

Sent: Thursday, 23 July 2015 2:49 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Subject: Fit for the Future

Dear IPART

I wish to make a submission as a rate payer of the City of Sydney concerning Fit for the Future and my Council's submission. Please keep my personal contact details and name confidential when publishing my submission.

I am concerned by the NSW Government's seemingly backward reform package aimed at making councils merge – in particular metropolitan councils – which would take decision-making further away from residents and rate-payers.

I submit that no major structural change be undertaken to the City of Sydney's boundaries. The City of Sydney is a highly effective council that serves its community well. It is incredibly responsive and has a green vision for a sustainable future.

Subsidiarity and devolution of decision-making have been a mantra in public administration – yet the Fit for the Future reform package is a step in the opposite direction.

There is no doubt some councils need to improve their performance, streamline their services and work more cooperatively with other councils, however retaining a council's strong connection with its geographically small and defined local community is important for accountability and important for the populations that reside within those boundaries.

Further, I am opposed to any measure that would see the proposed Greater Sydney Commission have the power to overrule local government decisions in respect of planning and development. Amalgamating councils would reduce the number of stakeholders/entities the Commission would need to seek the agreement of/consult with in order to move forward with major planning decisions. Amalgamating councils will further dilute the voice of the very people who stand to be most affected by any major planning decisions.

While the NSW Government lays the groundwork for a construction boom to create jobs and housing in the future – it needs to listen to the people who live here now. Please foster a city that people want to stay in – not one that disempowers and takes decision-making further away from residents and rate payers. We should be at the centre of this reform package – not the other way around.

Please keep my personal contact details and name confidential when publishing my submission.

Regards