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Submission: Leichhardt Council currently represents its local area in an efficient and effective manner. Analyses indicate that financial performance under the proposed new structure will be worse. Of more particular concern is the dilution of local identity that is likely to occur if Leichhardt is forced to merge with other councils. I have been a resident of this LGA for 30 years and cannot speak highly enough of the service obtained from Council when needed. I have found the environmental staff, in particular, to be outstanding, and commend the Council for its climate change, biodiversity, heritage and social engagement policies. Without dedicated staff able to provide a local focus, I am most concerned that biodiversity protection will suffer, especially with current State Government commitments to accommodating an increased population through urban densification and increased road traffic. It would be a tragedy to lose the local environmental, cultural and historic knowledge embodied in our current Council structure, and I urge IPART to value and preserve the focus and service that our present structure enables.