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Submission: Dear Tribunal

I wish to argue that Leichhardt Council should not be amalgamated with other councils.

1. Council is financially viable and efficient

Leichhardt Council is the third-most financially sustainable council in Sydney, according to NSW Treasury Corporation figures. In contrast, the five biggest Sydney Councils all rank at the bottom.

2. Council amalgamations will devastate chances to communicate with local government

Community consultation and activism would become much harder under larger units. Currently it is possible to have personal contact with local councilors, and through appropriate channels with Council officers. In a large bureaucracy and with a single councilor representing tens of thousands of residents, this will become impossible.

3. Amalgamation will diminish character of local neighbourhoods

Leichhardt Council is understanding and responsive to the particular historical and community character of different neighborhoods. Balmain is not the same as Annandale, Rozelle shopping centre has different issues from Leichardt – and all of them are very different from the suburbs of Canada Bay or the transport hub, Victorian houses and ethnic mix of Strathfield. Understanding, respecting and responding to different cultural backgrounds and demographics is part of making councils efficient and delivering government that is for the people that live there.

4. Councils can cooperate in ways other than amalgamation

Economies of scale can be useful, but Leichardt already cooperates with other councils – for example, SSROC has delivered a report on future energy options across its councils, and inner west councils combine each year to present the series of Treading Lightly environmental workshops.

If amalgamations go ahead, I am obliged to feel that while they may be in the interests of state corporations, and may I suggest developers, they are not best for the people who live in this LGA and this state.

As a voter and ratepayer, I urge that Leichhardt Council be allowed to remain independent, and to continue to develop relationships with other councils without amalgamation.

Yours sincerely

Angela Michaelis