

From: Brian Ladd
Sent: Friday, 3 July 2015 5:11 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Cc: Brian Ladd; Clover Moore
Subject: Fit for the Future Proposals: City of Sydney

Dear Ipart,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission concerning the proposal to merge Sydney City Council with Botany Bay, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra municipalities, to make a significantly larger Sydney city council. The benefits that have been stated for making the merger seem based more on faith rather than fact, because there is little evidence to justify this proposal.

I object to this merger proposal for a number of key reasons:

1. This proposal appears to significantly weaken the democratic process. It looks very likely to put a greater distance between the elected representatives, i.e., councillors, and ratepayers and residents because the merger envisages a reduced number of councillors than currently exists across the five municipalities. This would not be good for residents.
2. It also seems to give far too much decision making power to the General Manager and council's paid executive staff to make many important decisions that should rightly be the prerogative of councillors.
3. Delegating more critical decision-making to paid employees could lead to poor decisions. There is a greater risk of corruption entering into decision-making, especially in the all important planning and development portfolio. Many residents feel the corrosive influence of property speculators and property developers on the NSW state government should not be allowed to grow at the local government level. There is evidence that corruption does exist in some councils and a mega-city council could increase this prospect. This outcome must be avoided.
4. Across the OECD world the average size of local government municipalities is 25,000 residents. Increasing the size and population of the City of Sydney to approximately half a million residents, roughly the same population as the state of Tasmania, seems more like creating another state government rather than a local government, yet without the corresponding powers, independence, resources, infrastructure and representation to match.
5. Many innovative decisions and activities have been generated by the City of Sydney over the past decade and a half. These include achieving the long overdue make-over of the inner city for the 2000 Olympic Games; putting a high priority of adaptive re-use of significant heritage buildings and precincts; setting high standards for architectural design in major new developments; putting Sydney high on the international map for celebrating New Year; VIVID festival; Chinese New Year festival; staging forums for big ideas and innovation; and supporting minority communities, including the aboriginal, gay and lesbian, and other disadvantaged communities. I would not like to see any of these progressive achievements disappear or be jeopardised by enlarging the area of a proposal new City of Sydney.

The proposal to merge the Sydney City Council with Botany Bay, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra municipalities appears to be an ill-informed one and not in the interests of the NSW, greater Sydney or the existing residents of the City of Sydney.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Ladd