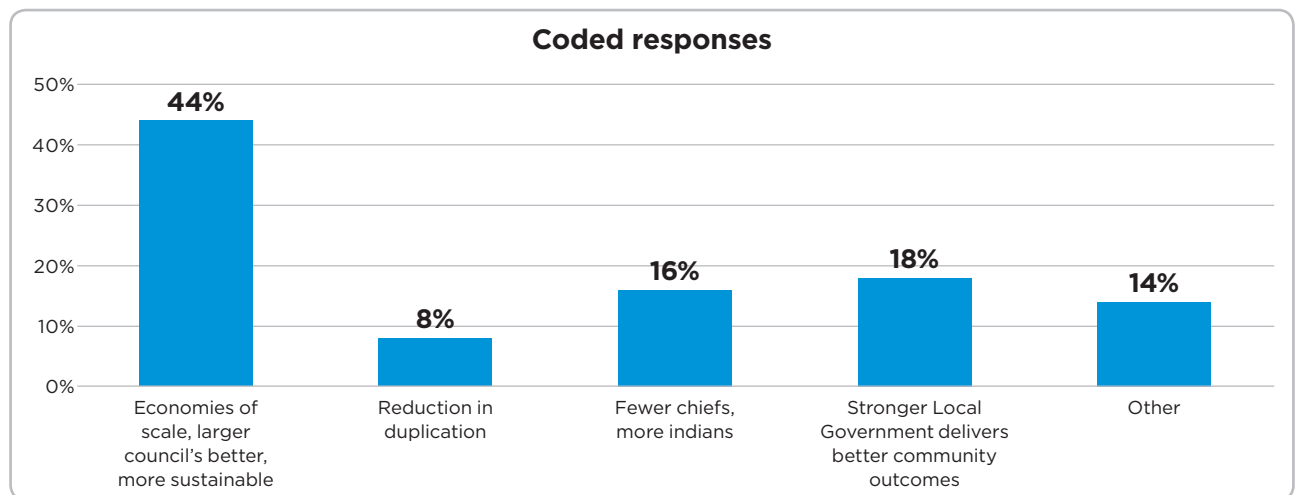
Respondents indicated a reasonable level of support for the State Government’s proposal to amalgamate, with 55.5% nominating some support.

*“Amalgamation of assets, processes, skills, staff, etc. could strengthen Council and provide good competitive spirit to become stronger”*



A number of reasons for supporting the State Government's proposal to amalgamate were provided. Economies of scale with larger councils perceived as better and more sustainable represented 44% of the total reasons for supporting amalgamation.

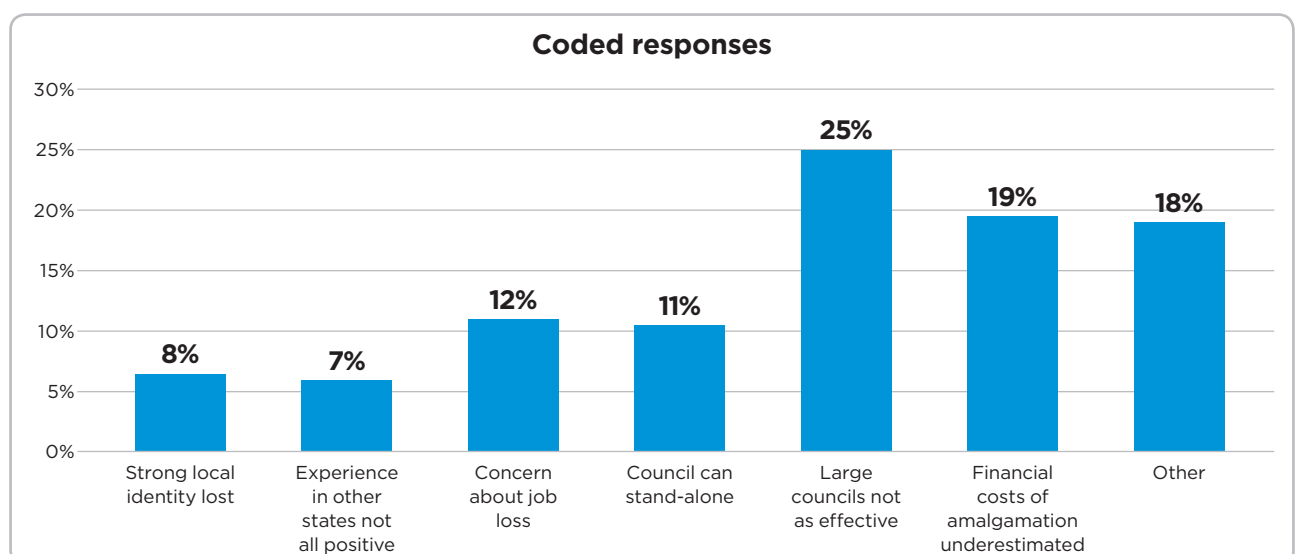
*“Larger enterprises are more sustainable through higher capability and better capacity to streamline activities and set up systems in place to turn around the local government culture into a more business like operation”*



Supportive *n* = 100

44.5% respondents stated they are 'not very supportive' or 'not supportive at all' with a considerable number of reasons provided against the State Government's proposal to amalgamate. The main concern from respondents was 'large councils are not as effective' followed by the 'financial costs of amalgamation are underestimated'.

*“There are benefits to staying alone and to amalgamate however I would argue that Local Government planning with communities works better at a localized level with smaller connected Local Government organisations. An amalgamation has the potential to create a larger tier of bureaucracy which lends itself to disconnecting from communities”*

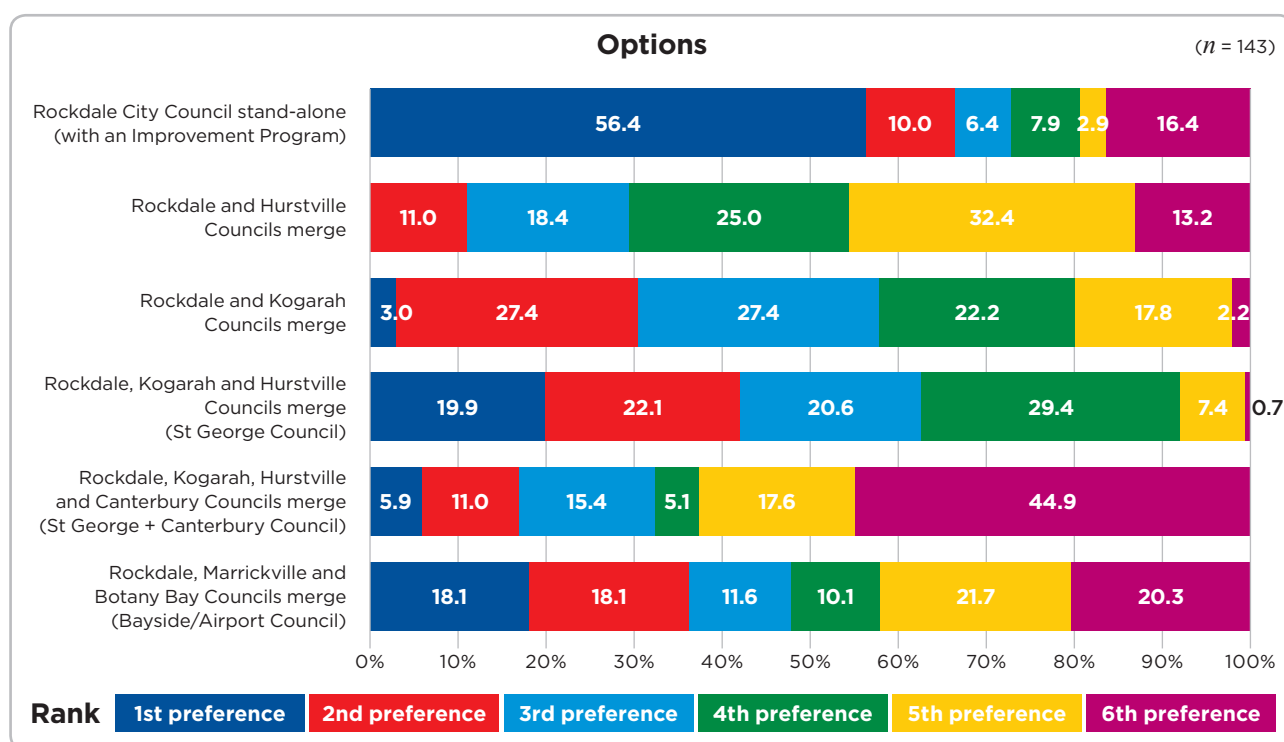


Not very supportive *n* = 115

## 5.3 PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OPTIONS

Respondents were asked to rank the options in order of preference from 1- 6. The Rockdale City's options presented to staff for consideration were:

- ◆ Rockdale City Council stand-alone (with an Improvement Program)
- ◆ Rockdale and Hurstville Councils merge
- ◆ Rockdale and Kogarah Councils merge
- ◆ Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils merge (St George Council)
- ◆ Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils merge (St George + Canterbury Council)
- ◆ Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Councils merge (Bayside/Airport Council)



### Preferred option

The preferred option nominated by 56.4% of respondents was that Rockdale City Council stand-alone (with an Improvement Program).

### Least preferred option

The least preferred option was the proposed merger of Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils with 44.9% of respondents ranking the option in sixth place.

## 5.4 CONSIDERATIONS FOR EACH OPTION

### Rockdale Stand-alone with an Improvement Program

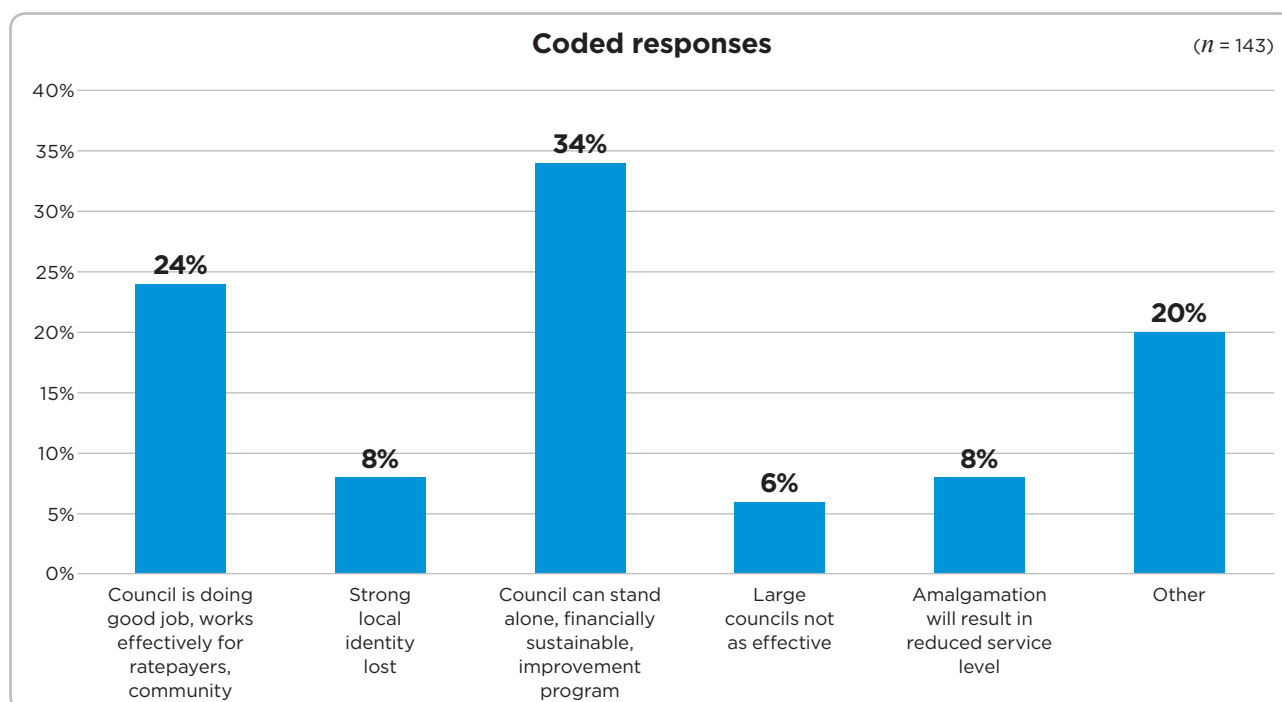
Respondents provided a range of reasons for their support for Rockdale City to stand-alone with an Improvement Program. The recurring theme was that with an Improvement Program Council would be financially sustainable and meet the State Government's Fit for the Future benchmarks.

Respondents felt strongly about maintaining the provision of localised support and services to address the needs of the community. Concerns regarding the costs associated with amalgamations were also raised, in particular, that a larger amalgamated Council would disrupt service levels as a merged Council implements new operational costs and service schedules.



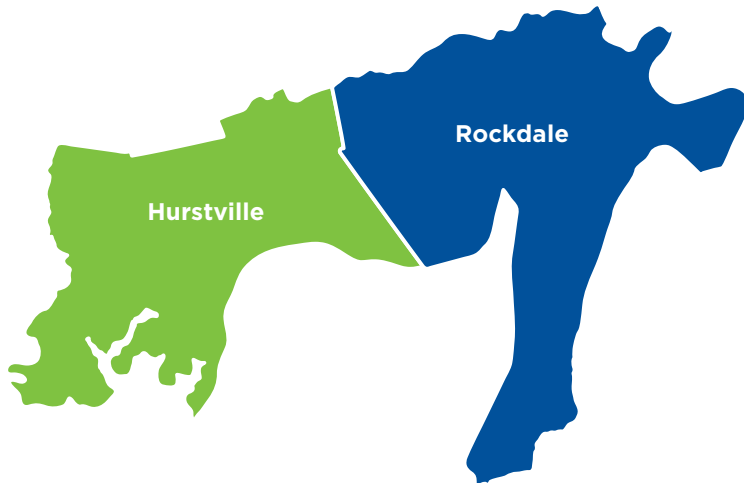
*"...There is a current argument that large local authorities disempower local citizens. When people feel disempowered by top-down governance the trend is to passively accept that change is impossible. From a financial perspective, stand-alone allows us to prioritise areas of need with our communities and spend based on need and early intervention and prevention priorities to ensure bigger impact outcomes for our communities. Larger organisations tend to lend itself to less spread thinly across a larger geographical area"*

*"Rockdale Council is serving the community and focused continuous improvements, it can only get better with an Improvement Program in place"*



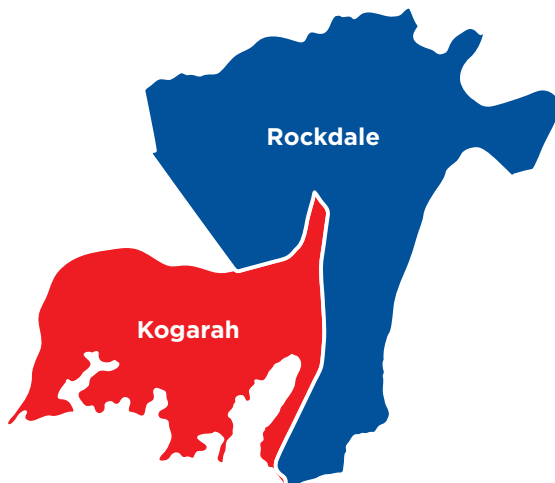
## Rockdale and Hurstville Councils merge

The option to merge Rockdale and Hurstville Councils was not selected as a preferred option.



## Rockdale and Kogarah Councils to merge

Only 3% of respondents chose Rockdale and Kogarah Councils to merge as their preferred option. The reasons given were geographic proximity and that the merge would be manageable.

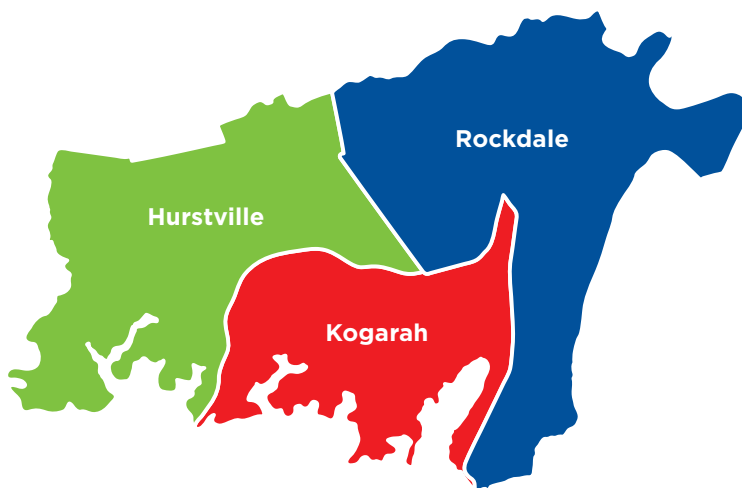


*"I think that Rockdale and Kogarah geographically are a good fit and the 'expansion' would not be too difficult to manage"*

## St George (Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils merge)

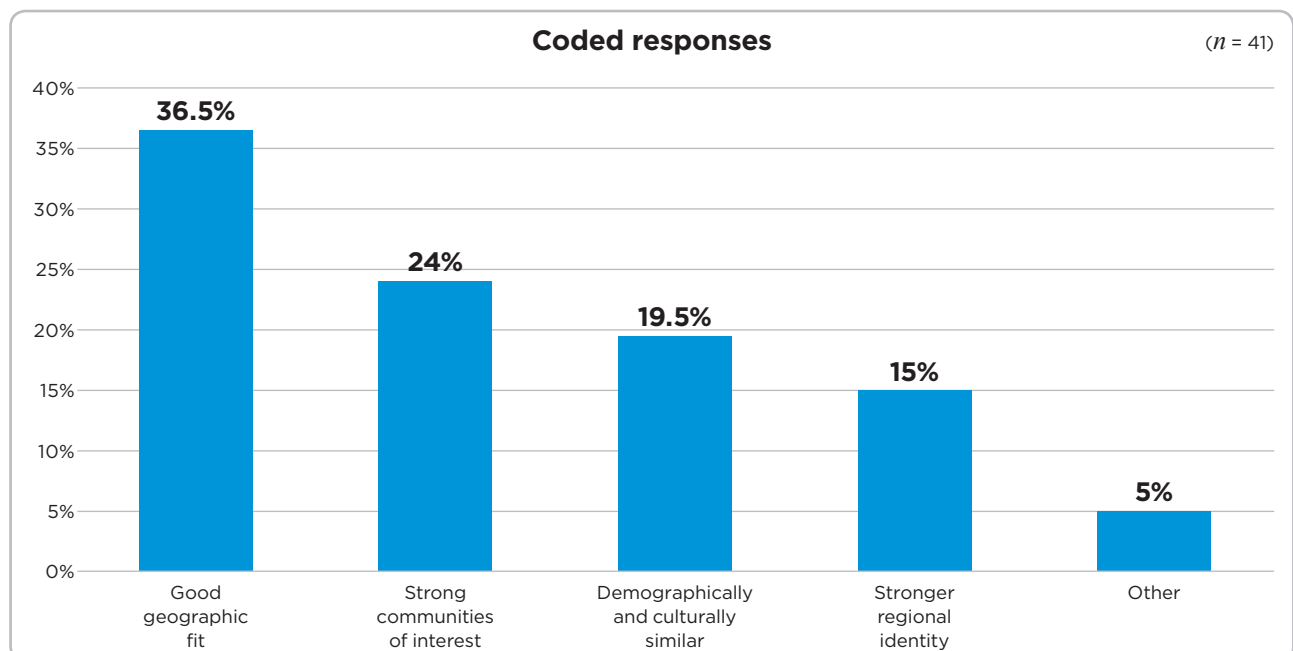
Respondents who chose this as their preferred option was the geographic proximity and the demographic similarities as their main reasons. The recognition of the Councils as an already established St George region was also a common theme amongst the responses.

Respondents felt strongly that the Councils shared a mutually strong community of interest and had already demonstrated efficiencies in partnership through the waste contract.



*“It makes most sense from a geographical, cultural and practical view to merge with our closest neighbours who share common needs”*

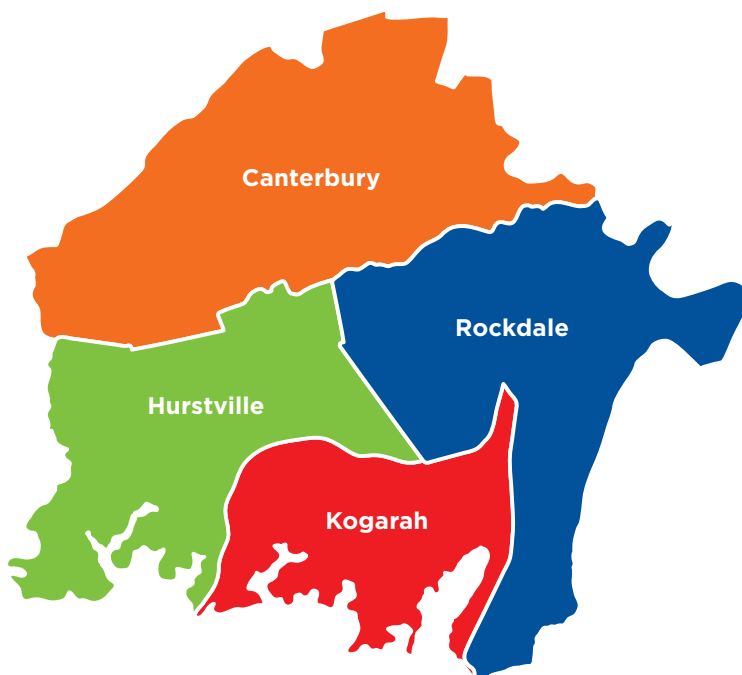
*“It’s a natural amalgamation of adjoining areas based on topographical features which separate this group from adjoining Council’s i.e. Cooks River to the north and Georges River to the South. These Councils have also historically worked together and have joint plans and studies”*



## St George and Canterbury Councils merge

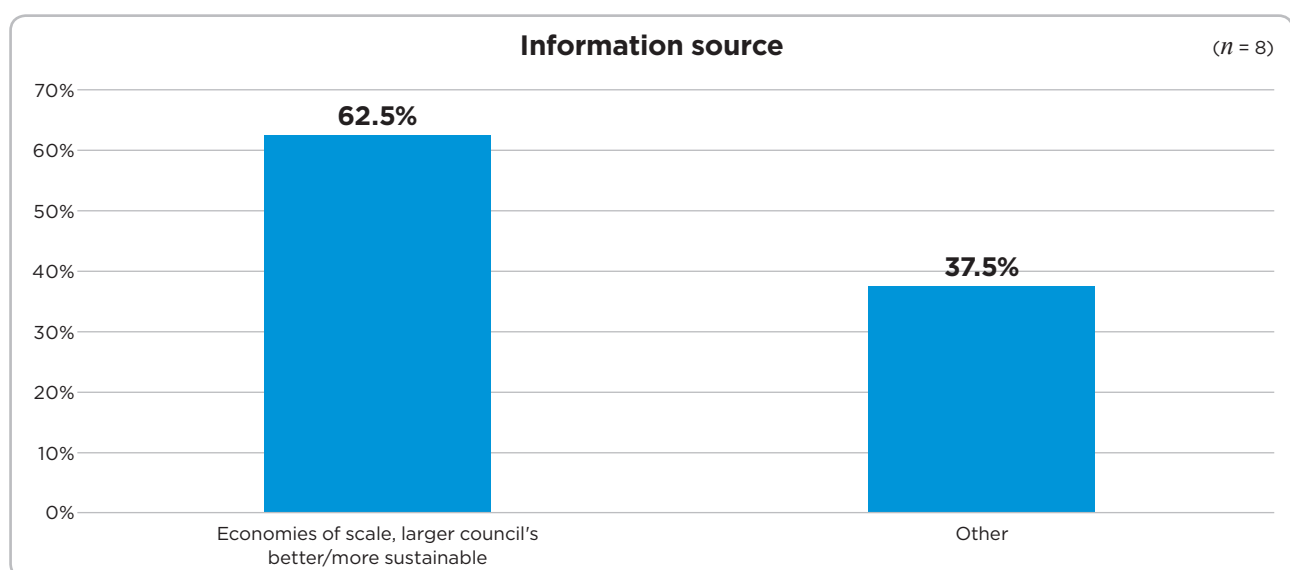
Those who did prefer this option felt the combined Councils would benefit from economies of scale and be sustainable.

The proposed merge of Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils was voted the least preferred option. The main concern expressed was that the merged area would become too large. There was a fear that the local identity could be lost and the Council would be unable to efficiently manage services across the widespread community.



*“Bigger Council will have more resources to deal with issues that are relevant to the local area”*

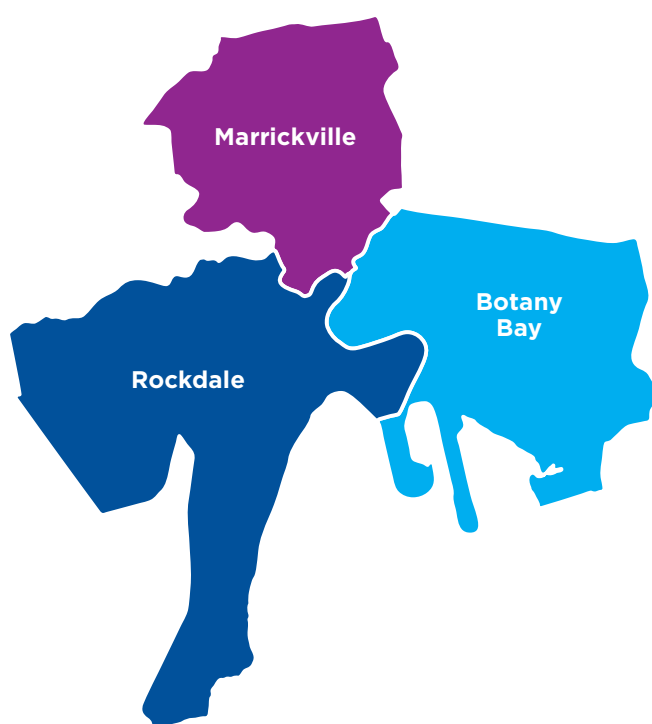
*“It is the larger geographical area and has more of a similar multicultural breakdown to that of Rockdale. I believe the issues experiences by these councils are similar to those we currently experience ...I believe we would bring a substantial knowledge base to these areas but may also be able to learn a thing or two from their processes”*



## Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Councils merge (Bayside/Airport Council)

Respondents consistently focused on the revenue and opportunities associated with the Airport when selecting the merge of Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Councils as their preferred option. Other common themes amongst the responses included the combined Councils strong community of interest and the economic benefits associated with thriving Town Centre's that are located closer to CBD (Central Business District).

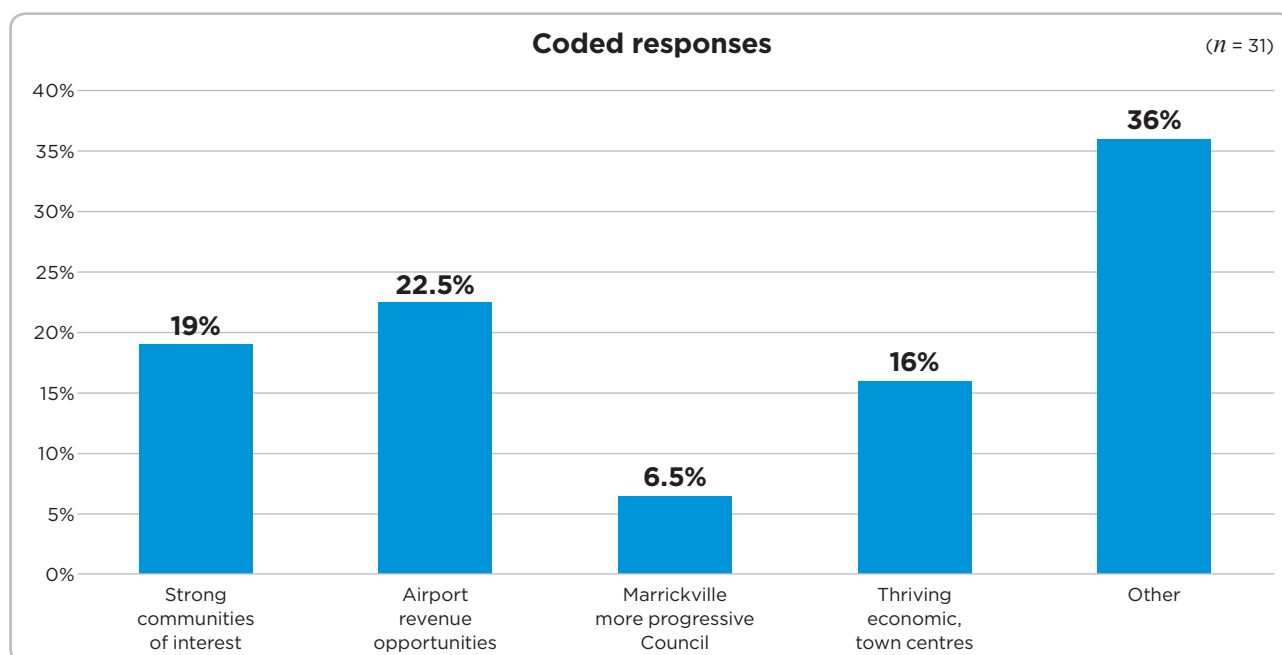
Other respondents recognised Marrickville Council as progressive and saw the merge as an opportunity for improved economic development and sustainability.



*“Rockdale’s changing population, opportunities and features have strong links to Councils closer to the CBD. We also share catchment boundaries and industry links that would be better served in a more integrated management approach”*

*“I believe that Marrickville has the most progressive approach to managing its’ operations with regard to its’ constituents requirements, the environment and image within local government and that would help bring Botany into a much better standing and enhance the way that Rockdale responds to all the areas for which it operates also”*

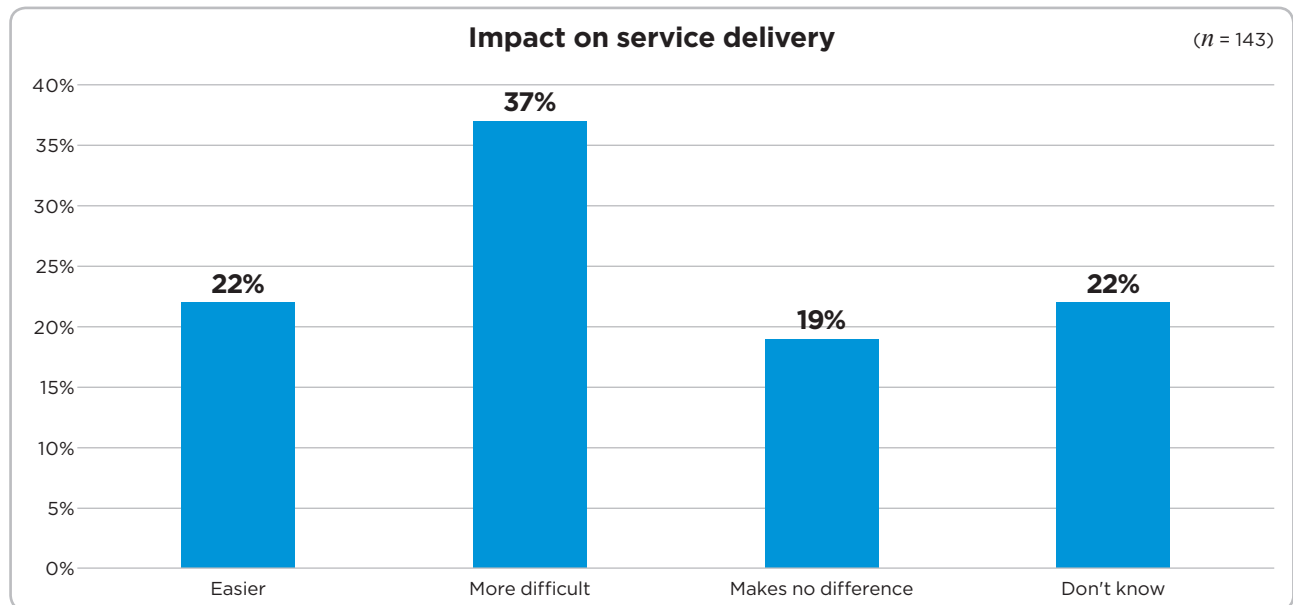
*“The geographical location and financial stability of these Councils, suggests that this would be the most viable option”*



## 5.5 SERVICE DELIVERY TO THE COMMUNITY

Respondents were asked to indicate how the State Government's proposed amalgamations may impact the delivery of services to the community.

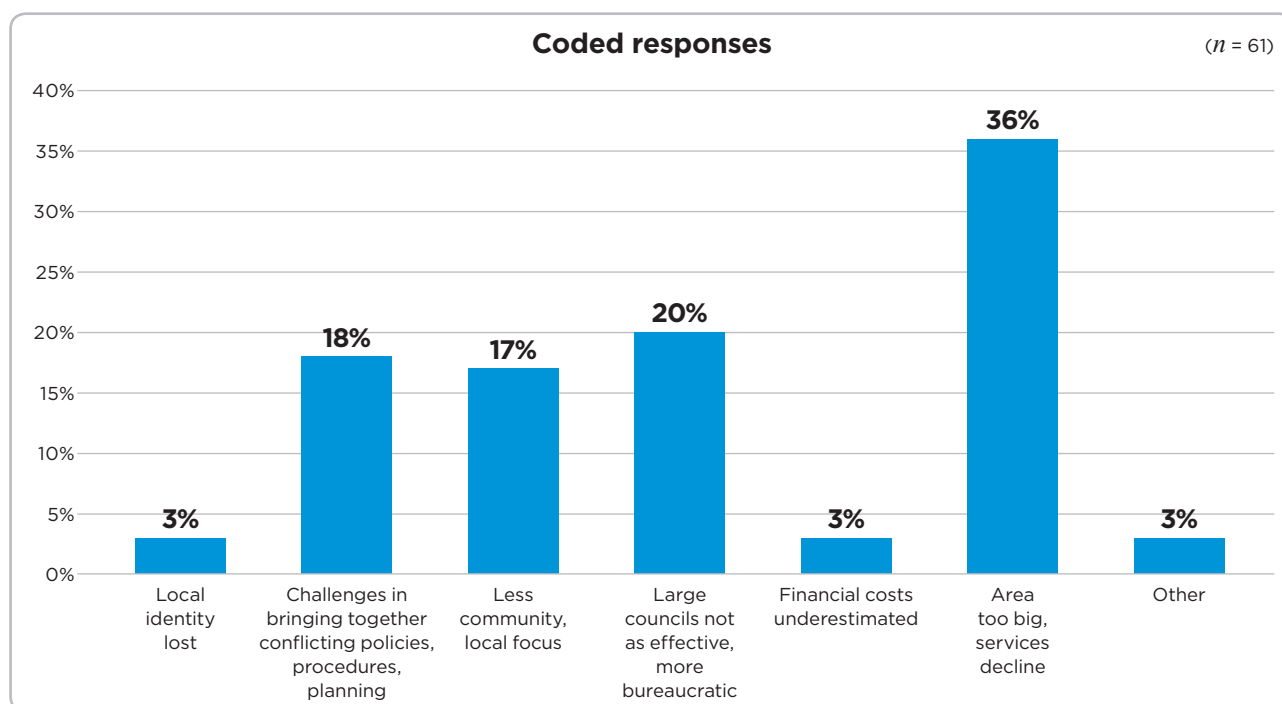
Results show 37% of respondents felt the proposed amalgamations would make it more difficult to deliver services, whilst 22% believed services delivery would become easier.



## More difficult

Respondents felt strongly that an increased area would decrease the level of service and increase the community's frustrations with individual issues. Respondents anticipated the community would expect an improved level of service if their residential and business rates were to increase.

There was a sense that a larger Council would be less effective due to an increased bureaucratic environment and a decreased focus on localised community needs. Respondents also raised their concerns about the challenges associated with combining Councils who have implemented various systems, policies and procedures to deliver services.



*“I think it would be more difficult at the outset with the integration of staff, systems and procedures but over time would develop into a more efficient and feasible model”*

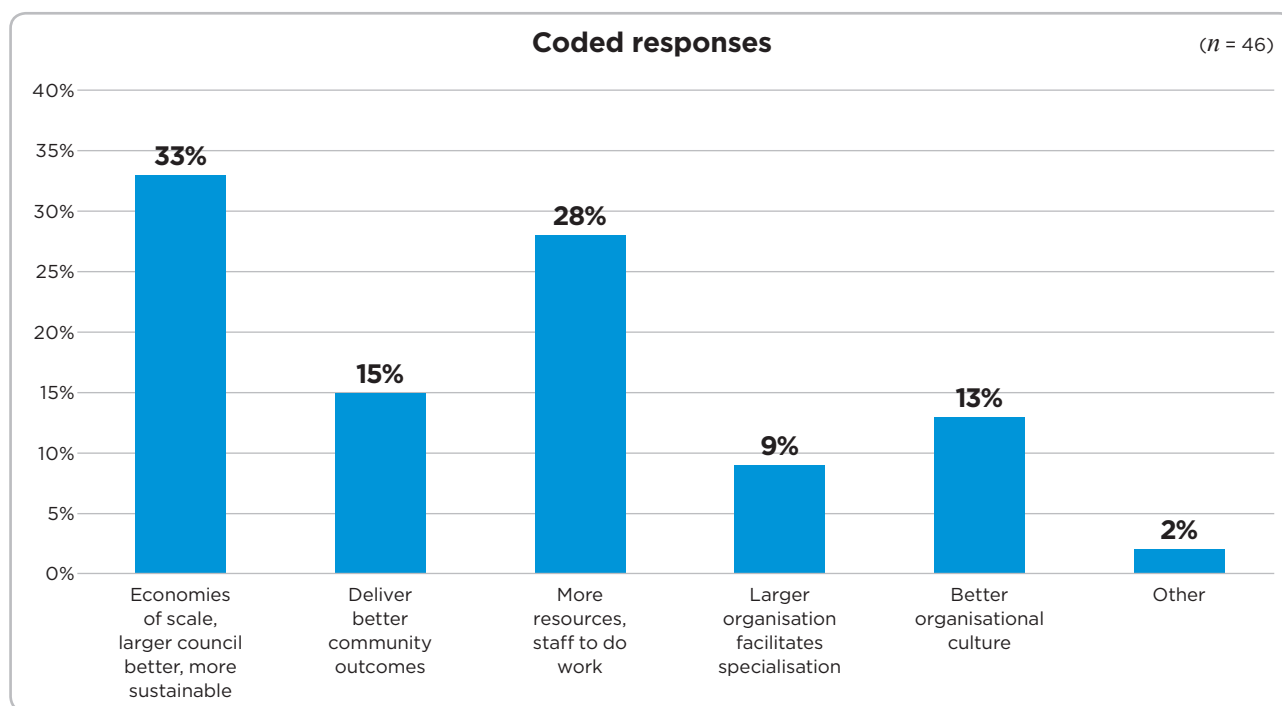
*“...Generally I believe there will be greater services expectation, more residents and more difficult to manage a greater range of service to the number of residents. There will be heightened community expectations because there will be a greater rate base, and perceptions of money”*

*“Working where I do, I see on a daily basis the frustrations of our customers trying to get Council to act on issues – amalgamating would only increase these frustrations”*



## Easier

Respondents who indicated services will be easier to deliver suggested a larger Council would benefit from the economies of scale and would be financially sustainable. Respondents strongly felt the increase in resources and number of staff would improve the quality of services delivered to the community.



*“Some services will be easier to deliver because of the ability to pool resources currently used by each Council to deliver a more integrated and cost effective delivery outcome. Of course this could also be delivered with a greater focus of regional delivery of certain services”*

*“We are already sharing services with our surrounding Councils, if we combine more they too will become more efficient”*



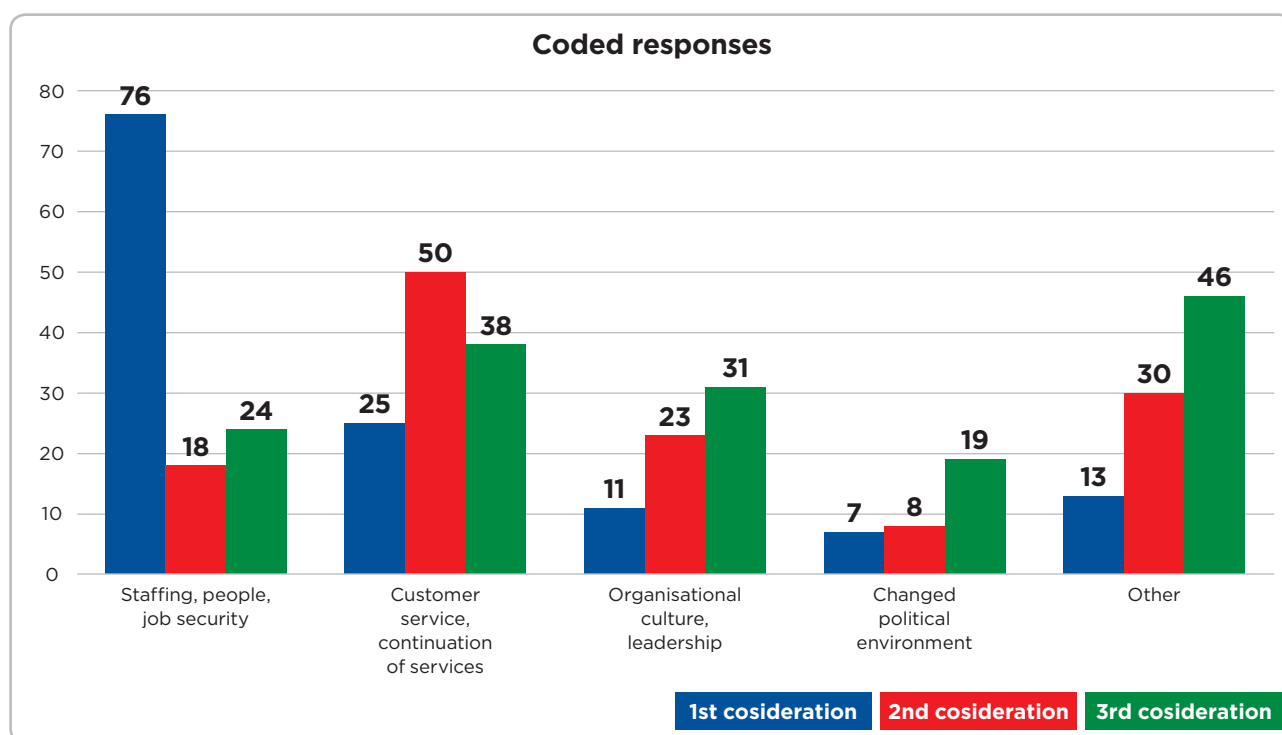
## 5.6 GENERAL AMALGAMATION CONSIDERATIONS

For respondents the following were of most importance to be considered in the event the State Government's proposed amalgamations are implemented:

1. Staffing, people, job security
2. Customer service, continuation of services

Notably, respondents highlighted concerns of job security and staffing to be of the highest importance. The primary concern for many was the security of their positions and the workload within a larger Council. Some respondents felt the increased number in staff would result in greater expertise, the development of specialist positions and create job opportunities that would lead to increase productivity as well as savings.

Respondents felt strongly that service provision should not decline in a merge Council. Many stated the increased resources of a merged Council should improve the level of service that each community has experienced. Other responses commonly focused on maintaining community belonging/sense of identity and ensuring the Rockdale community's voice is not lost in a merged Council.



*“Ensuring all obligations are met without increasing rates, fees and charges for residents”*

*“Current and planned work not be disregarded”*

*“Opportunities to expand our services and expertise”*



## 5.7 CHALLENGES IN ANY MERGER

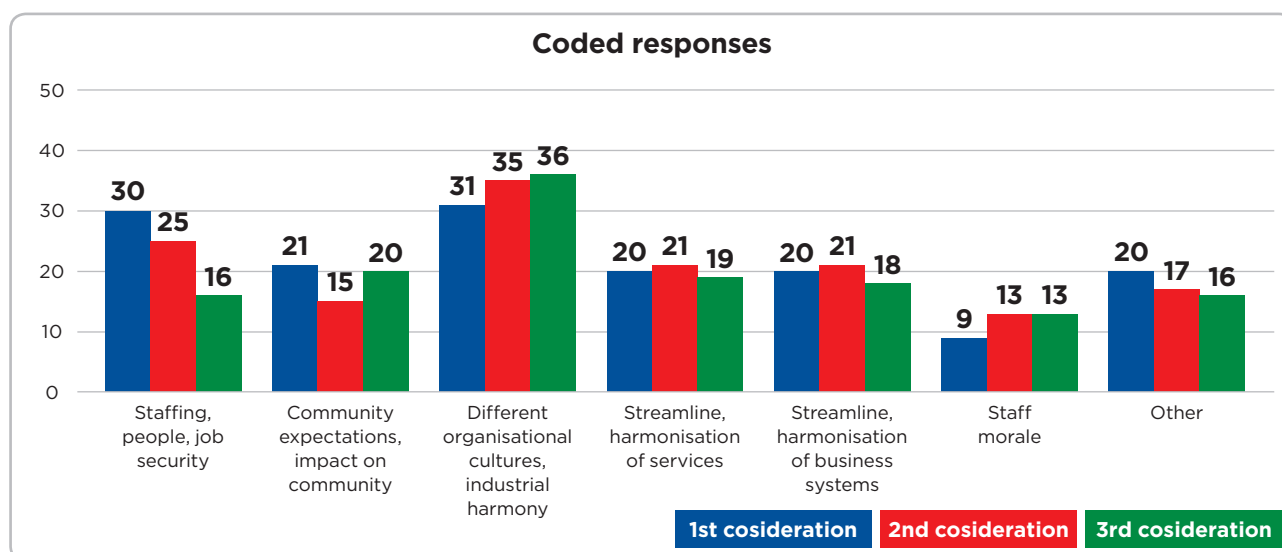
The three biggest challenges identified by respondents in the event of amalgamations are:

1. Different organisational cultures, industrial harmony
2. Staffing, people, job security
3. Community expectations, impact on community

Predominantly, respondents raised concerns about the challenges associated with streamlining the individual Council and team cultures. Further, respondents identified that the development of an organisational structure, culture and branding would be a challenge in the initial stages of the merger.

Staffing and job security was also identified as a challenge with job security as the main issue. Respondents considered that resistance to change, loss of corporate knowledge, leadership struggles and the management of increased levels of staff will impact the merged Council.

Respondents conveyed strongly that the community of a merged Council should not experience a decline in the provision of service. Notably, respondents identified maintaining service levels during Council amalgamation as a challenge.



*“Ensuring residents are still heard when they have local issues that need to be addressed”*

*“Conveying the changes in processes to the community ...and maintaining levels of service during the transition”*

*“Determining core services for the new Council and hence how the organisation will be branded and structured”*



# 6 Appendices

**Appendix A** Message from the General Manager

**Appendix B** Questions and answer fact sheet

**Appendix C** Rockdale City's Future survey

**Appendix D** Email to staff

**Appendix E** Survey results: open ended comments

## APPENDIX A

### MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



Fit for the Future

## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

### Message from the General Manager – April 2015

#### To all Staff

By now, all of you have heard about the State Government's Program, Fit for the Future or more simply, possible Council amalgamations. Our response to the Government's Fit for the Future program continues to progress and it is timely to update staff on Rockdale's approach. Council is obliged to carefully consider the options for Rockdale City and prepare a submission by 30 June 2015.

#### The Options for Rockdale City - What is Council doing? What if we do nothing?

At this stage, it is unlikely that we will find a willing merge partner from amongst our neighbouring Councils although those discussions are continuing. If there is no agreement amongst councils willing to merge, Rockdale City must look to gain Fit for the Future endorsement as a standalone Council. We will do this through the submission of an improvement proposal focussing on scale (our potential growth in population) and capacity (our financial sustainability in the long term).

#### Communications on Fit for the Future

Our communications and release dates so far include:

- September 2014 – My email to all staff advising of the Government's release of the Fit for the Future program
- October 2014 - Mayoral Minute on Council's approach
- Jan / Feb 2015 Rockdale Review – Options available for Rockdale
- February 2015 - Report to Council including timeline / milestones for responding to Fit for the Future
- March 2015 - Rockdale Review – Let's talk about the Airport (focussed on what the removal of the airport from our boundary would mean for Rockdale)
- 26 March 2015 – General Manager Briefings to all Staff

#### The next phase of communications will include:

- April 2015 - a staff survey will provide an opportunity for you to let me know the type of information that is important to you regarding Fit for the Future
- April 2015 - an extensive community consultation and information pack including community survey, released to all residents of Rockdale City.
- May 2015 – Report to Council based upon results of community consultation. These results will be used to inform our proposed response to Fit for the Future.
- Mid June 2015 – Council resolution on our response to the State Government Independent Panel.
- June 2015 – Submission of our response to the State Government Independent Panel seeking Fit for the Future endorsement.

PART 1

## APPENDIX A

### MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

### Fit for the Future - Staff Survey

In April, Council will be seeking feedback from our staff and our community.

The staff survey will be released in line with our community consultation.

The staff survey will focus on what you would like to know about Fit for the Future. I will also ask you to detail areas of improvement to assist us in becoming "Fit for the Future." For example, you may have some ideas on how we can introduce better ways of working to reduce duplication; minimise waste; or re-shape our services to save time and money.

I am also interested in hearing what you think the opportunities and challenges are for us if we were to become a larger council.

The role of the Unions in Fit for the Future is a very important one. They will continue to answer your questions about amalgamations and any issues you may have around your continued employment entitlements, all of which are protected under legislation.

### Fit for the Future – Community Survey

The community survey aims to understand which options to merge with neighbouring councils the community prefer – if any.

All data collected will be analysed and will inform our response to the Government, based on the overall best option for Rockdale.

In the course of your Council duties, you may be asked by members of the community, about our Fit for the Future approach. To ensure consistency in the information provided, please refer any customer inquiries to Liz Rog on 9562 1858.

Many of us live and work in the Rockdale Local Government Area. I encourage you to participate in both the community survey as a resident and to also take part in the employee survey.

If you have any questions, please refer to your Manager in the first instance.

Regards  
Meredith Wallace  
GENERAL MANAGER

PART 2

## APPENDIX B

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FACT SHEET



Fit for the Future

## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

### Questions & Answer Fact Sheet – General Manager Briefings – 26 March 2015

The following questions were raised at the four General Manager Briefing Sessions for all staff. Answers were provided at each of the sessions by the General Manager. The questions have been themed and are now included here for the information of all staff.

#### Theme: Amalgamations (Mergers)

**Q: If Council merges with another Council, how long would it take to form the new Council?**

**A:** The past experience of amalgamations in QLD and VIC, suggest a transition period of 12-18 months is required to properly 'blend' organisations. Time frames also depend on how many councils merge together and how well prepared those councils are to begin the transition phase.

**Q: When is this going to happen?**

**A:** Every Council in NSW is required to make a submission on Fit for the Future to the State Government by 30 June 2015. The Liberal government have indicated that they will respond to all Councils based on their submissions, late in 2015. The original plan by the Liberal State Government indicated voluntary mergers would begin with the September 2016 local government election. It is possible that this election may be delayed to enable enough time for new Councils to better plan their approach.

**Q: Can the State Government 'force' us to amalgamate?**

**A:** Yes, the State Government has the right to compel us to amalgamate; or to change our boundaries through the Boundary Review Committee. Fit for the Future is the State Government's Program for Local Government Reform. It was introduced under the O'Farrell State Government and has escalated under Premier Baird's government.

**Q: If we amalgamate, how long will it be until we start to see real benefits?**

**A:** The independent reports from Morrison Low suggest any merge option for Rockdale will require between six and eight years before we start to see improvements in the performance of the new Council. Initially there will also be quite substantial costs to the new Council (perhaps around \$34M) as well as an initial decline in productivity and performance (this is based on experience of other states where amalgamations have occurred). While there are a number of State Government financial incentives to assist Councils who agree to merge, there is concern across the local government industry that these incentives are not enough to cover amalgamation costs.

**Q: Queensland is an example where amalgamations are occurring. Some of the amalgamated Councils in Queensland have now de-amalgamated because it didn't work out for them. Will that happen to us?**

**A:** The state government is saying voluntary amalgamations at the moment. Rockdale City has always stated our position on Fit for the Future is that we are open to voluntary mergers that do not disadvantage our community or our staff.

#### Theme: Amalgamations (Mergers)

**Q: If we standalone, will there be a restructure?**

**A:** At this stage, we can only operate on what is known. The premier has advised that *"doing nothing is not an option. Every Council in NSW is required to make a submission on Fit for the Future to the State Government by 30 June 2015."*

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FACT SHEET



Fit for the Future

## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

At this stage, it looks likely that we will not have a merge partner and we will need to submit a standalone Rockdale City Council submission that includes an Improvement Plan. Our Improvement Plan must demonstrate how we will meet the seven financial and asset related criteria to be Fit for the Future. At the moment, we achieve 2 from these 7 criteria (this is about average for most NSW Councils).

We need to identify efficiencies we can make as well as how we will implement these efficiencies to ensure our future sustainability. The information we collect from our community survey and our staff survey will help us in formulating our response.

**Q: Community members are asking us about amalgamations and we don't know what to say?**

**A:** In April, we will be distributing a Fit for the Future information brochure and survey asking our community to tell us their views - about Council generally but also about amalgamations – if they want to amalgamate and who they would like to amalgamate with. This information brochure and survey will be distributed to every letterbox in Rockdale City. The information will also be available on our website at [www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture).

Please refer any inquiries to our website or to the paper copy of the information brochure and community survey. Customers can also telephone our customer service centre where they will be referred to the right people for a response.

### Theme: Councillors

**Q: How many Councillors would there be in a new amalgamated Council?**

**A:** The Local government Act limits Councillors to a maximum of 15 per LGA. Unless they change the act that will remain the maximum number of councillors. This means that, in any merge option, representation will decrease as each Councillor serves a much higher number of residents.

**Q: Would the Councillors be paid more due to the increased ratio of residents to Councillors?**

**A:** In their report the Independent Panel made a number of other recommendations for local government reform, including increased remuneration and training for Councillors to better reflect the complexity of the role. We would support that reform.

### Theme: Jobs

**Q: Will there be changes to jobs?**

**A:** Under our Award, continued employment conditions are protected for three years. Past amalgamations indicate that workforce numbers do not decrease for general staff. There may be changes in starting points and work teams however we would still be required to provide our existing services. There will be changes at the senior management level – for example a new Council will only need one General Manager. A new Council will not need 9+ Directors. Unions continue to play a very important role in Fit For the Future. Unions will continue this role and answer your questions about employment conditions and any concerns you have, as we progress Fit for the Future.

PART 2

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FACT SHEET



Fit for the Future

## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

### Theme: Rates

**Q: As a resident, I am worried that rates will go up?**

**A:** Predicting changes in rates if there is a Council merger is very difficult to do. Experience in VIC and QLD as well as some previous NSW Council amalgamations suggests that rates never go down. Across the Councils now, there are different minimum rates and different proportions of rates being paid by business and residential ratepayers.

In a merged council, some properties rates would rise and for other properties rates would stay 'on hold' until all properties caught up to the single rating system set by the new council. Land values play a key role in rate setting – usually the higher the land value, the higher the rates to be paid.

### Theme: Services

**Q: Our service level currently is four annual pick ups and Hurstville do two annual pick ups? In a merge, would this change so we only do two or would Hurstville now get four?**

**A:** The suite of services offered by individual councils today is a reflection of decisions made by those individual councils in the past. Service decisions are generally based on community desires and needs, funding availability or strategic business choices. Service levels will need to be reviewed in the event of a Council merge to reflect the desires and needs of the new combined communities and the newly elected Council.

### What's next?

Rockdale City Community Survey and Staff Survey on Fit for the Future will be released early April 2015.

### For more information:

(w) [www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture](http://www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/fitforthefuture)

(t) 9562-1858 – Liz Rog

(e) [lrog@rockdale.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lrog@rockdale.nsw.gov.au)

PART 3

## APPENDIX C

### ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE STAFF SURVEY

Hard Copy:



## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

### Welcome to the staff survey on Fit for the Future.

Before completing this survey, please ensure you have read the accompanying information brochure "Fit for the Future - Rockdale City's Future"

Questions marked with a red \* require a response.

#### Q1 \* How did you find out about the Fit for the Future Program? (Select all that apply)

- Newspapers ☐
- Television ☐
- Rockdale Review ☐
- General Manager Information Session ☐
- My Manager ☐
- Team Meetings ☐
- Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

#### Q2a \*How supportive are you of the State Government's proposal to amalgamate councils generally?

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

#### Q2b Why do you say that?

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#### Q3a \*As you know Council is considering a number of possible options for amalgamation. Please rank them in order of your preference - 1 being your most preferred and 6 being your least preferred. (Put one tick in each column)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
No change - stay as Rockdale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
St George Council (Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
St George Council (Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale + Canterbury)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Airport Council (Botany Bay, Marrickville, Rockdale)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale and Kogarah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale and Hurstville	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PART 1

## APPENDIX C

### ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE STAFF SURVEY



## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

**Q3b** \* Why did you select that option as number 1 or your most preferred?

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**Q3c** \* Why did you select that option as number 6 or your least preferred?

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**Q4a** \* On balance, do you think a larger Council will make it easier or more difficult to deliver services to the community?

- Easier ☐
- More difficult ☐
- Make no difference ☐
- Don't know ☐

**Q4b** \* Why do you say that?

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**Q5a** \* What are the 3 most important things to you in Council amalgamations?

- 1 

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- 2 

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- 3 

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**Q5b** \* Why do you say that?

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PART 2

## APPENDIX C

### ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE STAFF SURVEY



## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

**Q6a** \* What 3 things do you think will be our biggest challenges if we amalgamate?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Q6b** \* Why do you say that?

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**Q7** \*Thinking about the way we do business now, what do you think we could do to introduce better ways of working to reduce duplication; minimise waste; or re-shape our services to save time and money? Please write in any suggestions you have.

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Thank you for your responses - please answer the following questions so that we can be sure we have a good cross section of staff participating in the survey. The information you give us is confidential; it will be used to inform our submission to the State Government and help us shape an effective communication and change management plan for the future.

**Q7** \*How long have you worked for council?

- 0-3 years ☐
- 4-8 years ☐
- 9-14 years ☐
- 15-19 years ☐
- 20+ years ☐

**Q8** \* Which Department do you work in?

- Office of the Mayor and General Manager ☐
- City Operations ☐
- City Planning and Development ☐
- Corporate and Community ☐

## APPENDIX C

### ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE STAFF SURVEY



## ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

### Q9 \* Which of the following best describes you?

- I am an employee but don't live in any of the affected council areas ☐
- I am an employee and a resident of Rockdale City ☐
- I am an employee and a resident of Hurstville or Kogarah or Canterbury ☐
- I am an employee and a resident of Botany Bay or Marrickville ☐

### Q10 \* Gender

- Male ☐
- Female ☐


**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We will continue to keep you informed as more information becomes available. If you have any questions, please speak with your immediate supervisor or Manager in the first instance.**


PART 4

# APPENDIX C

## ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE STAFF SURVEY

Online:





# ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE

**Welcome to the staff survey on Fit for the Future.**

*Before completing this survey, please ensure you have read the accompanying information brochure "Fit for the Future - Rockdale City's Future" and the Q&A document from the General Managers Information Sessions. These documents can be found on the Corporate Portal Home Page under Fit for the Future.*

Questions marked with a red \* require a response.

**\* How did you find out about the Fit for the Future Program? (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ Newspapers
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Rockdale Review
- ☐ General Manager Information Session
- ☐ My Manager
- ☐ Team Meetings
- ☐ This survey
- ☐ Other

**\* How supportive are you of the State Government's proposal to amalgamate councils generally?**

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

**\* Why do you say that?**

**\* As you know Council is considering a number of possible options for amalgamation. Please rank them in order of your preference - 1 being your most preferred and 6 being your least preferred.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rockdale City Council Stand Alone (with an Improvement Program)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale and Hurstville Councils merge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale and Kogarah Councils merge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils merge (St George Council)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils merge (St George + Canterbury Council)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Councils merge (Bayside/Airport Council)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* Why did you select that option as number 1 or your most preferred?**

**\* Why did you select that option as number 6 or your least preferred?**

**\* Do you think a larger Council will make it easier or more difficult to deliver services to the community?**

- ☐ Easier
- ☐ More difficult
- ☐ Make no difference
- ☐ Don't know

PART 1

## APPENDIX C

# ROCKDALE CITY'S FUTURE STAFF SURVEY

\* Why do you say that?

\* What are the 3 most important things to you in Council amalgamations?

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>

\* Why do you say that?

\* What 3 things do you think will be our biggest challenges if we amalgamate?

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>

\* Why do you say that?

\* Thinking about the way we do business now, what do you think we could do to introduce better ways of working to reduce duplication; minimise waste; or re-shape our services to save time and money? Please write in any suggestions you have.

Thank you for your responses - please answer the following questions so that we can be sure we have a good cross section of staff participating in the survey. The information you give us is confidential; it will be used to inform our submission to the State Government and help us shape an effective communication and change management plan for the future.

\* How long have you worked for council?

- ☐ 0-3 years  
☐ 4-8 years  
☐ 9-14 years  
☐ 15-19 years  
☐ 20+ years

\* Which Department do you work in?

- ☐ Office of the Mayor and General Manager  
☐ City Operations  
☐ City Planning and Development  
☐ Corporate and Community

\* What best describes you?

- ☐ I am an employee but don't live in any of the affected council areas  
☐ I am an employee and a resident of Rockdale City  
☐ I am an employee and a resident of Hurstville or Kogarah or Canterbury  
☐ I am an employee and a resident of Botany Bay or Marrickville

\* Gender

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We will continue to keep you informed as more information becomes available. If you have any questions, please speak with your immediate supervisor or Manager in the first instance.

[Submit Survey](#)

PART 2

## APPENDIX D EMAIL TO STAFF



### Rockdale's Future - your views

Rockdale City Council to [REDACTED]

08/04/2015 12:08 PM

[Show Details](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

By now, all of you have heard about the State Government's Program, Fit for the Future or more simply, possible Council amalgamations. Hopefully you will have attended one of our popular information sessions, and had your questions answered.

Our responses to those questions, in the form of a Q&A document, and an Information Sheet with the most up to date information about our Fit for the Future response are available on the Corporate Portal Home Page under the heading Fit for the Future. Please take the time to read those documents - that information will be updated from time to time as we know more about our position.

You will be aware that we are conducting a comprehensive community engagement process to assess the communities views on the options open to us, and we are equally interested in what you have to say. Please follow the link ([Fit for the Future - Survey](#)) and answer the brief survey, telling us what you think about the options and how you would like to see council proceed. The survey closes at COB Monday 20 April.

Your responses are confidential and will only be reported in an aggregated form - no individual's responses will be identified.

Council is obliged to carefully consider the options for Rockdale City and prepare a submission by 30 June 2015.

I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to complete this important survey and have your say in the future of Rockdale City Council.

Yours sincerely

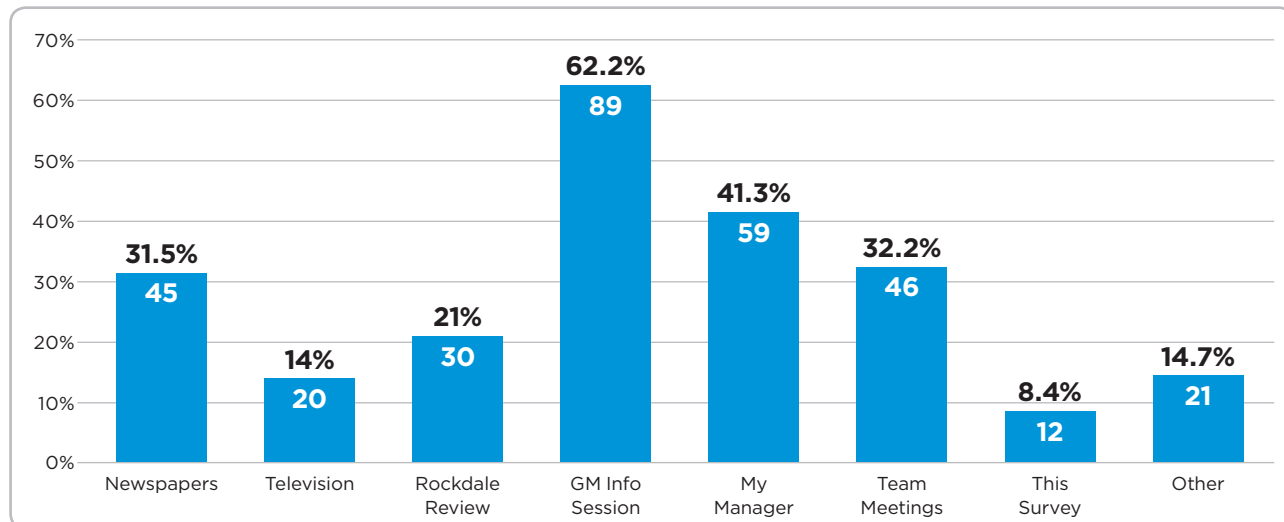
Meredith Wallace

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### 1. How did you find out about the Fit for the Future Program? Select all that apply

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses; in white count number



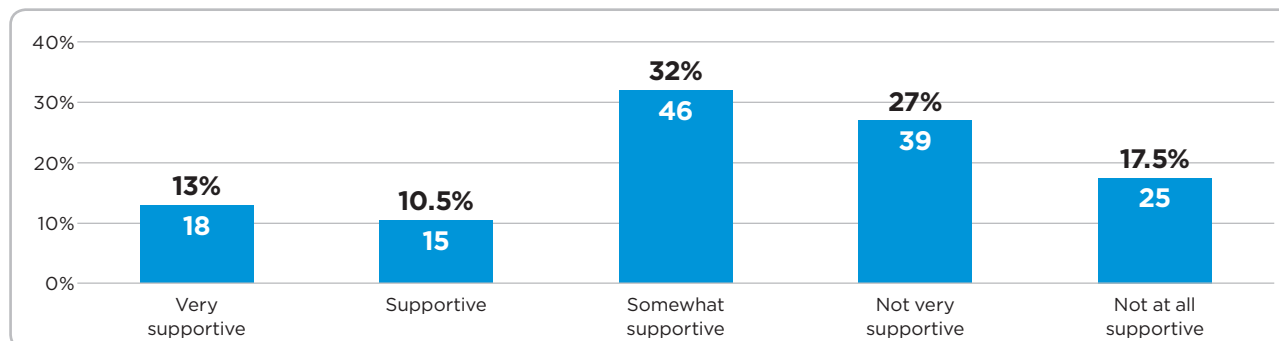
#### (Other) Response

- A work colleague
- Advice from my Union
- Department of Local Government
- Department Local Government circulars
- Department of Local Government web site
- Emails
- Friends in local government
- From the Trade Unions
- Hurstville and Bankstown City Councils
- Information sessions held at previous work place and News media
- Intranet
- Local Council
- My local Council, Union
- My Local Newspapers and Resident Information from my local Council - Botany
- News
- Office of Local Government Website
- Political party manifestos
- Previous council employments
- State Government announcements by Minister and Office of Local Government
- State Government Workshops and Conferences
- Union
- Word of mouth

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### 2a. How supportive are you of the State Government's proposal to amalgamate councils generally? Respondents could only choose a single response; in white count number



#### 2b. How supportive are you of the State Government's proposal to amalgamate councils generally? Why do you say that?

##### Very supportive responses

- Administration of a lot of Council's services are duplicated e.g. project management, property maintenance etc.
- Although there are short term costs I feel the long term benefits to the community make it worthwhile.
- Amalgamation of assets, processes, skills, staff, etc. could strengthen council and provide good competitive spirit to become stronger.
- Because there are too many small Councils in NSW.
- Better efficiencies and the ability to provide a better service to our community at the same time ensuring accountability of those responsible for delivering the service.
- Cost effective, value for money.
- Each Council has its own procedures for dealing with its matters and no 2 Councils are alike. Just driving from Sutherland to Rockdale and travelling through each Local Government Area it is apparent there are certain sections of each Council who place more emphasis on the presentation of their area and the areas of Council maintenance or enforcement than others. I believe a larger geographical area run by one Council would standardise the levels of service across the board and make our dealing with the public and their interaction with us less confusing.
- From a resident stand point I think it will allow for a greater standardisation of planning and other regulations, and as an employee I think it will help in allowing Council the freedom to hopefully take the best of Government practices and operate more in line with the best private sector traits in running a going concern.
- I feel that there would be a savings if there were a reduction in the amount of top end Council employees.
- I see more positives than negatives such as reducing the number of Councillors.
- It is about time Councils are amalgamated. Bigger Councils can bring more resources to the local area.
- Larger councils need to be efficient and have more power at the planning and development level.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Many opportunities, large area big community sharing and caring , after all we all stand for the same goal so amalgamation would help to build the strong and powerful community.
- Opportunity to refresh local government, improved consistency over similar services and processes, improved synergies across local government industry.
- Planning and delivering for such small, discrete areas is just not working especially as there is no effective regional planning or delivery framework. There should be savings and improved outcomes if amalgamations are well designed.
- We have to move forward to a bigger conglomerate Council in order to survive in the future.
- Will provide the resources and support to foster a stronger future for communities.
- With less chiefs more money can be spent on council assets.

#### Supportive responses

- An opportunity to define the purpose of local government, the services provided, how they are delivered, and their cost effectiveness. Reduce NIMBYs that exist in local government due to large population by still 15 councillors.
- Councils can gain a stronger identity by being a larger organisation. Less Planning instruments in the long term. Review of assets needs and services within current and potential Local Government Area boundaries is a constructive exercise.
- Don't understand why we need all the councillors and top heavy in admin.
- I believe that a super council would have more opportunity to progress my career and give me more experience and training with regards to my current role.
- I believe there is a greater range of expertise and a higher level of expertise in any given area among council staff in larger organisations.
- I feel that this will have long term benefits.
- I would be happy to be employed by a Council that joined another, only if it could be demonstrated by management that the decision was in the best of the rates pays of both those Local Government Area's.
- If we do not merge, or arrange to merge with other appropriate Councils early, we will be left behind with nothing but the 'scraps'. We should be reaching out and showing other Councils that we are serious about achieving high quality mergers that are mutually beneficial to all parties involved.
- In my opinion there are too many smaller councils unnecessarily.
- Increase efficiencies and better service that we can provide to residents.
- Larger enterprises are more sustainable through higher capability and better capacity to streamline activities and set up systems in place to turn around the local government culture into a more business like operation.
- Local government is too fragmented to deliver good strategic outcomes for the community, particularly in relation to regional infrastructure and services.
- More standardised services across a larger area. More control over a larger area, bulk buying, bulk contracting etc. Concerns on a Human Resources level as to the 'blend' of different staff, systems, salaries, training etc. and how that would be implemented and educated.
- This gives benefits and improvement to the council and community.
- Why not.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### Somewhat supportive responses

- Amalgamations are inevitable.
- Because I am.
- Because the cost of amalgamation is enormous and the benefits could be gained in other ways. For example, proper analysis of existing resources so they can be better applied, reduction of red tape, reduction of so many legislative requirements (both for Local Government operations and the services it provides), better organisational analysis (for example every Local Government has a different form to accomplish the same tasks) and increased staffing for greater efficiency (Rockdale City Council is already quite lean - always below capacity utilisation).
- Don't know the outcome. Victoria and Brisbane experience?
- Efficiency sounds good but it may mean fewer jobs and services.
- Good for saving money but the unemployment terrible. Its running good now why change.
- Having worked as a consultant to many Councils I have observed that many are not financially sustainable at current operational levels!
- Having worked for council for 20 years, I think management across three councils could be more efficient if folded into one council.
- I am concerned that a larger council may not be in tune with the specific needs of smaller communities. Sydney is diverse in its culture, geography, social and economic factors and residential aspects. This diversity is across the whole Sydney area but is centralised in pockets of similar types, styles and levels. At the moment the smaller councils can address these enclaves whereas a larger council would be spread over areas of differing styles and needs.
- I am hoping that I am able to keep my position, also not 100 percent knowing what will be happening.
- I am not sure if there will be any benefit to the local residents with amalgamation.
- I believe in local grass roots autonomy, rather than centralised planning and the creation of supra/subregional Councils. The community tends to lose more of its voice when this occurs.
- I believe that council's should be sustainable without having to rely on special rate variations to fund projects. Being the only person performing my role responding to resident enquiries applications, there is always a drama when I want to take leave with qualified replacement staff not being available. I believe this would not be as big an issue in a larger council with more staff performing the role and more available replacements.
- I believe there a too many Councils in NSW. Efficiency can be made through amalgamations if lead and managed well. The Fit for the Future movement has forced Councils to look more closely at their business which is what should have already been happening. That said, amalgamations should not occur for amalgamation sake. The current movement appears rushed and based on boundary lines which may not result in efficiency for those Council areas and/or the industry. In the Local Government Review - other improvements were suggested e.g. change in rate pegging, stricter performance measures and professional development for Councillors. I believe these should be implemented and performance measured prior to any amalgamations.
- I can see reasons why amalgamations would help but I can also see a lot of reasons that amalgamations wouldn't work.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I can understand some of the rationale but I'm skeptical of the real motives, and realistically, the benefits will only become apparent in the very long term after much disruption to present service delivery levels.
- I consider some productivity and financial benefits can be achieved through more sensible Local Government Area boundaries and sharing of resources.
- I don't see any real benefit in amalgamating, but I understand that these things happen.
- I think it is possible to achieve better outcomes based on economies of scale if the councils are larger in terms of areas and population.
- I think some very small Councils would benefit from amalgamation as they are too small to be financially viable. But I believe the overall purpose of amalgamations is political i.e. to minimise the influence of the smaller political parties and therefore maintain the power dominance of the two major parties, a situation I do not support.
- I think that if it is done well then the community could benefit, but there will be extended periods of time when amalgamations are occurring and there will be down time in delivering of services to the community.
- I think there are reasons for and against amalgamation.
- I won't oppose it if its a must or its best for the organisation, but not willing to support it if there's no real benefit.
- If it was to improve the service to the community then it would be worthwhile.
- If there is a benefit to Rockdale City Council and its residents, why not.
- It's good if it is benefitting the local community, not just an administrative exercise.
- Local Government needs reform and I see amalgamations as a necessary part of continuous improvement. Councils should be managed and run like a private sector business with improved monitoring and consequences for non-performance.
- Major changes to consider for residents and Rockdale City Council workers; what are the benefits? Financial benefits? Boundaries/zones.
- Many of the community groups and individuals I work with either live, work or have ties to St George Councils and the services we all provide. We are sometimes doing similar things not unique to each Local Government Area and/or competing in a saturated market.
- Not really sure how it will affect my job.
- Not sure what the affect will be to job security.
- Not sure what will happen to my job if/when we do amalgamate.
- Regional councils should not have to amalgamate but certainly some smaller Sydney Councils should be amalgamated.
- Require further information about the Fit for the Future.
- Rockdale City Council is doing OK on its own.
- Some amalgamations are warranted to provide improved community benefits However, a blanket policy of amalgamations based solely on a fixed set of financial criteria is limiting and not necessarily in the community's best interest.
- Some rural Councils certainly need assistance to provide and maintain services.
- Some small metropolitan councils could benefit from amalgamation.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Supportive if the amalgamation does not disadvantage the current staff and the community. Fearful that existing positions are not lost and that the community may not receive the customer service they currently receive. I have heard outdoor staff, even from other councils discussing their concern that services to the community will be outsourced.
- Sydney is a world city and services, planning, etc. must be more harmonious.
- There are some examples across Sydney of very small councils which share certain communities or natural assets which may be better managed with amalgamation however it is important that local government doesn't lose its ability to deliver community focused facilities and services.
- There are some very small Councils...
- There are too many Councils in NSW. Some of the councils are small in scale and they are not sustainable in terms of infrastructure renewal and financial capability.
- Unfunded substantial costs to councils to amalgamate, with questionable return on recovering costs in longer term. I have heard figures of around 18 years before a "break even" scenario kicks in, based on the Victorian Government experience.  
Councils have invested substantial costs in signage which gives identity to that Local Government Area. There will be considerable costs involved in changing signage (street signs, way finding, parks ID, etc.). The fact that no other Council is interested in merging with Rockdale doesn't exactly inspire confidence in amalgamation proposals for Rockdale. Marrickville Council (my area) recently circulated a flyer giving the pros and cons for amalgamations and is quite apparent that they are not keen to amalgamate. The reduction in ratepayer representation could have several negative consequences e.g. Councillors not fully representing the interests of their nominated wards (spread out over a much greater geographical area), having too much concentrated power. There may well be an argument for increased Councillor numbers in an amalgamated Council to counteract this. At an officer level, there would be increased time spent in undertaking site visits over a much expanded geographical area.
- View it as an opportunity for greater support and better outcomes in my department. Specifically with the ability to hire more specialised employees.
- Would like Rockdale Council to stand-alone however other smaller councils probably could amalgamate.

#### Not very supportive responses

- Amalgamations do not necessarily increase productivity. They do not necessarily make significant savings or deliver what ratepayers want. There have been de-amalgamations in recent years on the basis of customer dissatisfaction.
- Because it is a political fix to avoid impediments to the big end of town doing what they want.
- Bigger is not always better.
- Councils should be able to decide for themselves whether or not they amalgamate.
- Due to costs involved. No information has been provided as to when do the long term benefits kick in?
- Fear of job loss.
- Fear of losing jobs.
- Haven't been convinced of any real benefits.
- I am afraid I might lose my job in the amalgamation.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I am not sure that larger councils can deliver on the bread and butter issues of the rate payers it looks after.
- I believe we can operate as a stand-alone council profitably.
- I do not like the idea, I am currently happy at work.
- I don't feel that a bigger Council will serve the ratepayers properly.
- I think Rockdale City Council is doing fine on its own and can provide more of a personal service to its community. I think if a merge takes place the residents and ratepayers will miss out on receiving a great service as it will be too large to provide with a much bigger area to focus on. Also covering a bigger area our systems would need to be able to handle larger volumes of work including storage. Disaster recovery would be a nightmare.
- I think the ratepayers will suffer if Council amalgamate.
- I think with bigger Council not necessary mean your rates will come down or services are better.
- It has been proven in other states and also in NSW that generally, amalgamations do not work effectively.
- It is still unclear, from a layman's perspective, the underlying reasons for amalgamations. I am not aware of a benefits of scale analysis to reason both financially and resource wise. Will the long term benefit of costs of amalgamation and social impact costs be realised? I am not sure. I would be supportive only if I would be able to understand the actual reasons for it. It feels political, re-drawing of boundaries etc. Not convinced at this stage.
- It's a political thing and I'm not big into politics. Also it will cost a lot of money and not much benefit for the community.
- Job loss, deterioration of service to our customers.
- Job security and how would we fit under the new structure.
- Just because we are such a large council to begin with.
- Local representation might be lost when entities become larger. Attention for resolving day to day issues affecting local residents might get drowned in the bigger scheme of things. Believe in the philosophy of "Small is Beautiful".
- My opinion is that the larger the council area and number of residents it manages the least efficient it will become.
- My understanding is that country Councils are the most effected by debt and lack of future growth, but the government has chosen to inflict amalgamation on all NSW council's. Why not just target the affected Council's. If it is so good then why don't any of our neighbouring Council's want to join.
- Not sure how much representation I will get from a combined council.
- NSW amalgamation will rise the properties rate, affects our jobs and raise substantial costs to the council.
- Queensland are separating amalgamate councils.
- Rockdale Council meets three out of the four bench marks set by the State Government.
- Small Council is easier to run.
- Studies in other states showing that overall it doesn't always work.
- The benefits have not been quantified, and the proposals are not well considered. Larger unsustainable Council's will have greater risks inefficiency as it is harder to pin point.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- The State Government proposal depends on cooperation between Councils. Amalgamations normally don't have the benefits to the community that the State Government sets out they have. The financial support offered by the State Government does in no way cover the costs of amalgamations.
- There are benefits to staying stand-alone and to amalgamating however I would argue that local government planning with communities works better at a localised level with smaller connected local government organisations. An amalgamation has the potential to create a larger tier of bureaucracy which lends itself to disconnecting from communities.
- There is little evidence to support the assertion that bigger Councils will be more efficient or provide better services for the community. In fact it appears that smaller councils are better run and more in tune with their communities when compared to the larger councils in Sydney.
- There is nothing to support the theory that amalgamation delivers improved outcomes for local government. Of all the recommendations from the Local Government Review, the Liberal Party have chosen one that supports their ideology rather than addressing those that would deliver improvements. Furthermore, given that Local Government is simply an Act of the State Government, I have never seen acknowledgement from the State Government that they have failed in their management of this area. Also, the fact that the Minister for Local Government is never seen as a high level position shows the disdain held for Local Government. They say the first step in addressing a problem is acknowledging there is a problem. Not acknowledging you created many of the problems through rate pegging, lack of supervision of Local Government, cost shifting etc. only ensure that Local Government will never truly stand on its own two feet.
- There is too much confusion when job roles are aligned. Staff have a tendency to resent people who have better work condition in the same position.
- Worried about job loss.

#### **Not at all supportive responses**

- Amalgamation will mean job losses and therefore less staff to service the needs of residents.
- Amalgamations rarely deliver better services.
- Because the program is going to roll out with the state government managing only the politics and leaving merged entities, often bitterly divided at councillor and staff levels, to muddle through the process of merging.
- Before migrating here to Australia I worked in a London Council (London Borough of Greenwich). These Councils are very much larger than local Councils in Sydney. From memory LB Greenwich had over 350,000 residents 20 years ago. Intuitively the large Councils are better able to deal with the large corporations because they can specialise. Like Local Government in Sydney very diverse responsibilities are vested or transferred to Councils. Because the Councils are not large enough to specialise they depend on advice and assistance from State Government, and quasi government groupings like the ROCs. These organisations do provide a good service but appear less effective and more time consuming than a Council with in house specialists. It is also more difficult for the specialists to develop to address the needs of the specific Council with the responsibility for delivering the service. Realistically I doubt that the politicians will make Council significantly larger.
- Can't see the savings really, except for fewer contracted senior staff.

## APPENDIX E

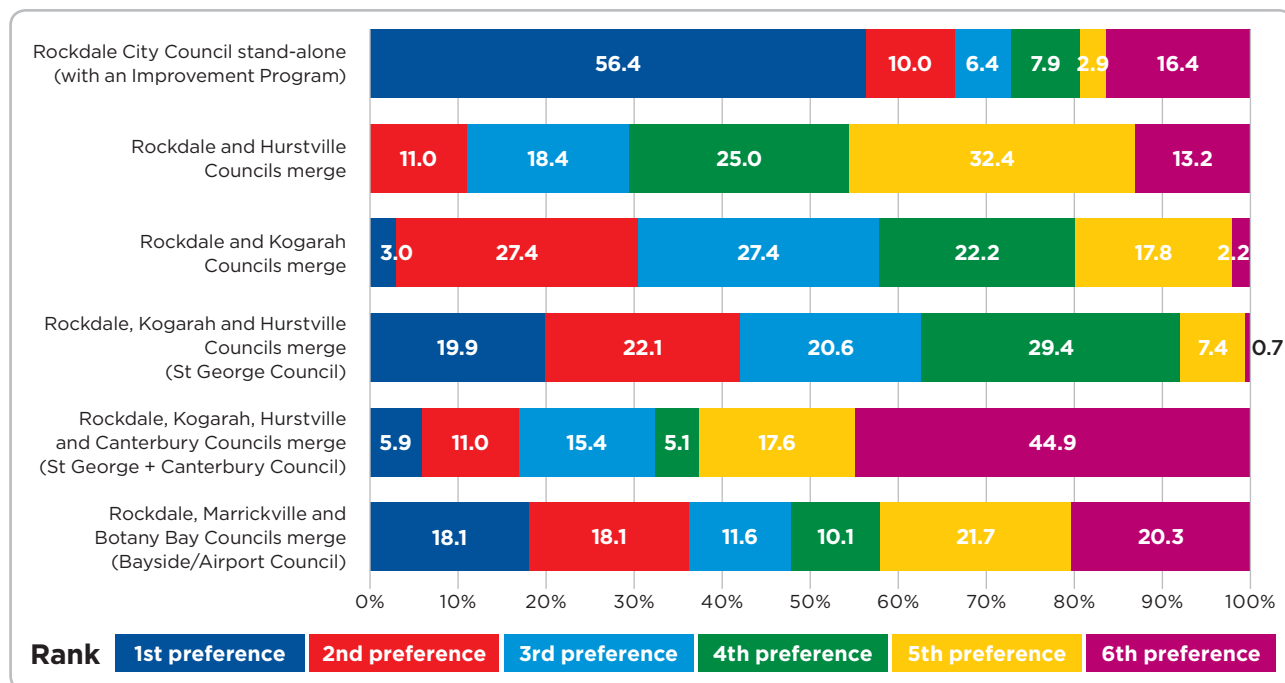
### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I believe a lot of services will be compromised as every council provides different service to the community, when merged some will be cut back. Big is not necessarily better. I am also concerned about job security.
- I believe amalgamations will result in higher costs, less services to the Community and a loss of identity of the local community.
- I feel that we are a very strong identity and there is no need for change. The community would only suffer under amalgamation because it would take longer to have projects completed because we would become so big.
- I think that service to the residents will slip if amalgamation occurs.
- If it isn't broken, why fix it?
- Once done there's no turning back. Selling off public asset it's not an option.
- Our Council has been delivering services and programs to the local community at a cost effective benchmark. In an amalgamated council, the residents will get less representation for their concerns and problems.
- Rockdale can stand-alone.
- Rockdale's worker's rights are different from other councils and it will cause problems, when council amalgamate.
- Should not be compulsory.
- The benefits don't out way downsides. It hasn't proven successful in other states. It is at great cost to the community. There are a lot better ways of spending Councils revenue, especially to those people struggling in our community.
- The community commitment to quality of service and personal communication is our highest importance, I feel this can only be achieved if Council stands alone.
- The proposal appears to be solely based on financial reasons.
- Very scared for my job. I have family.
- Waste of tax payers' money - things have been working fine the way they are and cannot see any real benefits making our Councils merge.
- We love to see the Council is doing its best to deliver public services. The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support. Also it will not hugely benefit us in near future - financially. To build a system which will take 10 years to settle down and improving a small amount is not supportive. I am fully supporting Rockdale City Council Stand-alone (with an Improvement Program).
- When our councils were first established, our population was a lot smaller. Local residents would have had great representation from their councillors. Over the years the population has increased so much that there aren't enough councillors per head of population. We need larger councils to be broken up into smaller council areas so that we have a level of government that can represent local issues. Residents in Rockdale don't really care about what happens to residents in Wolli Creek for instance and are less likely to support them as they risk their own area won't benefit. Also as local government represents the people at a local level, all we need is one more tier of government. If we were to remove the state government, there would be enormous cost savings and the federal government can take over anything local government can't absorb from the former state government

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

**3a. As you know Council is considering a number of possible options for amalgamation. Please rank them in order of your preference - 1 being your most preferred and 6 being your least preferred.** Respondents were asked to rank their choice(s)



**3b. Why did you select that option as number 1 or your most preferred?**

#### Rockdale City Council Stand-alone (with an Improvement Program) - Ranked 1 responses

- A restructure will cost a lot of money e.g. changing signs and there will be no money left for important works.
- A smaller, efficient, viable and caring stand-alone entity within the true spirit of "Local Government" is much more preferable to a larger less caring entity dominated by other vested interests.
- As recommended by senior management.
- As stated previously, I believe in grass roots democracy. The Local Government Area is large enough to sustain itself, particularly considering the density of development that is occurring at a rapid pace, equating to revenue for Council. I'm fairly certain that people would accept a lower level of service above an amalgamation. This is particularly so with an ageing population who are far less change responsive.
- Based on the information received so far, this is a viable option for the community
- Because I think Rockdale City Council is doing a great job running the Council by itself.
- Because it works the way it is.
- Because Rockdale's issue are unique to Rockdale not the greater St George.
- Because we can achieve the increase in performance ourselves if we try. The State has never helped or aided Councils in fulfilling their legislative duties, operating in the public sector environment or setting a prescribed organisation behaviour model to conduct operations. The State has only asked for more, on every occasion. The LG Minister needs to step up and administer all of the Councils in NSW. The benefits of consolidation are so expensive with no certainty of any benefits for at least 5 years.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Because we can easily be financial sustainable and within 4 years complete all areas of Fit for the Future.
- Being a small family.
- Better fit demographically and geographically for residents and staff. Multiple Councils i.e. more than two merging will be too much ground to cover; may cause management, operational and geographical issues.
- Change is not needed.
- Council alone can provide services targeted to local needs.
- Don't want amalgamation.
- From my review of the reports on the options, there is no tangible benefits in amalgamating. We have already headed down a path of improvements that will place the Council in a much more sustainable position to renew its assets and contain operational costs.
- I am not familiar with the other councils and their operations.
- I believe Rockdale can hold its own as it will have the community behind them, and we will be able to do more for the community if we "stand-alone".
- I believe Rockdale Council is best placed to provide the services to the local community as it has done over the last 100 years. Recent Council amalgamations in Queensland have not resulted in the claimed cost saving a promoted by the Government and in fact the local communities have incurred higher costs and a loss of services.
- I believe Rockdale is developing for the better.
- I believe that Rockdale already offers very good services to the Community and I believe that we could stand-alone.
- I believe that Rockdale is well positioned to put an improvement program in place to be fit for the future. Rockdale and Kogarah are a topographical match and the boundary adjustment would make sense. The Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Council merger would retain the airport and also include the complete Botany Bay coastline.
- I believe that there is untapped potential in Rockdale. In particular the ongoing increased occupancy and demand for accommodation will provide opportunity and will require careful management and control. The changing demography and the increase population density will demand a response at local government level. Now would be a particularly bad time to engage in experimental governance of the area.
- I chose number 1 as I feel we are a strong enough Council to stand-alone and move forward without the help of other councils.
- I don't see any real benefit in amalgamating, beside the benefit of merging with another library.
- I don't support strongly the amalgamation so I prefer Rockdale City Council would stand-alone.
- I don't think we need changes.
- I like Rockdale as it is.
- I like the status quo.
- I live in Rockdale it's my city. I like doing my bit for my community.
- I think Rockdale City Council is in a good position to stand-alone.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I think Rockdale is a big enough area to stand-alone and with an improvement program should make the residents happy.
- I think that as a council we can stand-alone. We are a financially viable operation with a growing base of new rate payers.
- I think that Rockdale Council can work effectively for the ratepayers and visitors.
- I think this is the best option for all - bigger is not always better.
- If it is possible to stay the same and also to be sustainable, I don't see a reason to change.
- If it isn't broken, why fix it?
- If Rockdale can stand-alone I think that would be preferable.
- In the first place all our neighbouring councils are not interested to merge so we might as well be on our own. We just have to prove ourselves in the future that we can be financial sustainable.
- Includes an improvement program.
- It can and will happen.
- It is related to my previous answer. Smaller bureaucracy, bigger impact. The key to this will be how we genuinely involve our communities of interest in decision making processes. Creating larger organisations can detract from that critical connections to our communities. Anecdotally they find it hard enough to understand our current structure and service provision and by creating a larger organisation you have the potential to really disconnect from communities. There is a current argument that large local authorities disempower local citizens. When people feel disempowered by top-down governance the trend is to passively accept that change is impossible. From a financial perspective, stand-alone allows us to prioritise areas of need with our communities and spend based on need and early intervention and prevention priorities to ensure bigger impact outcomes for our communities. Larger organisations tend to lend itself to less finance spread thinly across a larger geographical area.
- It makes sense.
- It will allow more harmony as the demographic is similar and retain a more personal approach to customer service.
- It would be less disruptive, save Council money and services would remain unimpeded.
- Job security.
- Rockdale City Council is a large council which provides many services that the other councils don't. The council has wonderful staff and a wonderful work ethic and culture and I really believe that this council can do well with an improvement program and sale of assets which are old and require a lot of maintenance. Further development in the Wolli Creek/ North Arncliffe precinct will be positive for the council and provide much needed housing demand.
- Rockdale City Council is doing OK on its own.
- Rockdale City Council should stand-alone.
- Rockdale City has a diverse and unique community. We have Botany Bay and income from the airport. Currently the number of staff employed could with improvement attend to the needs of the community. I believe we need to improve the way we do things. Our day should start with reading Council's Values and truly take those values on board during our day to day tasks. Providing customer service in the council perimeters and to our residents with those values in mind at all times.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Rockdale Council is already large enough and if we merge with any other council, our residents will lose out on local issues especially when they aren't relevant to people living further away.
- Rockdale Council is serving the community and focused continuous improvements, it can only get better with an Improvement Program in place.
- Rockdale council meets three out of the four bench marks set by the State Government, so why merge.
- Rockdale has always given good service on its own and it will be an improved service after the new library is finished.
- Rockdale has the ability to outperform a larger amalgamated Council.
- Rockdale is working fine as it is.
- Rockdale should be a stand-alone council but with an improvement plan. Rockdale needs the funding, new ideas and a unique strategic plan just for the council.
- Status quo.
- Stronger community focus for Rockdale.
- The Council can continue to serve the local community and response to their needs.
- There is always room for improvement as a Stand-alone Council, one that would be achievable and possible.
- This council has a large population and growing. Services may be compromised and may then project a negative image of council.
- This is based on the expectation of a real improvement program with a commercially focused drive to achieve a high level of corporate governance and discipline to make the best use of available resources to become sustainable.
- To stand-alone would be the best so that service levels remain the same.
- Very scared for my job, I have family.
- Want Rockdale Council to stand-alone.
- We are already a large council.
- We are familiar with our residential cultures and level of service required, so with our experience as Rockdale team work we can approach the target and achieve our works. I am also aware in order to comply with the improvement plan another restructure will be required.
- We love to see the Council is doing its best to deliver public services. The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support. Also it will not hugely benefit us in near future - financially. To build a system which will take 10 years to settle down and improving a small amount is not supportive. I am fully supporting Rockdale City Council Stand-alone (with an Improvement Program).
- We should stand-alone.
- What I understood from the General Manager's meeting was that there was no significant financial gains or other benefits to the organisation to amalgamate after findings from the independent consultant hired to look into the figures (or 6-8 years before we see any improvements). If that's the case, then standing alone and having an improvement program seems to be what we should be focusing on to get us fit for the future sooner.
- Why not.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- With an improvement program - Standing alone is the best outcome for our residents.
- Would result in the least disruption to services.

#### Rockdale and Hurstville Councils merge - Ranked 1 responses

No responses.

#### Rockdale and Kogarah Councils merge - Ranked 1 responses

- Because I live in the Kogarah LGA & work in Rockdale and would like to see them join
- I believe the possibility of Rockdale as a stand-alone council is slim so I believe the next best option is Rockdale and Kogarah
- I think geographical aspects should play a major role in influencing boundary outcomes. I have no preference for any one merge option over another, with the exception of the last one, which makes the least sense due to the sense of isolation of Botany Bay Council, and lack of connectivity with it other than a major arterial road. I note that the preferring options (above) only allow a greater or lesser preference allocation (which I don't agree with).
- I think that Rockdale and Kogarah geographically are a good fit and the 'expansion' would not be too difficult to manage

#### Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils merge (St George Council) - Ranked 1 responses

- A St George Council makes sense in terms of the regional location and sense of Community that already in part exists in our culture.
- Geographically and demographically the most logical.
- Geographically and the population share many common areas including land, people, services, roads, train line, etc.
- I believe it is the most sensible option for Council boundaries and to achieve sensible resource allocations.
- I believe the St George option has the higher 'communities of interest' characteristic.
- I seems the most obvious and geographical option. These Council already share resources which would aid in the transition.
- I think it's the most reasonable solution. Historically there was a St George County Council and the area identifies its self as being St George. (Hospital, TAFE etc.).
- In our area we work so closely with the St George Councils, it would be good to have shared knowledge. I work hand in hand with my experienced counterparts at these Councils and a combined approach to community capacity across a wider spread would serve our constituents better.
- Independent recommended approach which provides best fit in terms of communities of interest and urban communities. Consistent with previous independent reports e.g. Barnett Committee of 1970s. Canterbury - Bankstown merger provides a better fit and excluded.
- It is a natural amalgamation of adjoining areas including based on topographical features which separate this group from adjoining Council's i.e. Cooks River to the north and Georges River to the south. These Councils have also historically worked together and have joint plans and studies.
- It make sense, these neighbouring Councils should start making decisions jointly, which will be beneficial for the community.
- It makes geographic sense.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- It makes most sense from a geographical, cultural and practical view to merge with our closest neighbours who share common needs.
- Location and culturally it makes sense. This area is already referred to as the St George area e.g. sporting codes and talking to the locals. One of the losses though through this model is financial. E.g. Airport rates.
- Logical to have the St George councils together.
- Makes sense geographically and also the community is similar across these councils.
- More practical and ease of residents to approach Council because these 3 Councils are located close to each other.
- Seems like a good size.
- St George Council will be the best in my opinion because community, living in these areas are most likely same in most aspects.
- St George is the obvious fit based on boundaries, state government prefer option and historical sentiments.
- Strongest unit geographically.
- The community see this area as the St George region. Our current Local Government Area boundaries address Kogarah and Hurstville more than the other proposed Local Government Areas and this is visible to the public via major roads acting as the current boundaries. The St George Council would gain a stronger identity by being a larger organisation. Less planning instruments in the long term. Review of assets needs and services within the larger Local Government Area boundaries is a constructive exercise.
- The greatest efficiencies could be gained here e.g. parks and gardens, roads maintenance etc. The employee cultures are similar and would be homogenised with greater ease. The geographic areas are closer and more similar. Another serious option that should be considered is a merger of Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Botany Councils.
- The three St George Councils have the most in common and have already demonstrated efficiencies such as the waste contract and other smaller contracts.
- These Councils have worked together on projects etc. and have similar demographics.
- This appears to be a more natural option geographically.
- Why not.

#### **Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils merge (St George + Canterbury Council) - Ranked 1 responses**

- As it will expand the area and may help with the number of staff in the location.
- Bigger Council will have more resources to deal with issues that are relevant to the local area.
- Geographically - one Council should govern the area south of the Cooks River, north of the Georges River, east of Salt Pan Creek & south of Chullora Railway line.
- I can see the benefits as I live in Bexley North and access services and shops across the St George and inner west regions...
- It is the larger geographical area and has more of a similar multicultural breakdown to that of Rockdale. I believe the issues experienced by these councils are similar to those we currently experience but feel we are slightly more advanced in the procedures and processes in place for dealing with our resident's issues. I believe we would bring a substantial knowledge base to these areas but may also be able to learn a thing or two from their processes.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- It is the largest grouping and facilitate more specialisation.
- It makes sense - State Government research shows it to be the most feasible option.
- More Councils.

#### **Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Councils merge (Bayside/Airport Council) - Ranked 1 responses**

- A council with complete control of the airport means that staff will have a great deal of training and major opportunities to move from local government sector out to federal.
- Airport income is too much to overlook.
- An opportunity to address the land use, transport and infrastructure conflicts at the common borders and with the airport.
- Bayside is selected for geographical reasons and the location of Sydney Airports and Sydney Ports. Marrickville will bring the business side e.g. Newtown Town Centre.
- Cost effective.
- Geographic synergies. This option would ensure that Councils and the Airport would work together as the Airport and associated industries would be THE most important client/ stakeholder for the newly amalgamated Council area. If the Airport goes with City of Sydney it will be just another add on not the jewel in the crown so to speak.
- I always fancied being part of the Eastern Burbs.
- I believe that Marrickville has the most progressive approach to managing its' operations with regard to its' constituents requirements, the environment and image within local government and that would help bring Botany into a much better standing and enhance the way that Rockdale responds to all the areas for which it operates also.
- I don't know enough about the other councils and the strengths and weaknesses about each one, so I am not sure where we could benefit the most depending on who/if we merged. Maybe the airport as I know there is financial implications that could benefit council.
- I feel stand-alone will be better for the community.
- I feel that this is the best financial and cultural fit.
- If Rockdale were to merge I personally think a merger with a more progressive Council such as Marrickville would better as well as the large revenue that would be gained by merging with Botany Council and having the Airport in the new Council LGA rather than merging with the more conservative Hurstville and Kogarah Councils.
- In principal it looks like a good option and we would share the western, northern and eastern perimeter of Botany Bay. It has a higher profile than the river. We would also be able to enhance our historical heritage. On a vain note I like the name of " Bayside City Council ".
- It has the strongest economic community of interest in my (not fully informed) view.
- Its logical.
- Merging with those Councils, in the long term I belief will benefit the Community. The council will be more diverse and dynamic. More opportunity to grow commercially (increase income for Council) and a diverse place to live.
- Rockdale's changing population, opportunities and features have strong links to Councils closer to the CBD. We also share catchment boundaries and industry links that would be better served in a more integrated management approach.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Similar population characteristics.
- The benefit of amalgamating with Botany and dealing with airport issues.
- The geographical location and financial stability of these Councils, suggests that this would be the most viable option.
- Their residence appear to have similar values.
- These councils are more aligned in regards to Botany Bay management and in the changing demographics of Rockdale and Marrickville.
- These councils cover major areas that currently impact on Rockdale e.g. Botany Bay, Sydney Airport.
- Whilst the business case for an Airport/Bayside Council did not suggest this as a viable amalgamation option, I believe a proper due diligence approach would identify that there is merit in one Council with the key infrastructure of the Airport and the Port. The employment and economic development opportunities currently operating and forecasted with potential redevelopment in the area potentially make this council the most attractive. Through strong governance and the right leadership to examine the rationalisation of assets; improved services and service delivery levels will assist this model to achieve.

#### 3c. Why did you select that option as number 6 or your least preferred?

##### Rockdale City Council Stand-alone (with an Improvement Program) - Ranked 6 responses

- Against NSW's government's intend. Not deploying resources efficiently and economically. Duplication of duties remain.
- Amalgamation is the way forward.
- As only 2 criteria can be met out of the 7 there is a need as suggested to be fit for the future.
- Because as a stand-alone, Rockdale would be locked out of everything - funds, efficiencies etc. It could also lose the Airport with boundary changes. It would become the 'Poor cousin' of the larger Councils.
- Because I don't think Rockdale on its own is actually an option - we are not big enough to do this nor are we financially able to do this.
- Because of the old habits at hand in the Council I do not think they will change expect with a massive change.
- Cost.
- Financial disadvantage if Rockdale Council stands alone.
- For the reason given above.
- I feel that this is a disadvantageous amalgamation.
- I feel we are not sustainable to stand-alone and our fragility will be even more obvious when we neighbour a larger amalgamated council.
- I know that's the way we're approaching the issue, due to circumstance but I don't believe that's what the State Government is after.
- It is the smallest grouping.
- It seems least likely to be politically palatable with the current state government.
- It's the one option that in my eyes won't happen.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Means that nothing will change and no further education or training provided to staff to progress their career.
- Merger of metropolitan councils supported to improve overall system of local government. Independent reviews have previously recommended reduction in number of metropolitan councils. Long term improvements to local government not achieved through status quo. Prefer to be master of our own destiny and stand-alone option will not be acceptable to the State Government.
- No synergistic advantages, stand-alone.
- Rockdale alone will be a small enterprise compared to others, especially after amalgamation.
- Stand-alone does not help to grow at all.
- The NSW State Government does not really encourage this.
- There is some merit in reducing the number of Sydney Council's as well as creating a more uniform size of Council. For instance the combined population of Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils is 30,000 people less than the population of the adjoining Sutherland Council. It is also 100,000 less than Wollongong Council to the south. It pales into insignificance when compared to the western Sydney Council's such as Liverpool and Blacktown etc.
- Too big of a Council.

#### Rockdale and Hurstville Councils merge - Ranked 6 responses

- Does not seem to be geographically sensible i.e. wrapping around Kogarah.
- I again believe that Hurstville has not much to offer their community unlike Rockdale being community focused.
- I feel that merging with Hurstville would be the least beneficially politically as it is the most conservative option available.
- I see no major benefit in amalgamating with only Hurstville.
- I think there would be no benefit in amalgamating with Hurstville. The distance between these two councils is quite considerate.
- It doesn't make sense to exclude Kogarah when they neighbour Rockdale's boundary.
- It would not be appropriate to consolidate Hurstville and Rockdale as it would isolate Kogarah.
- Just feeling.
- Lack of shared vision and distance between major centres.
- Makes no geographic sense.
- My impression in working with Hurstville Council is that their service delivery is quite narrowly focused and there is too much emphasis on development growth at the expense of sustainability.
- My second choice includes Botany and Marrickville ensuring income from the Airport and stronger voice regarding the Sydney Airport. My concern Marrickville's debt. Least preferred I have not witnessed to date a strong working together with this Council. A bit the same as Kogarah however, Kogarah has no debts. Kogarah, Hurstville and Rockdale - the three are already considered at St George area not convinced of the benefits.
- Not a big fan of Hurstville Council or the way the area is run.
- Not an ideal location.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Not off any real purpose.
- Too isolated in location (and transport), I believe will be disadvantage for commercial growth and a preferred place to live.
- Travel to work.
- We would be better placed to be all of St George, without Kogarah we would be overlapping and double handling in our community consults, service delivery and management. I would think a St George Council is the preferred option.

#### **Rockdale and Kogarah Councils merge - Ranked 6 responses**

- Because if it ends up being forced amalgamations, it makes sense to create a larger council with Hurstville also and not just Kogarah.
- I don't believe that these two Councils can merge in a viable manner.
- No real gain.

#### **Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Councils merge (St George Council) - Ranked 6 responses**

- Geographically it does not make sense. Financially it does not make sense. Politically it does not make sense. If we are to deliver the best possible services to our community.

#### **Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Canterbury Councils merge (St George + Canterbury Council) - Ranked 6 responses**

- A bigger Council does not necessarily bring better outcomes.
- A large area, complications.
- Adding Canterbury to the St George Council's would create a very large population closer to 400,000 residents.
- As it would be a very large council.
- Bigger is not necessarily better.
- Canterbury Council is a large Council, centrally located, but has its fair share of problems. Carving up the Canterbury Local Government Area may be an option.
- Canterbury Council is not a natural fit, Canterbury should merge with Bankstown Council.
- Canterbury has financial stress.
- Canterbury isn't a good council.
- Cause Canterbury makes us look good!
- Consider over amalgamation of too many councils.
- Don't want the possibility of having to work in Hurstville, it's the furthest from home.
- Four council merging into one would be a logistical nightmare - in the eyes of our customers we are already under performing with our services.
- From a bird's eye view, an amalgamation of Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville seems to make sense. Merging with Canterbury I believe would stretch resources too thin.
- I believe such a sized organisation is too large and will require satellite facilities and will therefore not achieve the benefits of sharing/joining.
- I believe that the fallout from the political discontent in losing such a large number of seats would derail reasonable outcomes. Rightly or wrongly, that is a reality that people need to consider.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I believe the Canterbury community varies too greatly with Rockdale and even Kogarah and Hurstville. Community cohesion would be difficult and I think it would be too big of a Council (land size) for the Council to meet service levels at a satisfactory and timely rate.
- I believe there is no match whatsoever culturally or geographically with Canterbury.
- I do not think the Canterbury is anyway compatible with the culture of the other three St George Councils.
- I just feel that this would be too large to control.
- I live in Hurstville - I want nothing to do with Rockdale and/or Canterbury.
- I think that a 4 council merger would be much too difficult to manage efficiently and residents would be worse off overall.
- I think that merging with all these Council's in unfeasible. Too big an area. Not manageable.
- I think the service levels will get worse if council's amalgamate.
- It doesn't matter which councils Rockdale decides to amalgamate, I'm just a bit apprehensive of what changes it will bring.
- It involves Canterbury Council you can guess the rest.
- It is too large for any local representation for residents.
- It seems like it is too large to manage. Honestly I do not know enough about the other council's financial situations and haven't read the independent reports to have a preference over the others in terms of amalgamations. Are the independent reports available for us to read and get informed?
- Its too big and difficult to manage.
- It will be a very large entity. Bigger organisations tend to be more bureaucratic and create more red tapes - beyond easy reach of silent majority.
- It's all about the community and merging with another district would make it very difficult in many ways.
- Merged council is too big to manage effectively.
- Merging with too many council often does not work out and resident loose out.
- Other options have less synergy.
- Rockdale can make it!
- Rockdale's ratepayer's interests could get overlooked in a conglomeration of that size.
- Simplistically I feel it is too large an organisation leading to potentially areas of concern detailed in the previous answers. It could potentially lead to difficulties in delivering front line services to our communities. Amalgamation could lead to the remoteness of local government from our communities and enforce a complete disconnection between ordinary people and decision-makers.
- The discrepancies in levels of rates and services would work out to be detrimental to the Rockdale community.
- The independent report mentioned that this would be the least financially beneficial option.
- The merger of 4 councils is way too many and too messy. It will take years to realise benefits...
- The transition period in providing services would be difficult.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- There is no point to amalgamate to smaller councils with different system and cultures, that would increase the residential value and hence the council rates which will affect the community and it will be more difficult to serve a large area as there will be more to attend to.
- This combination meets only one of the State Governments Fit for the Future requirements.
- This proposal would create too big a local government area.
- This represents the most radical change. A new administration of this magnitude would take some time to understand the community needs at a time when significant changes are already underway.
- Too big.
- Too big and we would lose our identity.
- Too big a move, 4 councils, grouping a new identity as 1 council will not happen for over 10yrs look at Sydney combining 2 councils.
- Too big of an area, ridiculous.
- Too big the Council probably harder to manage.
- Too huge an area - loss of local identities.
- Too large an area.
- Too large, will become very diverse and could cause a cultural divide in the city. Hurstville would be better suited to Canterbury. Rockdale, Kogarah, Botany makes sense.
- Too many councils to come together.
- Too many council's together means a lot of services have to be changed to suit one council. Also, financial problems councils had before amalgamation would lead to less services and higher council rates.
- Too much. Demography and geography as well as Council ethos perhaps too disparate. hard to imagine this as an option that could be driven by a vision.
- Undesirable suburbs in Canterbury.

#### **Rockdale, Marrickville and Botany Bay Councils merge (Bayside/Airport Council) - Ranked 6 responses**

- After hearing what the General Manager said about the review of this option it does not seem viable for the community and staff.
- Always wanted St George Council.
- Area is too big.
- Bayside/Airport council seems to be too remote from the main centre of Rockdale.
- Communities don't fit.
- Culturally dissimilar.
- Don't think this is a viable option as not financially of advantage to Rockdale.
- Due to the geographic distances, it will be very difficult for residents to access services and programs. The residents will need to travel far away especially difficult for seniors and very young children.
- Financially not viable & Botany Bay may not want any amalgamation.

## APPENDIX E

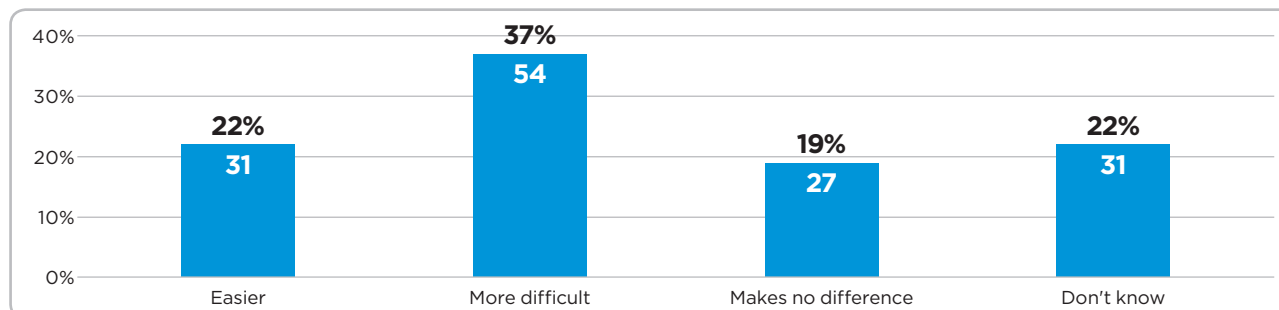
### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I believe this one to have the least 'communities of interest' characteristic.
- I don't believe that Canterbury is in a very financially stable Council.
- I don't think that mergers are good for anyone.
- It seems that a lot of people who come to the library or any Rockdale events are more from the Kogarah area.
- Marrickville and Botany are significantly different to Rockdale in terms of the influence of City of Sydney and its proximity.
- Other options are a better demographic fit and location wise St George Council area are a better fit.
- Population wise I think there are less synergies between those 3 councils.
- Rockdale stand-alone could not survive as an individual Council.
- Smaller Councils tend to breed secular and corrupt business models.
- The community see this area as the St George region and whilst there may be some financial merit to include the airport.
- There would be too much time loss in travel to work efficiently, especially if eventually a super depot or admin is entertained.
- They are too far away from Rockdale CBD.
- This option would attempt to amalgamate a significantly diverse set of cultures compared to, for example, an established region such as St George! The airport is an established divide.
- This would be the most disruptive.
- Too big.
- Too many managers to report to.
- Too much aircraft noise.
- Way too large, many logistical and operational problems, cultural (organisational) differences of historical nature.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

**4a. Do you think a larger Council will make it easier or more difficult to deliver services to the community?** Respondents could only choose a single response; in white count number



#### Easier responses

- A larger workforce on the ground.
- Central coordination and delivery of services.
- Combine the workforce and ideas to form a census opinion.
- Council will be able to prioritise works better.
- Given that the fit is right politically and or managerial. And to do that you need decision makers.
- Hopefully amalgamation will provide increased resources.
- Hopefully it would make it more uniform in what services are offered.
- If policies and procedures are standard across all Councils, communities will not compare Councils.
- In our area we work so closely with the St George Councils, it would be good to have shared knowledge.
- It facilitates specialisation. Council needs to deal with large organisations including developers and large contractors in the delivery of services.
- It will increase employment opportunities.
- Larger council can share scale of economy if managed effectively.
- Larger Council will be able to focus on delivering services that Council is good at, and to set up robust contracts in place for other services and/or works.
- Larger organisation with more resources will allow for improved service provision.
- Like any business, it boils down to efficiencies of scale.
- Mainly because there will be no information divide between the areas which does exist now. It is even hard to plan for a cycling route as one Council cannot integrate with what another Council is doing.
- More access to specialised employees (i.e. full time specialist rather than one or two days a week).
- More resources at hand should mean better efficiency.
- More resources to be redeployed to suit urgent needs. More opportunities for improvement of service delivery as resources are available.
- More resources to share the load.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- More staff.
- More staff to provide same level of service. Too many services of Council are highly specialised, it does not provide ability to resource staff appropriately.
- No overlaps or more efficient, cost effective.
- Resources can be pooled.
- Same culture, same values and same style of living, would obviously help to promote and build the strong community. Larger council can address all sort of needs which are required.
- Shared resources, economies of scale, increased skill base, greater efficiency in wealth distribution and staffing allocation with better asset sharing. However, it must be facilitated by proper management and implementation. At the moment it is only driven politically, so it will result in increased rates and costs. We have to ensure it is carried out without wasting those efficiencies.
- Simple economies of scale.
- Some services will be easier to deliver because of the ability to pool resources currently used by each Council to deliver a more integrated and cost effective delivery outcome. Of course this could also be delivered with a greater focus of regional delivery of certain services.
- There will be more staff available to provide services. There will be a higher standard of service and staff inefficiencies will be more noticeable. Staff will be answerable at a level not previously required.
- We are already sharing services with our surrounding councils, if we combine more they too will become more efficient.
- With a service review across all areas and a continuous improvement approach to service management - it will improve the way councils deliver and manage services. I think significant changes to service levels including a robust approach to service rationalization can be achieved. Local Government culture needs to shift completely to achieve a more business minded approach to service delivery.

#### More difficult response

- 10 years of administrative adjustment to achieve harmony, with service delivery levels being either compromised or adjusted to levels offered by the most generous Council in the group.
- A broader range/area to cover, disputes increase? Residents are more familiar with current zones.
- A greater population, over a Local Government Area of a greater area, with varying expectations that have been established in the particular Local Government Areas up until amalgamation. That is always going to be a difficult transition.
- Again to many managers.
- Any acquisition or merger can be difficult because of the scale involved and the different corporate cultures. Top quality leadership however can achieve a lot with a commitment to the implementation of the best of breed practices and cultures in the amalgamated organisations!
- As resources will have to be spread further over greater area.
- As stated before how do you maintain services that other councils do provide and vice versa.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- As there will be a higher amount of customers that will need to be spoken too.
- Attention to detail will be lost along the way and I feel that the quality of services will be compromised.
- Because different councils areas have different needs.
- Bigger area to service, more residents currently with different service standards.
- Currently we share some services. The services that deal with our residents directly are dealt with in a timely manner and with real concern for our community. However, I am thinking about community events joining together could ensure an event that would include a wider community and staff involved with such events could concentrate on one event being a success instead of say three different councils celebrating Chinese New Year in three different ways, e.g. Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale. Another example Rockdale hold New Years Eve fireworks, no other council of those mentioned earlier hold New Years Eve fireworks. We do not compete with the very extensive Australia Day event Kogarah hold.
- Delivery service is often cut back and rates increase to the highest council rate.
- Depends on the service. Generally I believe there will be greater service expectation, more residents and more difficult to manage a greater range of service to the number of residents. There will be heightened community expectations because there will be a greater rate base, and perceptions of more money.
- For four to six years the merging organisation will be inwardly focused.
- Hard to manage more people than less.
- Have seen other councils that have amalgamation lose services.
- I have experienced better services from smaller Councils. Large Councils can become impersonal, bureaucratic and less efficient.
- I think it would be more difficult at the outset with the integration of staff, systems and procedures but overtime would develop into a more efficient and feasible model.
- I think it would be more difficult especially if there is limited space available and depending on where the main office would be located, the residents that live closer might get preferential treatment as the Town Hall would located next to them and most events or functions would have to be held there as it would need to be able to hold so many people.
- Identification and prioritisation of community needs will tend get distorted in the bigger scheme of things. In the process fairness cannot be exercised.
- Initially it would be as the services provided would have to be amalgamated, changed and removed. It's bound to upset some people.
- It is easier to take decisions.
- It will be difficult for residents to access services when everything is centralised.
- It will require longer time before we start to see improvements in the performance of the new council. When the number of employees decrease, it will be more difficult as there will be more to attend to.
- It would be difficult to stay 'local' for decision making. Loss of identity and control.
- Large area and a massive. Re-adjustment period, will it work?
- Larger Council - when more people want things done, definitely takes longer with the queue.
- Larger councils bigger problems.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Likely to be less personalised service.
- More demand on ratepayers requesting the service up-front and we will need more time.
- More ground to cover, different operating procedures, diverse cultures have a different needs. Different Local Environment Planning rules etc.
- More red tape to go through. Councillors & their politics will be worse.
- Of course there will be job losses and this means more pressure for less staff to deliver to more people - this does not generally work.
- Residents will get less attention to services.
- Resources would be difficult to manage efficiently.
- Services will change and probably contract.
- The community believes in Rockdale and Rockdale stands by its community.
- The impact from a Customer Service perspective will be detrimental to the community. Other than online service provisions, there is still a large number of constituents would need to go to council offices. How is this going to be managed?
- The larger the area/customers the harder it will be to deliver services to the residents.
- There are a greater number of needs with less Managers and one General Manager. The work load is likely to increase, travel time around the Council will increase.
- There are the logistics of larger councils having less impact and potentially we become resource poor in terms of finance. Large councils I think have the potential to be less efficient and not necessarily cost effective.
- There will always be areas that are left out... particularly those where the councillors aren't based.
- There will be a lot of disagreements between the mergers therefore services will suffer.
- Too large a bureaucracy.
- Too many conflicting priorities. Residents in different areas do not always require the same types of services.
- Too many people to please.
- Too many people to service.
- Too much areas to cover.
- Too much red tape to go through, too many chiefs and not enough Indians.
- With a larger Council you will lose the personal touch with the provision of services. It is more than likely that with larger Council the services will all be contracted out to the lowest contractor who will only undertake the works detailed and would have no affinity with the local residents or community.
- Working where I do, I see on a daily basis the frustrations of our customers trying to get council to act on issues - amalgamating would only increase these frustrations.
- Would there be a guaranteed improvement in the way goods & services are delivered/obtained for the Community. Full focus on neighbourhood/community needs will not be possible as opposed to a larger focus run by a smaller Council.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### Make no different responses

- As long as the system is efficient, good quality, clear in distribution and roles, providing sufficient trained staff to service community.
- City of Sydney is a big council and having ward offices will not necessarily make it any more difficult.
- Due to the lack of detailed GOS and LOS across all councils.
- Each Council is already providing the necessary services.
- I believe the larger the teams, the more diverse expertise and potential innovation. Services such as outdoor teams will continue to deliver services in a localised fashion.
- If the appropriate number of staff are employed at the right levels, then delivering to the community shouldn't be affected.
- I'm not sure but I think it will make it a lot more difficult as the community to be service will be significantly bigger so service delivery may not be as regular/frequent.
- In the short term it would be more difficult, in the long term I believe it would be much the same.
- It would make little difference if the councils are neighbouring and resources are brought together. The similar demographic should allow specialist staff to assist across all areas.
- Larger council will have larger staff numbers to cope.
- Mergers would provide an economically stronger local government system. The attitude of people, the internal reorganisation outcome and best practice take up rather than size will influence the easy or difficult in the organisation delivering services. There are road blocks at the moment in delivering good service to the community and size is not the critical factor.
- No comment.
- No one will sacked/forced to leave. It's the workers that do the job, not the managers.
- Real services to the rate payers have already been significantly reduced (no lawns mowed, less frequent garbage removal) The majority of services now provided by Council are of benefit for a minority not the majority of residents.
- Service delivery will still need to occur and that operation at the field level will be operated to ensure community support, it will be the back of house that will have to take up all the issues related to the merger and ensure resources are allocated. Executive Committee would see to that.
- Some services now are shared, after a while efficiencies should be increased.
- Subsidiarity. Let those closest to the action take self-responsibility. Larger bodies should only intervene when (a) the lower level cannot cope and (b) when the higher level hasn't implemented policies that result in (a).
- There is no plan to view service levels at this stage only amalgamation.
- There will be some advantages and disadvantages, however overall it would be similar.
- There will still be the same services and (hopefully) same amount of front line staff to deliver these services.
- They all share the same responsibilities.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Typically amalgamations result in minimal staff losses. As the area of the Council expands and includes more population, this is met by the equivalent number of staff as previously existed. Councils can chose to operate from a single premise and depot or operate from multiple to provide better access to the newer and larger area it services. Modern technological advances can assist. As such the community should see a relatively seamless transition even though there will be time and money lost in the first few years.
- We don't know if affects any services or not.
- We still have to deliver the same service. The size of the community is proportional to the number of staff required (for service delivery).
- Why would it.
- Work outside still has to be done. Sub-contracting work out will be next.
- You still have the same communities, all you are doing is changing the boundaries.

#### **Don't know responses**

- Because I don't know.
- Having worked for several smaller councils and not a large council I cannot comment.
- Hopefully it will make things easier.
- I am not sure if combining councils will make things easier.
- I believe some services will be better through a larger Council - garbage, maintenance services, financial services, but services such as libraries, community services will still provide satellite facilities. Customer service and planning if centralised will be harder for the public to access - may still require satellite facilities.
- I believe there are pros and cons that need to be further qualified. I think the qualification process is important regardless of the results. I have not reviewed enough definitive information to make a sound judgement.
- I cannot predict what may or may not happen.
- I don't believe I know enough about it to comment.
- I don't know.
- I have never gone through an amalgamation and haven't studied up enough on previous ones.
- I imagine that economies of scale would make it more financially efficient to deliver some services (e.g. roads, rubbish etc.) to the community but the complexity of amalgamation would make others (e.g. environmental, community) more difficult while programs and agendas are being sorted out.
- I'm not sure if it will be easier or harder but I believe there will be a transition period where the employees will take a bit of time to adapt to any new changes and this will flow onto the residents as, any delay by us to understand and implement changes, will ultimately delay our message getting out to the residents of the area. I would anticipate a lot of push back from certain people who are against change for no other reason than they have to do something differently. I think in the long run it will be for the better.
- Initially more difficult, but with some sensible decision makers hopefully it will help.
- It depends on the level of funding and the proposed structure. Based on the experience in other councils that have de-amalgamated, it looks like the community would get less tailored services and some services would be cut altogether. Service provision could be more difficult.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- It depends on which service. There will be economies of scale in some services and real problems delivering others.
- It really depends on how well it is managed and organised, including having the resources available to deliver the services to the community.
- It will depend on the leadership provided in the organisation, the political dynamics and the new organisational culture that evolves. These are the real challenges for any merging organisation. A council may be wealthy but terrible in service delivery. A council may be financially challenges but provides wonderful engaging service delivery to its community.
- It will depend on the processes and procedures set in place and the adaptability of staff and the community.
- Not sure.
- Presumable some services would be easier e.g. park's maintenance, waste removal, libraries, financial/payroll aspects. See earlier comments regarding concerns over the impact on officers travelling greater distances and therefore spending more time "on the road". The question arises as to whether or not an amalgamated council was located in one building, and if so, where? How would this be decided? The delivery of design and project management services would presumably be more efficient given higher concentrations (effectively potentially better resourcing) of professional design and project management staff.
- Rockdale is delivering good services to the community as it is.
- Service delivery is determined by organisation not its size.
- The basic services would still be delivered, but individual Council's currently provide differing levels of service in the multiple areas of operation.
- The proof of the pudding is in the eating, some services may improve/expand; some may get worse/contract...
- There are too many variables to consider. Larger Council could mean more staff to deliver a service or increased confusion due to a lack of communication or experience in managing a large team etc.
- There are unknown variables that have to be considered including different rates and service deliveries to the community. Rationalisation of the various service deliveries currently in each Council may benefit some and disadvantage others.
- There is a lot of variables to take into consideration e.g. money, staff, infrastructure and over all planning. The council would really need to cooperate and share a joint vision. Personalities and politics would come into play.
- Too many variables.
- Unsure.
- Until any amalgamations go through no one will truly know.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### 5a. What are the 3 most important things to you in Council amalgamations?

##### Most important (1) responses

- Ability to speak to a councillor who knows my local area and issues.
- Amalgamation partners (new boundaries).
- Analysis of hardware and staff allocation (input substitution), operations management and structural reform in the new organisation.
- Assets and liabilities.
- Being more efficient in the medium term by achieving savings in consolidated core corporate areas - with a benefit of constraining rate increases and special levies.
- Better buying power from private industry.
- Better decision making for the community.
- Better planning and delivery of infrastructure and services - great opportunity to upgrade outdated systems.
- Communication.
- Communities wellbeing.
- Continued employment condition.
- Convergence.
- Council services remain the same or improve.
- Current and planned work not be disregarded.
- Customer satisfaction.
- Customer Service.
- Deliver services and infrastructure.
- Delivery of services to rate payers.
- Development of specialists to address issues professionally minimising the dependency on consultants or external agencies.
- Employment.
- Employment security.
- Enough allocated staff to function correctly and be proactive at the duties needed.
- Ensuring job security.
- Existing employee benefit remains unchanged.
- Finance.
- Financial prosperity and stability.
- Financially sustainable.
- For Council to remain financially stable.
- Good outcomes for the Community in terms of service provision.
- Greater expertise.
- Hard work and hard adjustment in the first few months.
- Having a job.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Impact on our communities.
- Improved service to the public and consistent approach across a larger area.
- Improved system of local government generally.
- Job losses.
- Job opportunities.
- Job retainment.
- Job security.
- Job security and harmony with new staff.
- Job security and income protection.
- Job security for 3-5 years.
- Jobs.
- Keeping my job.
- Keeping that feeling of belonging to a community.
- Keep the Council(s) as sleek and efficient delivering services to the communities it represents.
- Larger area.
- Larger councils.
- Leadership of direction, change, building a new culture, being brave.
- Like Populations.
- Local communities come first and services are maintained or improved.
- Loss of local representation.
- Lower rates.
- Maintain jobs.
- Maintaining a sense of place/identity.
- Maintaining adequate resources to deliver services (i.e. don't use amalgamations simply to cull staff numbers).
- Maintaining jobs of staff.
- More money to spend as money will be pooled.
- My job.
- My job and current benefits are secure.
- My job security.
- No council rate increase.
- No increase in rates.
- No internal silo e.g. Kogarah snubbing Rockdale staff and procedures.
- No job losses.
- No job losses to employees of Council.
- No job losses to staffs.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- No loss of employment.
- No loss of jobs.
- No loss of services.
- Non-party political representation
- One manager.
- Opportunities to expand our services and expertise.
- People losing jobs.
- Provide better service.
- Providing the right staff mix to allow service delivery to occur.
- Rates.
- Reduce costs.
- Reduce number of Councillors.
- Reduce rates.
- Retain the Airport and Botany Bay however should the airport be removed from Rockdale our financial sustainability would force us to amalgamate.
- Retaining my current job (unsurprisingly!) and retention of necessary design and project managers to cope with increased workload.
- Retaining staff with the local experience and knowledge of each Local Government Area.
- Rockdale's current services not cut back.
- Same services.
- Security of Employment.
- Service delivery.
- Service level standards.
- Services.
- Staff benefits.
- Staff retaining their jobs or offered voluntary redundancy - no forced redundancies.
- Staff retention.
- That the community benefits and wants the amalgamation.
- That there actually is an improvement as part of the amalgamations.
- The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support.
- The community retains the same voice it has always enjoyed.
- The State Government must accept responsibility for their part and play a strong leadership role.
- There must be proven benefits for the community.
- Value to the community!
- Viability.
- Worker's rights.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### Identified as 2nd most important responses

- Ability to shape new organisation.
- Achieving better quality output.
- Aligning responsibility for services with the skills to provide them.
- All electoral candidates being actual residents.
- An opportunity to refresh individual organisations to make them better with improved service delivery.
- Being able to still do your work in the area which you belong.
- Better accountability for moneys spent.
- Better Customer Service.
- Better Services.
- Better services to community.
- Better services to the residents.
- Career development.
- Challenge to provide better customer service.
- Change of the position and location of works.
- Change to the culture to be more customer focused with an attitude of 'can do'.
- Clear organisational leadership.
- Communication and engagement - transparent, regularly, accessible.
- Communication as to what is happening.
- Communities collective voice at a local level.
- Community expectations are met by manageable levels of service.
- Community programs.
- Compromise of quality of service to community.
- Conditions of employment maintained or kept close to existing conditions.
- Consistency in council policy and regulations.
- Continue improved service delivery (residents don't experience a decline in service levels).
- Cost.
- Cost effective service provision that is efficient is retained for residents.
- Council is for the ratepayers, not their own political agendas (but this will never happen as it doesn't now).
- Council services.
- Customer service.
- Cut out duplication and hence wastage in smaller Councils.
- Decrease in services.
- Delivering better services to the community.
- Delivery of services to community.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Economies of scale for the residents.
- Employee position.
- Enhance service deliveries to the community.
- Ensuring the work I do as an employee is still relevant and interesting.
- For Council to continue to offer a high level of service consistent with culture/values.
- Good outcomes for staff in terms of improved opportunities.
- Greater consistency of policies and processes in larger areas (rather than existing smaller councils) for customers who deal with many councils across Sydney (e.g. developers).
- Greater efficiency to secure our jobs and the future of local government.
- Having the best of all amalgamated Council's regulations implemented into the one body.
- Improved delivery of services.
- Increase in Council services.
- Increased benefits for rate payers.
- Increased services.
- Infrastructure.
- It must result in better efficiencies for ratepayers.
- Job satisfaction.
- Job security.
- Keep them simple and accessible to the local communities.
- Keeping our public open spaces, always being able to improve our recreational parks/spaces, roads and providing efficient transport for people.
- Larger councils' are too similar to State Government and should be broken up into smaller councils.
- Larger group of peers.
- Less Councillors.
- Less jobs.
- Level of service to the community.
- Local Government to remain "Local".
- Lodgment of development applications efficiently.
- Long term better use of my rates.
- Longer term planning decisions are made in the interests of the community and not vested interests.
- Loss of services to the public.
- Maintain high level of Services and Customer satisfaction.
- Managing change.
- More work.
- New office location.
- No contractors.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- No cost to the ratepayers.
- No increase in Council Rates, Fees and Costs.
- No loss of jobs for Rockdale council staff.
- No playing of politics.
- Not having to travel too far for work.
- Not travelling any further than Rockdale.
- Openness and harmonisation between departments encouraging ideas and growth.
- Organisational change - i.e. structural change that ensures roles and responsibilities are clear and there is accountability.
- Over load of work.
- Pay structure and work conditions across equal roles and responsibilities.
- Planning Instruments (long term).
- Power to larger councils for all planning and development - get rid of council meetings to determine development applications and replace them with an independent panel.
- Provide better infrastructure.
- Rate increases.
- Reduce the amount of councillors.
- Remove the ward Councillor concept and adopt Councillors that represent City-wide interests (reduce village politics).
- Resultant LGA.
- Retain positions however improvement of effectiveness and efficiency to manage infrastructure and deliver services. I retain a position in Council whereby I am able to continue to assist the community. The rate payers, developers, businesses.
- Roles simplify and easy to carry out.
- Salary security.
- Same or better services.
- Same place of employment.
- Savings and better use of existing funding sources based on economies and efficiencies.
- Services.
- Services and commitments do not decline.
- Services for customers.
- Services still being readily accessible by the public.
- Services to community not compromised.
- Services to remain the same or improve.
- Services, including garbage and roads.
- Sharing service delivery.
- Stability for staff.
- Stabilized workplace.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Standardisation.
- Status.
- Streamlining activities.
- Strength in numbers.
- Strong corporate governance.
- Strong culture/stability to stand-alone.
- Structure.
- Support for redundant staff.
- That staff are not disadvantaged by amalgamation.
- That there are significant benefits to our organisation and community.
- The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support.
- The calibre of Councillors must significantly improve if they are responsible for 3 times the current budget and population.
- The price of payouts.
- There really isn't anything important to me in council amalgamations
- Thoroughly tested and proven financial modelling efficiencies of as such an order for the mid - long term. Amalgamations should take place only if a very strong case can be made - factoring in all aspects that affect costs.
- Timeliness.
- Training and education opportunity.
- Transition phase (how the process would work).
- Transparency.
- Travel distances from home to work.
- Unify approach to service delivery i.e. not to many Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans in a larger local government area and ease of external understanding.
- Value for money.
- Wages, entitlements, conditions.
- Well defined transition.
- Workload.

#### Identified as 3rd most important responses

- A well planned transition period with clear timeframes and open communication with all stake holders.
- Ability of the Council to maintain its assets.
- Adapting and developing Councils service delivery to an increasingly complex array of responsibilities and large scale corporations.
- Asset management.
- Assets and services.
- Being able to deliver quality services.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Being able to do my job efficiently.
- Being informed of events and other changes in my area.
- Being part of the process to enact the new changes.
- Better advocacy and lobbying - more clout.
- Better bargaining power with State & Federal.
- Better return to the rate payers.
- Better services.
- Better services delivered to ratepayers.
- Career development.
- Chance to clean out deadwood in management.
- Change in structure.
- Clear operational delivery.
- Cohesion between councils when amalgamated.
- Community focus.
- Community representation.
- Conflict between old councils.
- Consistent and accurate communication throughout the process.
- Consistent approach.
- Cooperate with neighbouring Councils and State Government in achieving best outcome for everyone.
- Cooperation between councils.
- Cost effectiveness.
- Cost involved and who would have to bear it.
- Council decisions based on the benefit of the whole community rather than with a political bias.
- Council finances.
- Delivery of services.
- Direction.
- Duplication of services and facilities to be removed over time.
- Efficiencies.
- Efficiency at state level in servicing fewer councils.
- Employees and their duties.
- Ensuring all obligations are met without increasing rates, fees and charges for residents.
- Ensuring that the process is as smooth as possible for residents and employees.
- Executive Committee that engages with all staff such as Meredith and her team do at present.
- Facilities.
- Flatter structure, less managers.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Good Communication and clear outcomes set.
- Greater emphasis must be placed on asset management.
- Growth.
- Happy workforce.
- If amalgamations are given the go ahead, then make Rockdale as the MAIN CENTRE.
- Improve performance.
- Improved facilities to community.
- Improved reputation and image as the industry lifts to meet the expectations of fit for the future.
- Improved work team environment.
- Improvements.
- Improving the political environment for improved decision making.
- Increase in services.
- Inflation of council rates.
- Integration of different Information Technology systems.
- Job description.
- Job satisfaction.
- Job security.
- Keeping rates at a reasonable level, but being well off financially by keeping our airport rates, investing or being able to generate income from having something that attracts people to the Local Government Area.
- Leadership that creates and empowers success!
- Less Councillors.
- Less rate income wasted on General Managers and Managers wages.
- Less staff.
- Library.
- Location.
- Lower fees e.g. community facilities, Development Applications, etc...
- Maintaining cohesive communities.
- Maintaining services to the community.
- Managing change especially the impact on staff.
- More flexibility of on roster leave.
- More funding toward maintenance.
- More money to larger councils.
- More scope for advancement.
- Moving forward and making generous progress.
- No developer interests held by councillors.
- No increase in rates.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- No job losses.
- No loss of local identity.
- Not having to go through numerous restructures to meet a new amalgamated business plan.
- 'NSW Council' driving and implementing positive community change.
- Opportunity to work in a larger organisation.
- Organisation culture and team building.
- People and work colleagues.
- Provide less senior management.
- Public asset sold off.
- Ratify the number of elected members.
- Redundancy packages offered.
- Reliable facilities - working computers/printer.
- Restructure.
- Retaining adequate ratepayer representation.
- Rockdale area not being treated as the inferior party in the amalgamation.
- Sense of belonging to the community.
- Service delivery.
- Service levels.
- Services for the ratepayers don't get worse.
- Serving increased populations doesn't necessarily lead to improving community well being.
- Significant disruption within the work place and to service provision to the community.
- Smooth transitional process.
- Staff (conditions of employment).
- Streamlining of processes.
- Streamlining processes for rate payers.
- Structure.
- Support for all staff throughout the transition.
- Survival of Local Government.
- Targeted community services and facilities must not be reduced.
- That good governance be provided.
- That the residents are sold the benefits and are prepared to accept change for the better.
- That there is consultation with staff and community.
- The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support.
- The cost involved should we amalgamate, transition phase vs improvement program - strategies to improve existing services. Improve community engagement.
- The fallout from the political element does not further contribute to derailing good outcomes for the community.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- The loss to residents is not worth any potential cost savings in amalgamations.
- Too many staff.
- Transitional support for staff.
- Upgrade and renewal of infrastructure.
- Voluntary redundancy payment i.e. the number of weeks from 34 weeks to 11 weeks.
- We are all involved - have an input to any changes as well as continuously being informed about any changes or updates.
- Where does it stop.
- Workflow continuity.

#### 5b. Why do you say that?

##### Responses

- Because these are what I believe are the most important things in Council amalgamations?
- A financially prosperous Local Government Area ensures that better services can be provided to the community. It also delivers job security. However this can only be achieved through structural organisational change that delivers more efficient delivery of services.
- Alien staff structure makes it more difficult to roster staff on annual leave.
- Airport/Botany Bay financial sustainability. Positions retained, share knowledge, compare cost, population amalgamate - expenditure.
- Amalgamation must be for improvement in services and facilities in the first instance with proven cost efficiencies, otherwise there is no point to it.
- Amalgamation needs to provide improvements for all concerned.
- Amalgamations create fear and instability. Strong Leadership with united/cohesive Executives is required to enable positive and supportive change and to tackle the political dynamics. Regular open and ongoing communication with staff and the community is needed so they know what direction we are heading and why as well as how does it affect me and how will I be supported. Having mechanisms in place to managing the journey of change particularly for staff is required so staff know what their choices are and how they can be supported through the change. This also mitigates staff revolt.
- Amalgamations have to make real improvements if they are to take place.
- Amalgamations may reduce the number of staff which is beneficial for the council but might be challenging to provide better service to the community as hard to manage more people than less.
- Amalgamations should provide improvements and sustainability for the community.
- Appears to work in overseas government models (not considering the UK model).
- As a council employee would my job be effected.
- As a resident I strongly identify with many of the values that my local Council espouses and would not want to see these values change radically (towards more conservative values) if a merger were to occur. As an employee of Council I am concerned that the work that I do will continue in a similar vein. As a resident and an employee I would hope the process is as smooth as possible to avoid stress and inefficiencies.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Autonomy and delivering good governance to meet fair and reasonable community needs are paramount from where I sit.
- Because I am interested in the concerns of ratepayers and staff of Rockdale.
- Because I did.
- Because I like my job!
- Because my job is important to me.
- Because they are all uncertain.
- Because they are the 3 most important things to me.
- Because this is the crux of LG. If we do not pay heed to the above 3 measures what is the point of having a Council? We may as well be privatised or amalgamated with the State and make residents pay for everything. Let us not abandon ship because of this challenge. We must look inward and examine our organisation and be prepared to improve with the same cost base.
- Because this is what happens when entities merge - contrary to what we are told will happen.
- Because you asked the question?
- Cost to the landowner, long term planning impacts to the landowner, assets and services available to any landowner/resident/visitor.
- Council amalgamations have proven to be very disruptive to all the community with little benefit.
- Council can no longer rely on rates to sustain its operations. Need partnerships and cost sharing with various levels of governments and private enterprises.
- Council would be fit enough to stand-alone.
- Council's should be providing good services to the Community and the maintenance of Council assets is a very important factor.
- Currently the bigger Councils seem to get more funding and NSW State support - Parramatta, Liverpool, Penrith for instance.
- Depending on which councils would amalgamate, there are differences in revenue base and service delivery which would shape the organisation. The loss or restriction of some services would be difficult to manage. As a staff member, I am also concerned about changes to my employment conditions and the possible introduction of working conditions that disadvantage new staff members.
- Employment, I would not like to lose my employment due to amalgamations. Workloads, I would not like to see an increase in workloads. Service levels, I think service levels will slip if amalgamations occur.
- Expectations on the quality of service that Council needs to provide will continue to increase. Specialisation will assist in meeting these expectations.
- Fewer but more proactive Councillors will benefit the community. RCC is already sharing some delivery of services and seems to work well. A consistent approach gives the community certainty and confidence, particularly in planning matters.
- Financial gain, a recognised status within Australia, growth for the future.
- For a better Council.
- For the benefit of all stakeholders and the larger community within the state.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Forced redundancies lead to moral issues and break down of services along with a loss of valuable knowledge. In saying this though there is a need to remove duplication of services and improve the quality of services provided. Need to look at how from a staffing situation this is undertaken.
- Foremost job security is important so I know I don't have to look for another job. I want to be abreast of what is happening and why. Being in the dark insights fear and uncertainty. Being a part of the process will give me ownership and will make me feel that I am part of the new creation.
- Funding can come from State Government towards maintenance of facilities.
- Have worked in councils for many years and the culture of the organisation plays a big part.
- Human nature.
- I believe that it is important that the amalgamations are executed smoothly with limited/considered impacts on the community/workforce and are conducive to positive and productive environments.
- I believe they are important to me and the public.
- I don't like change.
- I have been through a previous council amalgamation and all the point above were what caused resentment, fear of job security and resentment within work teams.
- I like my job, if it's going to happen it should prove beneficial, I can buy a pair of genuine Nordic clogs online but I can't pay my rates.
- I strongly believe customer service and asset is very important to me.
- I think a key question to ask is the assessment impact on any amalgamation on our communities. Regardless whether we do or do not amalgamate we collectively need to manage change which is critical for any service to deliver effective services with and for our communities. The premise from my understanding is that the argument for amalgamation is based on it being cost effective but I would question whether large organisations can be cost effective. They have pooled resources including finance but it doesn't necessarily mean that the finance is being spent in the correct areas.
- I think it is very important to have all these things in order for the community (residents/ratepayers) to be happy and for Council to be in a strong financial position.
- I think the ratepayers will suffer.
- I would like to know my position is still adding value and that I can continue to make a difference. I also value working in a non-hostile environment.
- If these 3 things above are not undertaking then morale will fall, service levels will fall and community relations will also fall.
- Improve the community.
- It is important for a council to be financially viable, provide efficient services and appropriate facilities to the community.
- It is important that top management is cohesive and that the chain of command is simple and clear and not just a cost cutting manoeuvre which will lead to mass outsourcing of jobs, which makes no sense when considering the already higher unemployment rate.
- It is important to meet the needs of the community into the future and change is needed.
- It is what I believe.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- It takes time to refine and realise efficiencies when merging organisations. Staff resources need to be fit for purpose.
- It will make me feel secure knowing the above are ensured whilst going through any amalgamations.
- Its common sense that isn't as common as I thought.
- Job security and service to the community are to me the 2 most important issues... I am very concerned about losing my job...
- Job security to maintain gainful employment for myself and colleagues. Resultant LGA - desirability of working across certain suburbs. Important to maintain a structure that provides a breadth of professional experience for staff for professional development.
- Jobs = \$ = means to live.
- Jobs pay bills!!!
- Just answering the question.
- Larger council means more staff which in turn means great opportunity for career progression.
- Like populations would made it easier to create a common identity and make service delivery more efficient. Staff Stability is important in terms of moral and efficiency at Council. Cohesive Communities encourage community harmony and are resilient.
- Long term employee and rate payee.
- Merging is never so easier, only the best would be convincing all stake holders and giving equal opportunities to all who are directly and indirectly involved in council to accumulate the main goal.
- Models from other states.
- My experience tells me that whenever there are mergers/amalgamations is that it results in redundancies/loss of positions and that services to the public suffer as a result.
- My fear is that large Councils will deliver on a political agenda which is not in the best interests of local communities.
- My job is important to me at this stage of life. The unknown and potential negative effects on my position.
- My position is structured in a way that is highly vulnerable in the context of merger and is quarantined from proposed protections.
- Need good quality and reliable services.
- No staff should be losing jobs. The bigger council would be able to streamline services and become more efficient, thereby increasing services to the community.
- Nobody wants to lose their jobs. With new ways to do things work processes will be streamlined. There needs to be a clear direction otherwise the amalgamated councils will be pulling in every direction based on the their needs.
- Not broken don't touch it.
- Not immediately but I have been talking about a regional GIS, I think that would be extremely beneficial.
- Obvious.
- Obviously 3 councils amalgamating would only need 1 Cleansing Department, 1 Customer Service Department etc. so job loss is inevitable.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Outsourcing may occur, lose jobs. Council are currently very good at delivering timely cost effective services.
- People do not want to pay higher council rate if we amalgamate with a council in debt.
- Personal interest.
- Rate payers pay lot of money each year and they deserve better service.
- Reasons given earlier.
- Reduction in the number of services offered may reduce staff numbers, move of office location may transport/travel difficult for some staff and residents, new management style and structure causes anxiety of the unknown for some staff.
- Self-explanatory.
- Staff need to be supported and assisted though the amalgamation process.
- Staff need to know that their jobs are secure, and if not, it will affect the morale of the workplace. It could cause tension if they feel that an employee of the Council they are merging with, has taken the job of a long-time colleague. The community needs to be made aware that the merger of Councils will mean greater resources available to deliver services to the community.
- Staff should be more involved in the negotiations process.
- That is what I expect local government to be.
- That's my opinion.
- That's what this is all about.
- The above issues are self-explanatory.
- The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support.
- The end result should be a more sustainable local government entity at no cost to the ratepayers and there should be a smooth transition for staff.
- The main prerogative and reason for Council's in the first place is serving the community, providing assets and services. This needs to be the primary concern in any plan for the future.
- The prospect of Council amalgamation bring with it staff reduction as the merge Councils rationalise service deliveries and reduce cost.
- The weakest link in "Local Government" is the capacity and capability of Councillors. Rockdale is a Council with annual revenue of \$60 million, staff of about 250 persons and manages assets close to \$800 million on behalf of its residents. If this was a company, you would expect the Company Directors or Boards to be extremely competent people. As a minimum, you would expect extensive previous experience and a process where positions were filled based on extensive recruitment and evaluation. Elections of Councillors offers no such competency.
- There are the biggest concerns too...
- There has been a demonstrated need for change since at least the 1970s and piecemeal attempts have been made however there are opportunities to significantly improve how the system of local government operates in NSW for the benefit of the State rather than an individual council. The political environment currently facing Rockdale is not conducive to good decision making in the public interest.
- There is extensive research on the issue of mergers and acquisitions from the private sector that clearly demonstrate the key success factors for any organisational merger!

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- There will be more work to cover for the employees, the inflation of council rate would affect all NSW residents, and finally decreasing the number of employees.
- These all have an effect in my work and the way my work is conducted.
- These things are important to me. I have been working here for a very long time and would hate to see things change detrimentally. If we were to move to a different location, this could cause issues with many staff who are local to the area. Job security of course is important. We all have mortgages to pay. Job satisfaction is paramount as we come to work every day and need to be content and confident in what we are doing.
- These things might change.
- These topics are important to council.
- They are the only reasons to amalgamate successfully.
- They are the things that affect my living environment.
- They mean so much to the community.
- This helps council to meet needs of community as well as work teams together in delivery of good services.
- This is my opinion.
- To improve services to community.
- To me service delivery is our primary role in the community and the level of service needs to be maintained. The effects of redundancies can be devastating. Affected staff need to be fully supported throughout the process.
- To me, efficiency (through larger organisations) will assist with long term sustainability.
- To shape the new organisation through using best practice and opportunity to address historical practices.
- Too young to worry about it.
- Truth.
- Values are important and the community values the service and commitments the Rockdale Council offers to them.
- Very scared for my job, I have family.
- We always want those 3.
- We are a large group/organisation; as such I think it's important that we are informed of all updates and all decisions. I think communication is better from the front line, rather than after decisions are being made.
- We are all accountable to not only the community locally however a fast changing 21st Century Sydney.
- We are over governed in Australia.
- We are quite customer focused in planning and delivering services. Not sure what other councils are.
- We need to ensure our residents can get representation from council on local issues. This becomes impossible as the size of the council grows.
- We strategically plan and are constantly reviewing and reworking our services and delivery, I wouldn't want to see this put to the wayside, instead integrated forward planning is a necessity here.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Why change what is running well here at Rockdale.
- With amalgamation I don't know where I stand so hence job security. It would be fantastic if we could provide better facilities to our patrons, most of the time we have trouble with our computers and printer not working properly and it frustrate our borrowers.
- With bigger council they have more rates collected, more money to be able to provide better infrastructures, give cheaper rates and competitive rates for community facilities, etc.
- With Point 1. Job security is the most important especially with an amalgamation because no one want to lose their job.
- Work life balance.

#### 6a. What 3 things do you think will be our biggest challenges if we amalgamate?

##### Identified as the Biggest Challenge (1) Responses

- 15 Councillors can now do greater damage to their electorates if they fail or repeat the mistakes in their current Council.
- Adjust within the transition period.
- Admin things such as computer systems, staffing, office locations, sorting out contracts for current services etc.
- Agreement of how things will work.
- Amalgamating policies and regulations.
- Amalgamating with other councils.
- Amalgamation of systems.
- Avoiding the negative impacts of State Government policies.
- Be able to maintain and deliver quality of services to residents.
- Bringing the cultures in Councils together under a common system.
- Change.
- Change management.
- Change of administrative control.
- Changes to services and levels of service.
- Chaos - loss of corporate knowledge - loss of identity - power struggles - temptation for power to be concentrated at the top to overcome inertia - lack of ability to gain consensus.
- Clear communication lines and openness between councils.
- Clear direction.
- Combination of resources.
- Combined service delivery.
- Communication between departments.
- Community expectations.
- Community satisfaction.
- Compatibility and communication.
- Concatenation of records.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Cooperation from all members of newly formed council.
- Cost of merging.
- Councillors.
- Culture.
- Customer service.
- Dealing with change at various levels - staff, political and external (e.g. ratepayers).
- Dealing with customer complaints.
- Deciding which jobs won't change.
- Deciphering electoral boundaries/wards & seats and managing the fallout from the seats that are amalgamated.
- Decision making.
- Delivering quality service to the community.
- Delivering services to customers.
- Delivery of services in a fair and equitable manner.
- Determining core services for the new Council and hence how the organisation will be branded and structured.
- Developing a common identity.
- Developing a culture of a high performing organisation.
- Different cultures.
- Effectively manage infrastructure and deliver services to a growing culturally diverse community. Forever changing, growth, population, education.
- Efficiency in output.
- Eliminate the risk of delusion: i.e. be prepared to face the facts.
- Ensuring residents are still heard when they have local issues that need to be addressed.
- Getting everyone on board once a decision is made.
- Getting merged staff to pull in the same direction.
- Getting the best and right mix of employees.
- Getting the community regain their faith in Council after amalgamation.
- Given that there appears little likelihood of a voluntary amalgamation with any other Council for Rockdale, it would appear that an amalgamation would be "forced", which would be a significant challenge in itself.
- Harmonisation.
- Harmonising work cultures and locations of various offices.
- Having 1 identity (people love their council).
- Highest quality of service to the community.
- How to reduce multiple services like community services, customer services and libraries in to one service.
- Impact on our communities.
- Improving the service standards.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Individual people losing control/power.
- Industrial harmony.
- Initially coordinating and maintaining services.
- Integrating staff and systems.
- integrating/changing systems and processes.
- Integration of IT systems.
- Job security.
- Jobs.
- Keep identity as a local Government.
- Keeping people power.
- Keeping rate payers happy.
- Keeping rates, fees and charges the same.
- keeping the community on side.
- Keeping the right staff.
- Knowing who the new councillors will be and whether they have an interest in my local area.
- Level of services we can provide.
- Locations of sites.
- Loss of jobs.
- Maintain better customer service.
- Maintaining a sense of local community with front line services that will be required across a larger population.
- Maintaining a stable workplace culture.
- Maintaining expertise.
- Maintaining service levels.
- Maintaining services during restructuring.
- Maintaining standards.
- Management.
- Managing larger staff numbers.
- Managing the transition.
- Merging different services.
- Merging staff.
- Merging systems and streamlining teams.
- More money for bigger projects.
- New areas to familiarise with.
- Our whole job, everything changes.
- Paper works.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- People.
- Protection of jobs.
- Quickly develop a cohesive efficient operation in a larger bureaucracy.
- Rate increase or holding.
- Ratepayer timeframes getting positive results.
- Removal of duplications to become more streamlined in the services provided.
- Resources amalgamation.
- Resources to developer organisational structure.
- Restructuring.
- Retaining staff in the pre and initial stages.
- Retaining staff with the local experience and knowledge of each LGA.
- Same services.
- Service levels transition.
- Services to Rockdale people.
- Services to the communities on a wider area.
- Setting up new systems and policies that everyone agrees on.
- Staff accepting change.
- Staff culture.
- Staff culture for a new organisation (past compared to present/future).
- Staff morale.
- Staff redundancy.
- Staff resistant to change.
- Staffing.
- Streamlining of services.
- Streamlining systems.
- Team organisation change.
- That the current innovation and best practice of individual councils are not lost in any mergers, but rather is adopted by the merged organisation.
- To ensure the finances are sufficient to deliver the services and infrastructure.
- To get back on track financially.
- To get more funding from the Fed and State Governments.
- Transition.
- What do we keep and what goes? Software etc.
- Where do you start.
- Willingness to change.
- Work condition.
- Work load for remaining staff.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Workflow continuity.
- Working criteria.
- Working out fair staffing arrangements.
- Zones/boundaries.

#### **Identified as the 2nd biggest challenge response**

- Ability to be flexible (i.e. accommodating new furniture).
- Achieving a one organisation mentality.
- Addressing cultural and demographic differences between councils.
- Administrative synergy.
- Alienation - loss of closeness to community - lack of real consultation - more community disenchantment leading to lack of support for important decisions.
- Alignment.
- Amalgamation of lodgement processes.
- Assets and liabilities - retaining - selling? Natural habitats - environment. Empowerment - who in the newly amalgamated Council will make the final decision? Ensuring the community benefits from such decisions when the time comes.
- Becoming a business rather than a service.
- Being one tribe.
- Being organised.
- Building a new central council building - choosing the location, perhaps Hurstville CBD.
- Business system.
- Change management issues with RCC Staff and with staff in other councils.
- Change of work practices.
- Changing our ways.
- Changing policies.
- Cohesion.
- Communication between the different departments.
- Communication both internally and externally.
- Community expectation.
- Concatenation of LEP/DCP.
- Conflict between old councils as every council has their own policy and style.
- Continue improved service delivery (residents don't experience a decline in service levels).
- Convincing staff their jobs are safe.
- Coordinate service delivery.
- Coordinating the amalgamated structures and strategic plans.
- Cost of service deliveries. They may be not necessarily cheaper.
- Council fund.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Councils not wanting to merge and trying to protect their existing empires, and just going through the motions of a merger.
- Creating a corporate culture that will require change in attitudes!
- Customer service.
- Deciding which staff will be kept.
- Delivering levels of service that the community can fairly and reasonably accept.
- Depending on who you would merge with and what debts you would inherit.
- Developing standards across the wider region.
- Different systems.
- Different worker's rights between other councils.
- disrupted service delivery, whilst it is integrated.
- Doing the accounts for the first few years.
- Don't know.
- Educating the community.
- Employees and their duties.
- Ensuring the organisation does not become too large and unwieldy.
- Financial stability.
- Finding the best regulations to govern the final Council.
- Forming direct communication with our community.
- Getting everyone on the same level.
- Getting staff on board and willing to change their roles.
- Getting the residents to buy it/clarifying what it will mean for them and how the changes will be implemented.
- Getting the right people on board and in the right positions to make a difference.
- Good governance and corporate structure.
- Having everyone trained onto the IT services implemented noting different facilities used.
- High costs.
- How to combine different processes from different councils.
- Identifying physical locations of Council Chambers, admin centres etc.
- If we join does Rockdale get loading like other councils for holidays.
- Incorporating 'best common practices'.
- Integrating staff.
- Integrating staff from the differing Councils developing and implementing effective and consistent work practices.
- Intellectual property loss in staff that move from Council.
- IT systems.
- Job security.
- Larger areas to manage.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Less staff.
- Library services.
- Loss of intellectual knowledge.
- Maintaining and or improving services without significant increase in costs.
- Maintaining jobs.
- Maintaining staff.
- Maintaining staff morale and cultural differences.
- Maintenance of assets.
- Making it economic and performance based.
- Managing change.
- Managing impact on staff - positions, morale, fear of change.
- Managing those who aim to derail the process and promote insecurity and untruths.
- Merging different service levels.
- Merging IT and other associated systems.
- Merging of different work cultures.
- Merging services.
- More opportunities to learn with bigger Councils.
- Moving staff to other locations.
- New programs to deal with.
- Operating on one system, some councils are utilise a call to collect clean up, others by area.
- Organisational culture.
- Outsourcing of staff.
- People don't like change - reduction in moral.
- Planning projects for new works and looking after existing infrastructure.
- Potential loss of services.
- Prioritising the community needs.
- Providing consistent service.
- Providing services over a larger area in a cost effective manner.
- Quality.
- Rates pricing.
- Red tape.
- Re-location of staff to different areas.
- Residential care.
- Resources to do civil works required in a greater area.
- Retention of jobs.
- Saving money.
- Security.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Service delivery change.
- Staff communication across the merging Councils.
- Staff duties.
- Staff keeping their jobs.
- Staff retention/retraining.
- Staff will be less motivated and loose ownership of the various projects and services they are committed too.
- Streamlining policies and procedures.
- Streamlining processes and departments.
- Structural change.
- Suitable candidates.
- Supporting the staff through the amalgamation.
- Switching to electronic communication.
- System transition.
- Team efficiency.
- Technology changes.
- That residents don't lose out on any services that they now have.
- The cost in amalgamating Councils and will the alleged cost savings be realised in the future.
- The State Government becomes more fearful of the new power of the large Councils due to their size and acts accordingly. Clovers Law is a case in point.
- The up-front cost of aligning systems.
- To get back on track financially.
- To provide better and acceptable services.
- Understanding and responding to local issues.
- Unsure.
- Viability.
- What effect will have on services during the amalgamations.
- What will be the cost?
- Where are we going to end up decentralisation of services engineers in one building planners in another.
- Which council will take over.
- Which Council(s)? How would we gain efficiencies? How well are these calculated? How will the transition process be managed if an amalgamation went ahead?
- Will the residents like the idea.
- Work practices.
- Work processes.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### Identified as the 3rd biggest challenge responses

- "Cultural" differences.
- A new and different political agenda will dominate decision making.
- Achieving a realistic delivery program for the community based on sound business decisions for delivery of services e.g. present the business case for Saturday trading; Libraries that are poorly attended.
- Adequate and equitable representation for all residents within the amalgamated entity.
- Adjusting to city demographics.
- Agreeing on policies and development controls.
- Aligning different values and cultures.
- Amalgamating different work ethics.
- Can the same level of community services be maintained.
- Chance to repeat mistakes of the past.
- Change management.
- Changes of structures.
- Changing salaries.
- Communicate to the community new changes.
- Communicating carnages to the public and employees.
- Community and staff adjusting to change. Councillors adjusting to change.
- Community expectations.
- Computer systems and process (and fees and charges).
- Consistency in applications.
- Consistent and accurate communication throughout the process.
- Continued service during amalgamation.
- Conveying the changes in processes to the community in general and maintaining levels of service during the transition.
- Convincing the community of the benefits of amalgamation.
- Cost effectiveness.
- Council services.
- Councils, staff and communities making the mergers succeed to deliver better or efficient services to the community.
- Creating a new identity and culture.
- Creating the new council identity.
- Cultural impacts.
- Dealing with different cultures.
- Deciding on a new home for the Administrative Building.
- Decisions on systems, processes, services and assets.
- Delivery better services to a wider community.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Determining how staff will work within the new structure and where they will be located - unions will have a keen interest.
- Developing the most appropriate individual services levels and methods of delivery.
- Developing the Units.
- Different political agendas.
- Dividing the larger Local Government Area up so that it is manageable in a way that people are happy to work out of the old 'Rockdale area' and into a new and unfamiliar area of the new Local Government Area.
- Don't know.
- Employees on side.
- Environmental care.
- Equity across regions.
- Fairness and equality in what staff are paid.
- Financially Rockdale will not be better off and how long or can it recover.
- Finance structure change.
- Financial challenges of managing a large council.
- Finding any real benefits and change.
- Finding the best work methods.
- Finding your feet.
- Get to know more areas and people.
- Guarantee of success.
- Having one General Manager.
- Having phones able to send email and go online.
- Having to consolidate all our legislation and operate as one entity.
- Implementation of the new restructure and changed management.
- Infrastructure e.g. what services, buildings will be kept or let go.
- Initial downturn in service vs return for investment.
- It would be difficult for any General Manager or Council to control and run if it was to be a very large Local Government Area.
- IT/data operational systems.
- Job security.
- Keep team morale up.
- Knowing new policies and procedures.
- Liabilities.
- Loss of identity for the community.
- Maintaining service costs and standards.
- Maintaining staff and community morale. Further questions arise - see section below on "suggestions".

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Making sure Rockdale is treated as the inferior partner.
- Managing the political environment.
- Money.
- New processes to learn.
- Non-productive period.
- Not sure.
- Not to lose the knowledge base of the Council's with downsizing of staff.
- Office location of the new Council.
- Organisation structure.
- Organisational cohesion and staff support.
- Organising and planning integration between all systems and choosing the best paths.
- Overcoming any barriers.
- Performance appraisal.
- Pleasing the ratepayers.
- Rate rises.
- Ratepayers will want to see major improvements with the money saved.
- Rates and service.
- Real cost of amalgamation.
- Redundancies?
- Re-engineering and agreeing on business processes for the merged Council.
- Reporting to correct management.
- Resistance.
- Resolving the mix and standard of services.
- Resources.
- Retaining our own identity.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Save money on duplication of services.
- Service delivery.
- Service delivery to the community.
- Service level dropped.
- Services.
- Short term cost of an amalgamation and the likelihood of ever retrieving these costs through efficiency gains.
- Sorting the large amount of similar job roles and levelling there work conditions.
- Staff lose morale.
- Staff moral.
- Staff transition.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Staff uncertainty.
- Supporting staff through change.
- Systems.
- That larger councils try to 'take over' smaller councils.
- The Executive Committee finding the right amount of essential information and time to engage with its' employee base.
- The replacement of a diverse range of systems and cultures with a sustainable alternative!
- The time it will take to amalgamate and the turmoil that it will create with the local communities in trying to merge different organisations and communities together.
- Time.
- To get back on track financially.
- To make a better and safer place for living and working.
- Too many managers.
- Training staff.
- Transition period where conflicting priorities between former LGAs compete.
- Trying to make it work when it has failed in other states.
- Understanding full impact of the changes and clearly articulating these to the workforce/ community.
- Unifying the asset management systems.
- Unsure.
- Wasted community monies.
- What and how services are to be provided.
- What jersey will we wear.
- Whether it will have any benefit in long run to the community.
- Which Councils to merge with.
- Who pays for what?
- Will the areas still stay the same.
- Working with other councils.
- Worse off - instead of efficiencies waste - poor oversight/review mechanisms installed change creates new bureaucratic layer - increased distance between decision makers - technical experts - community.
- Zoning and development of the area as a whole and demographics.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### 6b. Why do you say that?

##### Responses

- A lot of councils use different IT systems and it would be a difficult project to get them all on the one platform. Resident's services are a priority and they wouldn't like to lose any of the existing services that their local council provides. In my experience I have seen larger organisations dominate/take over smaller organisations when it should be a 50/50 merge.
- Additional resources are hard to come by in Council.
- All Council's run differing systems and have differing policies and procedures. Any new system or changes in policies will require significant training.
- As above but also will an amalgamation disenfranchise our communities further and reduce participation? Managing change includes managing that change with our communities but also for the staff of the amalgamated organisations. With any change you need to consider shared vision and values, resources, management and leadership capabilities and key to this whole process is communication. Change management comes with challenges but it has to be effective. In regards to cost effectiveness and it is simplistic but you can't do more with less. Public expectation will still be the same in regards to service delivery but if amalgamation leads to less money and a review of service delivery then as part of the change process we would need to manage the expectations of our communities as well as make a business case for preventative spend to support our communities in Rockdale Joint.
- As every council has its own way of processing applications lodged.
- Based on knowledge gained from my own research.
- Because Council's take years to implement consolidation with costs blowing out for the next ten years. We must be truthful as to whether or not it will be worth it.
- Because huge changes to existing situations could have flow on effects.
- Because I did.
- Because I see these as being the challenges that we will face.
- Because its true.
- Because other councils have phones with internet/email access. Some staff will not leave.
- Because the loss of some management roles duplicated in the merger, may effect staff morale. It has to be a genuine merger, where the workload is shared, but so too are the rewards.
- Because they are important.
- Because this is what happens when entities merge.
- Because you asked the question?
- Because you asked...
- Can be more financial sustainable because more money comes in from rates, fees, etc.
- Cause that's what I think.
- Change in the dynamics of the organisation with staff merging from other management and styles and workplace cultures. Meeting community expectations previously set by the pre-merged Council could cause difficulties. New Councillor, different compliance etc. could also cause conflict in the community both culturally and economically.
- Change management 101.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Clearly there will be replication and excess staff due to amalgamation which will create uncertainty for staff. For example, you will not have three General Managers. Work environments are very different between council's and this will be a challenge for staff to be able to tackle new software and document systems as well as new work environments. Amalgamation will also come with some loss of identity to the community in regards to their local government area.
- Communication is vital and it's very important in washing out a lot of the negativity associated with this.
- Community - culturally uniquely diverse. Environment - natural habitats being retained vs development. Rates - will they increase? More for less (services)?
- Concerned that quality will fall.
- Council responsibilities need to continue. The changes will provide opportunities and practical experience from staff outside current organisation. The challenge is to adopt the best practical systems and integrate the wider experience in providing services in the differing managerial environments.
- Council's greatest asset/liability are the staff.
- Currently not all councils have the same processes and policies.
- Depending on who we amalgamate with site locations may cause issues based on travel time, ease of access. Staff retention as nobody likes to lose their jobs. Differing opinions on how things get done depending on what council you were originally from.
- Did happen to Victoria and will also happen here in NSW.
- Different councils will bring different experiences, procedures, systems and expectations. People are often quite resistant and afraid of change and the greatest challenge will be in effecting widespread change and finding a common ground or compromise between the disparate Councils, both for the staff and community.
- Each Council has its own staff structure, procedures, operating systems and regulations.
- Everyone fears change regardless of what we voice. Everyone fears the unknown and always thinks the worst, but one thing I found is that once the change is made it feels like a little holiday till you find the person next to you is working in the same job role with vastly better work conditions and on a better pay scale. This builds resentment in teams that stresses relations.
- Everyone wants stuff cheaper.
- Extensive professional experience in NSW and QLD.
- Having had considerable experience in Local Government administration and as a member of the public I have analysed the implications of the amalgamation proposal and come to this conclusion.
- Having the experience of going through several restructures within an organisation these answers always need to be considered.
- I am concerned that Local Government will lose staff to other sectors as a result of uncertainty around job security. It is difficult to resolve structure in the current size organisation, it would have to be more difficult to resolve a structure without having a full understanding of the services and standard to which they are delivered.
- I believe the community will not be better off if Councils merge and standing alone with improvements will be all the way better for all.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I have the feeling that other Councils view us as not the preferred option, residents will need to buy into whatever proposal gets developed and understand its implications for them, Some staff already appear to be getting jittery.
- I imagine developing a new or merging complex IT, financial and other Council systems from two or three different Councils may be a very difficult process. I have also wondered how the symbolic location of Town Hall, Council Chambers etc. would be decided.
- I think each Council works a little bit different e.g. software.
- I think every council now think they have the best staff and delivering the best service.
- I think it is a huge task to amalgamate such big businesses in terms of financial and human cost.
- I think overall this is a stupid question, the answers are self-explanatory.
- I think there will be a bit of a push back, either - that's not my job, or this is the way we have always done things and this is the way we will continue to do things.
- I think this is fairly evident.
- I work closely with my counterparts and community members relate to each of us, communication needs to be improved so the community can see exactly where our services lie and how we have come together to build a strong community service delivery that upholds each Council's already made functions.
- If we amalgamate there will be more than one of each type of services and trying to merge them into one will be a difficult and emotionally charged time.
- I'm taking from a workers perspective, not a community one.
- In merging three significant organisations, impacting on services to huge communities, dealing with the transition from a variety of perspectives will be challenging - communication strategies will be critical but also people in key positions to assist in dealing with change are needed. People at all levels will not want change or accept it. Experience has shown that to achieve best outcomes you will need people in the 3 organisations that are experienced and have the knowledge about their own systems, processes etc. to bring them together. What we keep, what we throw out and what we change particularly where it impacts of our ratepayers will be politically tough decisions.
- It is important and essential that if an amalgamation were to occur, the community is better off and also the employees are better off, not worse off if an amalgamation is not a good fit.
- It is obvious.
- It is what I think.
- It may be difficult to merge these things swiftly, which could cause some discomfort in the short term and if not managed well in the longer term also.
- It might be too large to run smoothly and I think there would need to be a lot of meetings to keep everyone informed about procedures and what is happening.
- It will be a challenge to bring together a number of services with different standards and Key Performance Indicators and ensure that people are not overall worse off than they were before.
- It will be harder to go about our business when trying to serve a larger area.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- It will take much time and consultation to create new systems for people to adopt. A change management team will be needed to ensure people do not reject what is unknown to them. Each council will feel their system or policy is superior and want to roll it out across the new larger council. A culture of 'this is how we do it' will prevail and will be hard to get rid of. Encouraging people to work in the 'new area' of the Local Government Area and not just stick to the familiar 'old Rockdale area' will be difficult. Many people have worked with their hands on projects in this Local Government Area for over 30 years and they have much ingrained knowledge of the area. It will be daunting for them to work in a totally new and unfamiliar area.
- Just answering the question.
- Keeping the community happy, councillors happy and staff happy should be key considerations in any amalgamation.
- Less number of employees and a larger area to serve. Would reduce the level of services provided.
- Life experience! Working in state government and the NFP sector, I've been through at least 3 restructuring processes and it is always hard to know if it has resulted in clarity and efficiency ...usually not!
- Loss of village feeling and personal ownership.
- Merged staff will be under different pay scales & conditions & morale will suffer.
- Models from other states.
- Most of the staff at RCC are motivated and take ownership of their particular areas of responsibility. The relationship between staff and management is positive in almost every department. It would be a shame to break up something which appears to be working well and if supported will continue to improve.
- Most staff know our own LGA very well. Increasing areas and therefore increasing knowledge will be a big change.
- My manager attended a conference which included the case study of a recent council amalgamation. From his feedback about this session, I gathered that the more technical aspects (such as the kind of computer system chosen) were less of an issue than streamlining the more "cultural" aspects of an amalgamation (which programs, events would continue/discontinue, which service levels would prevail).
- Not knowing what amalgamation will bring, better/worse.
- Not sure.
- Obviously money saved by amalgamating will be required to be spent on services (or improving services) for our ratepayers to see that the merging is a success.
- Often services are based on past decisions and revisiting those services through appropriate and regular monitoring and reporting will provide the necessary data to achieve cost savings and increased productivity.
- Once again I feel that it is obvious.
- People are afraid of change-managing expectations and fears is important. Business Systems need to align. IT/data operational systems may differ and need to align.
- People are resistant to change.
- People will be resistant to change. Running a larger council will cost.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Planning and development will take long to merge and collaborate with the state government, building a central government building.
- Point 1. I believe the community might lose faith if we amalgamate and not be able to communicate with staff they already know and trust.
- Possible amalgamation would cause difficult circumstances so any change would have an adverse effect ranging from the Staff to the Community. Council has to also consider the high transitional costs involved to build a 'Super City'. Is there any going back if the amalgamation process does not work?
- Restructures such as amalgamations are always problematic, but does bring to the fore, employees that are keen to take organisations forward.
- Service levels vary from one council to another, if amalgamations occur, which service levels will be implemented. Being organised for change.
- Services, staff and administration will naturally have to change to accommodate the amalgamation.
- Should be transparent and respect each other's values and way of their working styles.
- Single family is better than the joint family.
- Somehow at times you feel for the customers we are supposed to be serving
- Sometimes hard to amalgamate different systems used and different knowledge levels. Forced redundancies will see a lot of knowledge of the areas walk out the door to the detriment of those left behind.
- Teething problems in streamlining of services.
- That's my opinion.
- That's what I feel.
- The above issues are self-explanatory.
- The amalgamation cost will take 7-10 years back financially which I cannot support.
- The initial merger will require a get to know you period (a seamless approach) without impacting on customer service to the community.
- The larger councils get the further away from communities they get. Small to medium councils have a benefit of being closer to their communities. Also, given the potential for some amalgamation decisions to be politically driven, there will be competing priorities based on former LGA boundaries.
- The merged Council would have a larger workforce with the attendant's problems of different work cultures, a substantial payout should a large number of staff decided to have redundancy. This would obviously have a significant impact on the finance of the merged Council.
- The risk of delusion is already a major problem for existing organisations that do not rely on being commercially sustainable (or profitable) for existence (survivable).
- The three things above will be highly time consuming on top of everything else that is needed so I hope that Meredith, Stephen, Karin and Geoff can work on measurable deliverables to ensure that Rockdale in whatever form it takes comes out on top and that they are the Leadership Team to head the new "Rockdale 2016 ...and beyond!"
- There are many workers whom been at Councils for decades who may feel threatened and resistant to change. Others may see their own view their power eroded.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- There are numerous examples of waste in the history of decisions made by Rockdale City Councillors. Amalgamations can simply increase the level of waste.
- There are old habits which need to be replaced or improved.
- There is a perception that amalgamations mean loss of jobs. While the opposite is true, it impacts on staff morale. If amalgamation is a path that Rockdale will go down, the staff need to be fully informed of the process and the outcomes - no sugar coating!! Structural change is essential to ensure that services are delivered, at current levels or better, in a more efficient a cost effective way. The varied systems used to mapping, information storage, processes and the like will be difficult to condense into a single cohesive system.
- There might be position changes and some staff might not be happy to deal with it.
- There will be a lot of change and disruption to Council services and Council staff will need to deal with all the aspects of the changes.
- There will be more than one Council merging – that’s three ways of doing things, three organisational cultures and three lots of elected members. Sticking to ‘my way’, ‘old ways’, ‘comforts’, competition between staff, fear of change thrown in with bureaucracy is going to be a huge challenge to overcome. The workload pressure of maintaining business as usual whilst creating a newly merged Council will also be a challenge.
- There will be numerous issues to overcome.
- These are the biggest requirements too.
- These are the core resources and management processes for operation of councils.
- These are the things that should be considered in a proposed change.
- These items significantly impact the organisation internally as well as the residents of the City.
- These matters are never easy. 3 entities 3 different levels of service, systems and structures.
- These need to be sorted before things will start running smoothly.
- These things will definitely change.
- They seem to be the biggest challenges when dealing with any changes or system implementations (big or small). I believe that the same challenges will be present but at a larger and more complex scale.
- They speak for them self.
- This is my main issue. All will get back to normal after all is settled.
- This is what I believe.
- This is what I believe will be the most difficult.
- This is what I think.
- Time & cost effective.
- To amalgamate will take time, administrative works, to iron out all the issues to merge. Time, money and effort will be diverted to this area rather than serving the community.
- Too many different views with larger scope of staff and resident population.
- Very scared for my job, I have family.
- We are here to serve our local community.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- We could be a happy big team under one name like a big conglomerate such as Microsoft, Apple. We could move or retrain to suit our qualification and job prescription better. We could move from position to another position within the bigger council to suit our qualification and job prescription better. It is much easier to cope with less bosses, councillors, general managers, directors, and managers.
- Whilst we essentially do the same things, the processes can differ between councils. Colleagues at other councils who have been through amalgamation enjoyed different work conditions i.e. 35hr week/leaseback vehicle. The older community generally struggles to adapt to change.
- Who will cover what zones? Will the residents be caned for or fall through a crack? Environmental issues be monitored at all times or ignored?

#### **7. Thinking about the way we do business now, what do you think we could do to introduce better ways of working to reduce duplication; minimise waste; or re-shape our services to save time and money? Please write in any suggestions you have.**

##### **Responses**

- A clear and ongoing maintenance schedule for our playing fields ...A clear pathway for both staff and ratepayers to aspire to.
- A culture of individual commercial and corporate accountability would be a good start with a high level of discipline in the decision making process associated with the use of the community's resources. Individuals need to be accountable for what they do and what value it adds to the community! From past experience the introduction of approaches such as "program budgeting" can be a useful cost effective tool to achieve this accountability!
- Align staff to service delivery outcomes.
- Annual day where all staff meet and discuss the implementation strategy for each unit.
- Asset management strategy.
- At this stage Council has something to look forward to with our new Customer Service Centre and Library. More general training and education across the organisation to attain a better functioning Council.
- Better and more appropriate reporting, limit duplications.
- Better collaborative tools that are in real time, open to co-authoring, commenting, sharing and easy to access. Programs that align with one another and convergence processes.
- Better communication and understanding between internal business units. For business units to try and work in unison since we all work for the same organisation.
- Better communication between departments within Council would make a significant difference in the delivery of services!
- Better coordination/communication between teams. Clear processes and tasks allocations.
- Better people = Better decisions.
- Better systems e.g. booking systems talking to accounting systems to avoid double handling and ensure that all invoices are raised correctly.
- Big area means big risk as well as big opportunities for all day to day work and reshaping of the council its very important to address all sort of problems not ignoring minor or focusing only the major problems , equally addressing all sort of problems and sharing all the benefits fairly we can make one council for all.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Call to collect clean up services, 2 x per year, they're like Westfield gift cards, even if you get them you forget to use them, it would also stop the side of the road looking like a tip.
- Can't think of any immediate opportunities.
- Clear, transparent accounting of how much it costs us to build and maintain assets. Better approach to user-pays of Council open space and community facilities. Better political support for more integrated development planning (growth) around transport nodes rather than "spot" rezoning proposals for the benefit of developers.
- Close a branch library to free up staff to minimise need for casual staff to cover leave and to ensure seamless provision of the many activities the libraries run.
- Co-mingled 120 Lt Waste bins. I would like to think more about this and respond outside of this survey.
- Common IT Systems/platforms, One Mail Room, One 'Head Office' and 3 sub-officers, this would include outdoor as well.
- Communication and cross team collaboration. Individuals are too quick to take ownership of a project and don't take the time to communicate their ideas with their team and relevant departments. As a result we sometimes end up spending an unnecessary amount of resources on projects that could have been achieved in half the time and cost. Project Planning - There is a lack of affective planning that impedes on the final outcome of projects. Realistic time frames and project actions need to be considered prior to commencing a project. The lack of planning is contributing to an unnecessary amount of costs as we attempt to meet deadlines.
- Consolidate our buildings and have more staff working together nearby. Close the two small branch libraries. It would be cheaper to provide a shuttle bus service once a week to get the customers to a larger library.
- Cook Park/Lady Robinsons Beach is the jewel of Rockdale Council and is currently managed in an ad hoc way by numerous divisions across the organisation. To reduce this duplication of services to save monies and to have it under control I suggest appointing a Manager to be totally responsible for all issues along Cook Park and Lady Robinsons Beach. With all the redevelopment currently underway with the Wolli Creek Area I recommend in order to better manage the area that Council form a Task Group comprising of an Engineer, Planner and Building Surveyor to coordinate all developments to ensure they comply with the Wolli Creek Master plan and minimize the impacts of works on the residents already living in the area. Such a Task Group has been set up by Sydney City Council and is used to streamline the redevelopments in the Waterloo/Alexandria Areas.
- Council and review the collection of household large items of waste (clean-ups). Currently Council provides 4 free scheduled clean-up annually and a paid collection service. There is a trend to including a free pre-booked service either a mix of scheduled and pre-booked service or moving to a total pre-booked service. The matter could initially be raised in a community survey with option for 1. Stay the same. For 2 scheduled and 2 pre-booked service or for a completely pre-booked service.
- Customer service officers should be up-skilled so that they can better advise community members to not to have great expectations. This will avoid lodging of many customer requests which in turn will save Council officers time and resources.
- Customer-oriented and team-based management will help to improve the effective operation and management.
- Decentralised services.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Don't change scope of works mid project. Make sure everyone knows their role within each team. Push TRIM harder so that everyone is aware that it's a must for all documentation.
- Duplication seems inevitable as no one has the time to search or remember what they did yesterday. Our newly implemented systems do not assist in minimising duplication, their initial creation and search functions do not help in this area. Office based staff will always generate unnecessary waste, this can be minimised by getting staff more mobile and equipped with I.T. technology assistance. Telstra did it over 20 years ago.
- Ensure that all staff correctly use the systems that are in place and that they receive sufficient training to achieve this.
- Ensuring CRM notes are kept up to date and finalised when done - maybe having a regular trash and treasure market (every month) so people can sell their unwanted goods so less dumping. Maybe a call up clean up collection service as now with rain/storms my area looks terrible as people scavenge through and then it all becomes flying debris all over the roads.
- Going electronic, being more advanced in our skills.
- Have an external audit of job descriptions that looks at tasks and procedures within each department, then look at how that is managed by Coordinators and see where they fit in the big picture. I have no issues with Managers and Directors, what is needed is looking at Coordinators and the workforce to see where change and streamline can occur moving forward.
- Have consistency with all councils.
- Having previously worked in the private sector only and as a relative newcomer to government work I feel that sometimes I have a different perspective on work ethics and what it means to work hard. I've found that many people who have been working for local councils for an extended period of time seem to take the benefits and their job for granted and have no real understanding of what an actual full time job really is. I find this especially frustrating as there are numerous others who are absolutely outstanding and go above and beyond to cover for those who do the bare minimum of what their job requires, if that. I feel that there needs to be a review of jobs and employees on a regular basis to make sure that the best person for the job is actually doing the job. Employment and job security should be earned not an assumed given to stop people from getting complacent and stagnating.
- Higher customer service focus. Change to 2 on call waste collections a year, where the customer calls and are given a date that the clean-up will occur. A better reporting system that identifies key reporting options and flags them as duplicates. Example abandoned vehicles, if the same registration number is entered it flags as a duplicate rego and notifies the receiving officer and they can decide whether to proceed with a new request or make notes on the current request. More accountability for each and every department to stop/limit the passing of the buck system that seems to be in play at times.
- Hire more ground (front line) staff and discontinue positions that are not required or are not useful to the public. Staff that do not require a vehicle to carry out daily duties should not be given a lease back. Hire a younger workforce. Give more work opportunities to people living outside of Rockdale to minimize conflict of interest situations. Make tougher policies on Councillor-staff relations.
- I don't have any.
- I don't know.
- I have none.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- I respect the knowledge insight and motivation of the senior managers at RCC. In the context of amalgamation staff would be receptive to productivity initiatives proposed by management.
- I think we are already good at exploring and taking on better ways to improve our business and services. As long as this culture continues and that there is strong leadership and support in getting things done, our business will always improve. However we can do better in the 'scoping, budgeting, implementation and engagement phase' of any improvement project so as to reduce time and money wasted down the track for not getting things right to begin with. In a nutshell, if there is any lessons learnt, it will be not rushing through any changes, and spending time in engaging staff and allocating proper resources to get any improvement projects properly scoped, tested and managed. Using something similar to the Lean Six Sigma approach to ensure things are understood well enough, improvements are designed and tested well enough and that we can actually measure any improvements will also help.
- Identification of services that deliver a measurable value to the community, and improve on these would be a great start. Minimisation of Consultant involvement where internal staff are equipped enough to carry out such delegated duties would be good.
- If an amalgamation takes place, the range of services available from the various satellite offices of Council (administration centres) should be considered, so as to best utilise the staff and assets already available to Council.
- Improve on Management, Directors and General Manager, stop hiring consultants and stop external audits, we as a Council are capable of doing our jobs correctly.
- Improve on the ROC system.
- Improved inter-organisational communication.
- In General the staff need more training to understand the whole process in their area, rather than just know how to do their own small part. In that way they can built a sense of belonging, responsibility and happy to be helpful and assist others. The leaders and managers should be more approachable and more willing to help, and expediting their input to help to achieve targets. Any decisions different from the initial target has to be explained and it isn't an absolute. Any frustration created by this circumstances can only cause time and skill waste.
- Invest in improving resources e.g. IMT to enable us to deliver more modern services, online etc. which the community wants.
- It's hard to make people realise how important a job the council has and does. How many posters will it take for people to stop littering or start recycling?
- Joint planning and good practice sharing meetings between department employees' not just managers. As a suggestion you could introduce quarterly coordinator meetings (apologies if this already happens). The meetings could be themed and focussed on developing service planning, connections etc.
- Kerb side rubbish collection should be programed to match joining Councils. Should only be 2 a years for each house hold and program by Council around the LGA. We should not allow random dumping of rubbish and collections almost every week our LGA most times looks like a dump especially around large unit complexes in Kogarah and Wolli Creek.
- Lean process reviews completed quickly and managed assertively. It would deliver productively gains but of course councils are usually reticent about pursuing efficiency as aggressively as in the real world. Council and senior management need a lot of ticker to pursue this.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Less clean-ups.
- Lobby harder to get rid of rate pegging so that more income can be generated. It works in other states. That's half the reason why Council's don't have the required funds to perform all its responsibilities to the required level. It's not that they don't want to, they are restricted in many cases.
- Manage telephone conversations between staff and staff friends or staff family members which are not Council's business. Time management for staff arrival time, taking lunch and breaks and departure. Sack lazy staff who read FACEBOOK, or INTERNET for private reasons or talking without stops about their own holidays and disturb other staff working. Reduce influence of some old trade union representatives who have been on the trade unions too long with the staff consultative. Their membership to be with the staff consultative committee should expire after a five year tenure. These trade union representatives are currently boasting to other staff that they tell their respective bosses what to do including the General Manager, Directors and Managers. The directions that Council should take do not come from the trade unions.
- Managers and co-ordinators to lift there act and be more proactive.
- Managers to manage properly. Not be permanently missing in action.
- Maybe join with other Councils in certain services that will benefit the whole community in general – e.g. waste collection. Allow for clean-up services based on household requirements rather than set dates for general clean up e.g. 4 or 6 per calendar year - it might reduce unnecessary dumping of rubbish. Respond to incoming mail where action is required in a timely manner - rather than getting another one saying “still waiting for a response to a previous correspondence” - maybe something can be looked at and officers should be made aware of.
- Merge and collaborate development controls with the state government. Push for a paperless office - electronic lodgements of DAs etc. Remove leaseback vehicles and introduce public transport allowances - will remove the need for hundreds of car parking spaces.
- Minimise printing and plastic consumption. Invest in collaborative systems to encourage efficient process-
- Mobile connectivity appropriate for the work we do to reduce the time spent in the office-
- More communication and clarification of roles and responsibilities...
- More community education about waste management and improve systems for electronic secure payments and application accessibility which would save time and money.
- More focus on performance management consistent across the organisation. Budget over-runs, non-delivery, delayed delivery, non-accountability, 'going around' an agreed process/policy is often tolerated. Standard work plans linked to performance reviews. Work shopping and sharing in developing the unit work plans. More strategic and proactive approach to 'best practice' budgeting and financial management. Engage the Leadership team in reviewing and work shopping the budget.
- More staff.
- New more modern computer software to replace the Pathways system. Emailing of council rates and other invoices which are due for payment to reduce waste and improve efficiency.
- No comment.
- No suggestions.
- Not sure.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Nothing to add at present.
- Notification of applications needs to occur quicker and the end process also needs to be quicker - extensive time loss at the moment which frustrates the public and staff. Electronic s149 certificates to be available. Fees able to be paid electronically which would allow applications to also be lodged electronically.
- Outsourcing.
- Over the last six months there have been many improvements to the IT structure and internal and external service delivery. Continuing to resource and enhance this sector has a huge flow-on benefit to the workflow and productivity of different departments and for individual employees.
- Overview of services, staffing etc. will need to be carried out. This way the council/s will realise what problems, such as waste and duplication will be identified and can be rectified.
- Printing! We waste too much paper. Continue to improve systems and make ensure better system integration.
- Probably shouldn't have spent so much money on a report that shows we are not good on our own. Might be a good idea to talk to our teams and ask for input - there are a lot of ground staff (in their fields) that can come up with alternate solutions and better ways of doing this.
- Property management is unclear and is not clearly defined e.g. who does what. Duty statement of staff never finalised after restructuring.
- Provide more work facilities like professional software, phones, cars ...etc. to minimize waste and save time and money. Reduce duplication.
- Provide the community with a list of our services and consult with them on the level of importance and align finances with the services to be maintained and at what level. Review and report back on the services yearly.
- Providing better training to the staff to make them more efficient to their job.
- Providing proper assistance to business units to do real service plans including review of processes. There are no doubt processes that are not adding value that have become entrenched. However, current workloads often make it difficult to stop and review properly, whilst the crocodiles are snapping at your heels.
- Public consultation, perception is more important than minor efficiency gains at this point in time.
- Questions arise such as: would one amalgamated Council operate in one building, and if so, where? What would happen to any surplus building stock? As stated earlier, there could well be efficiencies in terms of more centralised design and project management officers, providing staff numbers were maintained properly to adequately service the increased workload.
- Reduce carbon footprints.
- Reduce councillor perks - they don't need to be spending big on dinners and conferences. Increase fees to hire community halls and key bond deposits, use the money to refurbish/maintain the buildings. Reduce council pick up service from 4 to 2 a year.
- Reduce the amount of Councillors and the way Council deals with their complaints.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Reduce the amount of legislation we apply and enforce. Standardise all operations across the state (not just within our boundaries). Establish common protocols across all Councils - so ratepayers are aware of them. Educate the public on the true cost of services so they realise another form of organisation may be considerably more expensive. Educate the public on rate pegging benefits currently enjoyed in NSW.
- Reduce the bureaucracy.
- Reduce the number of staff in areas which are over resourced for the services they deliver and timelessness of service delivery.
- Re-evaluate or Core Services and Added Value Services. Then measure those against our staffing levels.
- Replace Councillors with Administrators.
- Require detailed and critical service reviews - make tough decisions. Systems need to be integrated and electronic - reduce duplication of effort. Opportunities in corporate type services to be provided on a shared services basis e.g. by SSROC saving costs across organisations. Centralise customer service type work in one area - deal with council enquiries on first contact e.g. 80% of time without referral. Reduce number of Councillors. Greater accountability on budget process and financial monitoring by business units. Improve way business units interact with each other in planning and delivering services etc.
- Re-shape, less managers.
- Review current operations and services, multi-tasking. Regular staff meetings - share where changes in council structure have been made, ensuring enquiries do not go to the wrong officer, wasting time and money. Reduce waste - smaller picture - think before you print, think can this be re used, think when catering for any event/occasion - don't over cater. Our services endeavour to give the customer as much information as possible to avoid a return call and the need to speak to a Director or the General Manager. Their time is very costly. Staff need to resolve matters or try to assist at level that does not need to reach the Managers/Directors/GM. Be proactive, be creative, initiate ideas and share.
- Review of our works process and streamline some activities by removing duplication where the skills, expertise and knowledge are available in other sections of Council. Review also the services provided to the Community and ascertain where waste can be reduced and where necessary the level of service deliveries is reduced.
- Sell all the libraries and base 1 huge facility that is opened more regularly. Same with the pools.
- Set clear and consistent position descriptions and sector responsibilities. Make people more accountable for their actions and the role they are employed to undertake. Ensure the staff are competent and have the qualifications or ability to complete the role they are employed to or allocated to perform.
- Sharing/not duplicating library services (often see same author talks at libraries in next council a week apart). Same tree contractors possibly.
- Shifting to a more robust asset management system, review our services and compare to other Councils (example annual clean-up), reduction in constructing new assets and focus on maintaining and upgrading existing assets, potential partnership with private enterprises to generate income supplementing rates.
- Smarter work procedures and practises. Each person takes ownership of an issue in their area from start to finish.

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- Staff identify ways to improve process and put these into practice with the relevant managers. Transparency in consultant costs for projects to the public. Project management improvements - identify a sponsor and stakeholders at the beginning of a project and ensure all are aware of their roles within each project. Prioritise major projects and ensure all staff are aware of timelines.
- Start working/partnership now with your merging council and develop similar systems, spend rate payers money sensibly.
- Starting and finishing of work could be altered to suite different departments.
- Stop Saturday Customer Services. Reduce the events - have a greater control on cost i.e. one event cost \$12,000 and was attended by 40 people, was that value for money. Analysis what we do, why we do it, should we continue to do it - what is the value for money.
- Streamline service units and departments. Most service units are building up an empire.
- Structure in the work place, familiar departments working alongside.
- Take away storage folders, they do nothing but collect dust, it should be trimmed then recycled not put in folders.
- The drive for amalgamation is basically stemming from financial and funding considerations. Better ways can be found through mutual cooperation between Councils in delivering services. A funding and procurement mechanism could be setup (common pool of funds) for jointly managing projects that impact on all communities within the participating Councils. A joint mechanism would be ideal, where economy of scale matters.
- The internal systems are bogged down with duplication of information. There is little useful knowledge capture and sharing. Much time is wasted with internal staff required to visit multiple locations for information, often to rely on their own personal folders. All this time wasted in finding information or following redundant policies means the actual purpose of the designer's role (to design for the community) is delayed.
- There is duplication across the organisation and most simple tasks often require multiple follow ups, better systems may increase efficiency. Better planning, many activities appear to be run ad hoc as there is not enough time given to properly plan the execution resulting in additional work created. Better Communications between teams would increase efficiency and reduce the amount of large minute pressure requests. More accountability from individuals and teams to improve workflow. Leave it to the experts, often individuals/teams are leading projects that are out of their depth/area of expertise, taking longer to complete task, leaving Council open to legislative and image issues.
- Through clearly defined management structures, going all the way down to the bottom of the organisation and by delivering to the community and rate payers the best facilities and services as we possibly can.
- Unsure.
- Use recycled paper for non-essential documents.
- User Pay System would be good in parks for parking so more revenue for council. No freebies for any community facilities, halls, etc. Discount rates applies to special groups only.
- Utilise the money to get better value for buck. Staff performance incentives can go a long way to improve service delivery if they are fair and not biased. Having a free drop-off waste collecting centre will significantly reduce illegal dumping and even reduce the need to pay waste collection contractors. Residents will be free and willing to drop off waste if it's collected free by council even if it's the same as quantity and frequency as kerbside service.

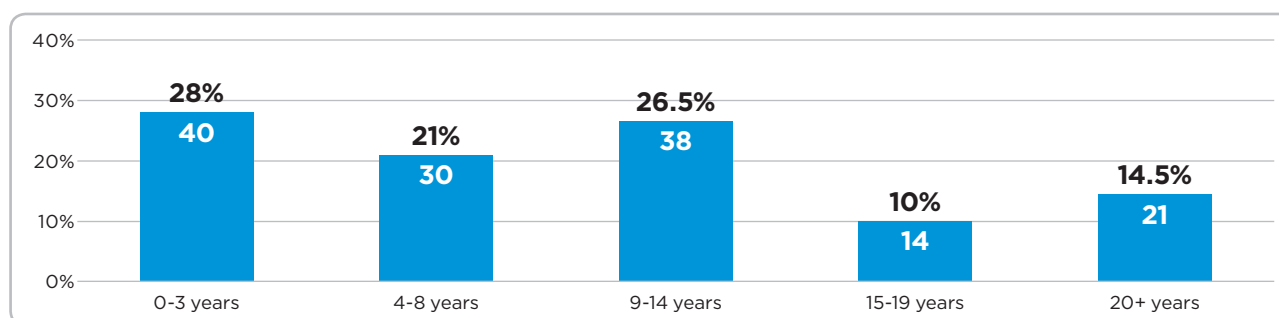
## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

- When the Standard Instrument - Principal Local Environmental Plan was introduced, it brought consistency to the Land Use Zones and the Local Environmental Plans across New South Wales. Feedback from customers, developers and businesses has been very positive, citing that it is easier to move or work between different Councils. However, local differences in controls relating to the minimum lot size requirements for dual occupancies in Rockdale (700m<sup>2</sup>) and those of Hurstville (630m<sup>2</sup>), still causes frustration in customers. They need to introduce one LEP and one DCP for the amalgamated Councils, making it easier for people working in the local area. This would reduce duplication and there would significant cost benefits in terms of the preparation of 3 or more LEPS.
- While amalgamation will be a very complex process it may be an opportunity to make some wholesale advances e.g. rather than trying to improve on current systems it may be better to look at world best practice and install entirely new systems and processes.
- Yes. Systems are difficult to use plus duplication/error is almost a given.
- You don't say before or after amalgamation.

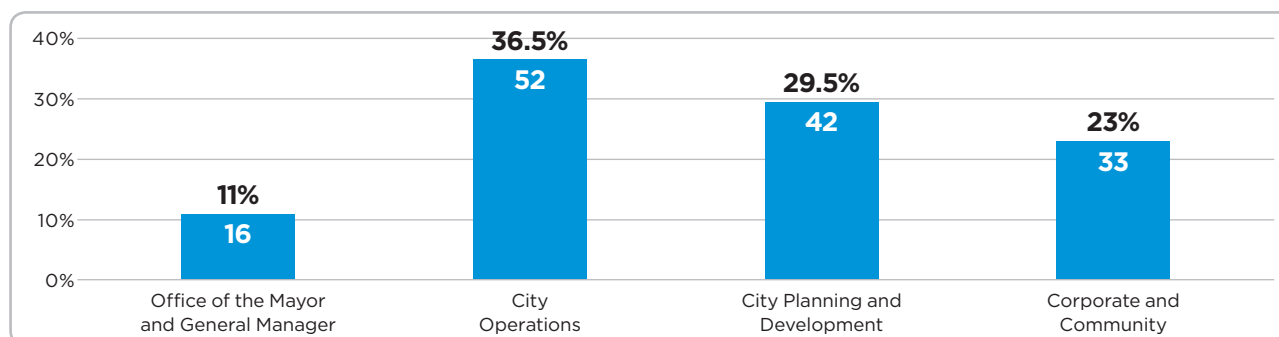
#### 8. How long have you worked for council?

Respondents could only choose a single response; in white count number



#### 9. Which Department do you work in?

Respondents could only choose a single response; in white count number

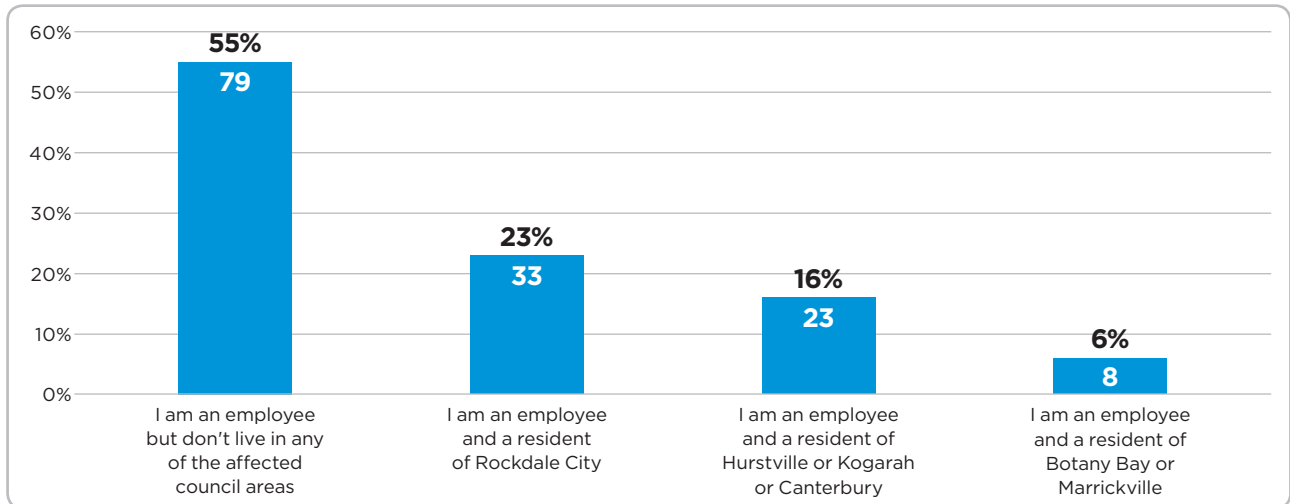


## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY RESULTS: OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

#### 10. What best describes you?

Respondents could only choose a single response; in white count number



#### 11. Gender

Respondents could only choose a single response; in white count number





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