

Author name: Anonymous

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Submission: I am writing as a resident of the City of Sydney LGA to register my strong opposition to any potential merger. I provide the following reasons:

1. The City of Sydney is well managed, effective and financially strong - The Council was singled out in the draft Sampson report into amalgamations as a good example of a well-run council. TCorp rated its financial position as strong with a positive outlook. This position has been built over the last decade under the current administration. The Council responds effectively to the concerns of residents and businesses. It develops long-term strategic plans following extensive consultation. All of this is at risk under an amalgamation scenario.
2. The City already has a large and rapidly growing population - It was recently reported that the City of Sydney's population hit 200,000. This is expected to grow to 250,000 over coming years. This growth, fuelled by the increasing desirability of city living and corresponding residential development, should be considered when contemplating potential amalgamation population targets.
3. The City is already a global city - Sydney is an internationally recognised and respected city. It regularly rates among the world's most liveable cities. It is already considered to be a great place to do business. Amalgamating with nearby councils, particularly the eastern suburbs councils that have little in common with the CBD and surrounds, will not increase Sydney's status as a global city.
4. The City was only recently amalgamated - The Council was merged with South Sydney Council in 2004. By all accounts, the process was extremely disruptive and protracted. The impacts of such a process are felt not only by the council, but also by residents and businesses. No strong case has been made that justifies the risks and disruption involved in further amalgamations.
5. The recent business voting changes - Substantial modifications to the City of Sydney Act that made business voting compulsory and granted two votes to businesses were recently introduced by the state government. These changes were highly controversial and opposed by many members of the community. They were strongly criticised by election experts such as the ABC's Antony Green. It is not yet known what effect they will have or how they will work in practice. An amalgamation of the Council in addition to these changes would be a drastic and unfair measure to impose on the community. The state government justified the changes by arguing the City was a 'special case' due to the CBD with its large number of businesses. It is not clear how incorporating additional suburban councils into the business-voting regime under an amalgamation scenario could be justified. In addition, it is unlikely surrounding councils or their residents would find it satisfactory coming under such a regime in any amalgamated mega council.

I sincerely hope the concerns of residents and businesses regarding amalgamation will be genuinely taken into account; otherwise, it may lead to a lack of faith in our local and state democratic systems.