

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to stress my strong objection to any forced amalgamation of the City of Sydney under the 'Fit for the Future' review.

The City has demonstrated that it is indeed already “Fit for the Future” and should not be amalgamated with neighbouring councils. Amalgamations are enormously disruptive and would put at risk the excellent plans the City already has in place for the future of our city.

(1) THE CITY OF SYDNEY ALREADY HAS SCALE AND CAPACITY

The City of Sydney already delivers high quality services and infrastructure while keeping rates and charges low. The residential population recently topped 200,000 and the City of Sydney has around 1.2 million people within its area daily. The City generates \$108 billion worth of economic activity annually - over 30 per cent of metropolitan Sydney’s economic activity and almost a quarter of the NSW State gross domestic product. The City of Sydney has completed over 250 major projects including parks, playgrounds, childcare, pools, libraries, theatres, community and cultural spaces - more than any other NSW council. The City of Sydney is now working on 370 projects as part of its ten-year plan.

The City of Sydney has committed to reducing its carbon emissions 70 per cent by 2030. It has already slashed them by 21 per cent and is on target to achieve 26 per cent by 2016. The City of Sydney is Australia’s first Carbon Neutral Government, and has installed solar panels and low-carbon LED street lights, and built the largest urban water recycling program in Australia.

The City of Sydney has also led to increased amenity for visitors and residents alike through the Night-Time economy and Small Bars strategies, plus increased public safety via pushing for stronger controls of Kings Cross and the city venues late at night. The City of Sydney has also led the introduction of the Light Rail which is now finally being built. The City also makes a strong effort to address the very sad issue of Homelessness with care and dignity.

THE CITY OF SYDNEY IS SUSTAINABLE

The City of Sydney's demonstrated effective governance, strong finances and skilled personnel are critical for securing Sydney's continued transformation as a modern global city and to capitalise on unprecedented development investment potential over the next decade. Leading independent financial auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers have said that The City of Sydney are a "benchmark against which other councils could be compared" and the NSW Government's own Treasury Corporation rate its finances as "strong" with a "positive outlook" – the only NSW council to receive this rating.

THE CITY OF SYDNEY IS SEEING UNPRECEDENTED INVESTMENT

In 2013-2014, The City of Sydney oversaw \$3.95 billion of development, over four times more than the nearest council. In the past decade, it approved development worth \$24 billion. Last year the City of Sydney approved over 1,800 development applications and has consistently been in the top ten for development application assessment times while processing the highest value and some of the highest numbers of complex applications. This throughput was achieved while maintaining a commitment to sustainability, design quality, heritage and livability. The independence of the current City of Sydney leadership from developers is a critical point and the controls and the team in place should not be disrupted.

AMALGAMATIONS ARE DISRUPTIVE AND WITHOUT DEMONSTRATED BENEFIT

The financial benefit of an amalgamation is marginal compared to the risks of a loss of business and development confidence due to an uncertain investment climate and disruption to city operations and critical infrastructure projects. A decline in construction activity of just one per cent over the next decade due to disruption or delays would have a negative economic impact in excess of \$300 million. By contrast, any benefits from an amalgamation would be marginal. Detailed analysis by

Randwick City Council, reviewed and supported by the City of Sydney, identifies potential savings of just \$146 million over 10 years resulting from the State Government's preferred amalgamation – that's just 54 cents per resident a week.

Accordingly I urge you to exclude the City of Sydney from any forced amalgamation.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.