

From: Michael Ruiz [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 28 July 2015 12:34 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: I support the City's submission to IPART that it should not be amalgamated:

To:
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
Local Government Division
Review of Local Council Fit for the Future Proposals

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

1.1.1 • We have scale and capacity

The City of Sydney delivers high quality services and infrastructure while keeping rates and charges low. Our residential population recently topped 200,000 and we have around 1.2 million people in our 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. We've completed over 250 major projects including parks, playgrounds, childcare, pools, libraries, theatres, community and cultural spaces - more than any other NSW council. We're now working on 370 projects as part of our ten-year plan.

We've committed to reducing our carbon emissions 70 per cent by 2030. We've already slashed them by 21 per cent and are on target to achieve 26 per cent by 2016.

We were Australia's first Carbon Neutral Government, we've installed solar panels and low-carbon LED street lights, and built the largest urban water recycling program in Australia.

• We are 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 say we are a “benchmark against which other councils could be compared” and the NSW Government's own Treasury Corporation rate our finances as “strong” with a “positive outlook” – the only NSW council to receive this rating.

1.1.2 • We are in a period of unprecedented investment

In 2013-2014, we oversaw \$3.95 billion of development, over four times more than the nearest council. In the past decade, we approved development worth \$24 billion. Last year we approved over 1,800 development applications and have 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. We've achieved this while maintaining our commitment to sustainability, design quality, heritage and livability.

1.1.3 • Amalgamations are disruptive 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.

Sincerely,

Michael Ruiz

