I am opposed to the amalgamation on the grounds that the government have that it is cheaper and more efficient for councils to amalgamate but this is actually untrue. There is evidence. Information from the comparative councils NSW local government council 2001-2010 clearly shows that councils over 150,000 the rates are generally much more expensive.

The optimal size for councils, for cost and democratic reason, are between 50-75,000 people.

The amalgamation to create larger councils will lead to much greater costs to be levied on ratepayers. They will cost at in the order of $100,000,000 each. There will be full-time paid councillors each receiving about $200,000 each. As well as the GMs very large salaries starting at $600,000 each. Middle management will expand with salaries of between $150,000 - $500,000.

Political parties will take out local government completely. This is a trend that has already commenced and is very detrimental to the democratic representation by our elected councillors. They will no longer be representing the interests of the ratepayers. They will be representing as they currently do, the interest of the political party to which they belong and their developer benefactors.

Another nail in the coffin of democratic representation.

We need greater control by residents and direct involvement in all decisions that affect us, not less.

Councils need to be small (50-75000 residents) so that it is still possible for residents and ratepayers to know their elected representatives and to have contact with them.

It should be an illegal act for councils to force upon residents and ratepayers decisions that the majority, or large number of residents and ratepayers oppose.

In summary, the 2 main issues I am concerned with are the loss of democratic control by residents and ratepayers over our elected representatives and the enormous rise in costs in running councils which will be borne by residents and ratepayers.

Residents and ratepayers will find that they have no ability to influence council decisions but they will be saddled by increasing costs of supporting these very large councils.

Jacqueline French