

Dear Sir/Madam,

While I firmly oppose Kogarah City Council's 2014 Draft LEP/New City Plan and deplore the behaviour of its Mayor, Executive Staff and Councillors in regard to the issue of community consultation, I remain unchanged in my support for the idea of it retaining its autonomy.

Amalgamation is an idea designed to assist property developers, created by them and endorsed by the politicians whose favour they buy with their campaign and other political donations. The current NSW Government has a vested interest in pushing for amalgamation as this will:

1. Allow new 'mega councils' to streamline the process of development application and approval by denying residents their right to object or severely limiting their ability to do so.
2. Directly assist property developers who wish to develop areas not currently zoned for development by making it easier for them to ignore and override the objections of potentially affected local communities.
3. Earn votes for a party that's promised to "reform local government" by placing profitability and "streamlining" above the needs and wishes of local communities which will be permanently deprived of a voice in matters of direct concern to them and their families.

Making Councils larger will only exacerbate the current problems without doing anything to solve them. Increasing Resident to Councillor ratios will permit Councillors to further distance themselves from their constituents, providing them with the perfect logistical excuse for doing so. ("Sorry, I can't speak to you about the destruction of another historically significant building because all my time is now taken up with examining and voting on development applications.") What we need are not larger Councils, but existing Councils served by Councillors who genuinely have the best interests of their communities at heart and are not driven by agendas of cronyism, duplicity and greed.

Asking profitable Councils to amalgamate with and absorb the debts of unprofitable, poorly-managed Councils is akin to asking Australia to amalgamate with and absorb the debts of a country like Greece. Any federal politician who suggested such a thing would instantly be labelled a fool, yet Mike Baird somehow expects such a flawed system to work in the case of NSW, based on the assumption that amalgamation will 'reduce costs' and 'provide better services and infrastructure.'

Amalgamation did not provide these things in Queensland, where many recently amalgamated Councils are now spending millions of dollars of

ratepayers' money on the lengthy, inconvenient and costly process of de-amalgamation. Why should the people of NSW believe the idea will work here, where dissatisfaction with local government and its often dubious decision-making processes has never been higher?

Amalgamation is simply a bad policy that the vast majority of Kogarah residents do not see the need for, do not support and do not wish to see implemented in their local government area. As one of them, I implore the NSW Government not to inflict it on us for the sake of keeping developers happy.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Ben Rumble

