

10/7/2015

IPART

State Government Office,

1 Market Street,

Sydney. 2000.



I would like to register my opposition to the NSW Government's strategy to forcibly amalgamate councils. I am particularly concerned about any amalgamation of the City of Sydney Council with other Local Government Areas.

The City of Sydney LGA is unique. Indeed comparing the needs of this area with others, is like comparing vastly different species. While there may be some common expectations for services, (refuse collection, roads and street maintenance, health services, etc, etc) there is little likelihood that a mega City of Sydney Council would be able to adequately service all the vastly different needs of the areas covered by the proposed amalgamation of City of Sydney with Woollahra or Botany.

Furthermore it is my understanding that of the responses to a survey sent out to all City of Sydney residents and businesses (and also responses to the surveys sent by other councils to their ratepayers within the state) showed a resounding lack of support for the proposal of amalgamations.

The NSW State Government was asked to state its position on the amalgamation of councils prior to the Election. It did not do so, nor did it raise this as an election commitment. In this regard, it cannot claim that it has a mandate to progress with amalgamations. Given this the NSW Government should hold a referendum to ensure that everyone in NSW is aware of this strategy and has been given the right to vote on the outcome.

IPART says it will assess Council's proposals independently based on the Government's criteria and ensure a consistent, fair and impartial assessment. It is not wholly clear what this criteria is, however, for this process to be truly independent, consistent, and transparent, then it is incumbent on IPART to disclose the criteria and its findings publicly.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

Beverley Steel

[Redacted contact information]