

Author name: M. Knight

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Submission: The City of Sydney Council should remain in its current form

We write to you in support of the City of Sydney's submission to IPART in which it demonstrates that, in its current form and boundaries, it is "Fit for the Future".

We oppose the Government's proposal to create a "mega-council" for the city consisting of Botany Bay, Randwick, Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra. This would result in a "local" jurisdiction of greatly increased population, equivalent to the size of a small state, defeating the meaning and intent of governing at a local and community level. We note that none of the councils or local communities involved support the proposal. We understand that in some cases, amalgamations may be an opportunity for improvement. However in this case, we do not believe it to be advantageous for the reasons stated below.

As you well know the City of Sydney is unlike most other suburban local councils. It is currently experiencing substantial growth in residential population and capacity. It already attracts and supports large numbers of businesses, student populations and visitors. World class events are regularly held within the city, further adding to its unique requirements.

The City of Sydney has a successful track record of providing the many and varied services to meet the needs of this world class multicultural city. As a residential building of over 200 apartments we are well placed to assess the quality of many of these services. We endorse its vision for a sustainable Sydney and support its various capital works programs.

Importantly, we value its willingness and ability to engage with, listen to and respond to, the needs of our community. We fear this will be lost in the proposed amalgamation. We also fear that a merger of this nature will cause costly disruptions to existing and proposed projects and services, and reduce productivity and efficiency as systems and internal management procedures and policies are harmonised. This has happened in the previous council merger of 2004.

We understand that the final decision on the future of Local Government in NSW will be made solely by you and your government, and that Councils and the community will have no right of reply. We are also led to believe that you will not rule out forced amalgamations. It is for this reason that we make our view clear to you now, and ask that you take it into account when making your decision.

Further, the political implications of such a merger cannot be overlooked. It is well understood that the 2004 amalgamation by the then Labor Government was politically motivated. It is further well accepted that the suggested mega Council would preclude the successful election of an Independent Council. This flies in the face of the very nature of our Third Tier of Government and should be rejected.