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Submission: The members of CWA Canowindra Branch have voted unanimously to convey our opposition to the proposed amalgamation between Cabonne Council and Orange City Council.

Our principal concerns relate to:

Loss of rural representation

City and county require different types of services. How can city based councillors understand the needs of rural communities? Cabonne's rural residents will only form 26% of the new council. This means that we could always be outvoted on any rural issue and so will lose power to influence decisions about our rural communities.

Incompatible rating structures

Cabonne draws a large proportion of its rates from farming and mining, whereas Orange draws theirs from residential and business. Orange rates are twice as high for residents and 10 times as high for businesses.

Precedents suggest that residential and business rates for Cabonne will be significantly increased over time to bring them into line with Orange.

Unnecessary

Cabonne has proved itself Fit for the Future, and has a successful partnership with the WBC alliance which has saved millions over the past 10 years.

The business case is extremely tenuous with projected savings of only \$400,000 over 10 years. Why the need to amalgamate?

Risky and Costly

Cabonne has no debt but the proposed council must assume Orange's debt burden of \$16M.

Cabonne and Orange have completely different ICT systems for council ERP and information management. Even the consultants cannot estimate the cost of ICT integration. If the business case is tenuous and savings marginal, what happens when these unknown ICT costs blow out?

There is NO Case for amalgamation. We ask you to take these considerations into account during your deliberations on the proposed amalgamation.