

From: RODNEY JENSEN [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2015 2:50 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Subject: Fwd: submission concerning amalgamation of Sydney City with Botany Randwick Waverley and Woollahra Councils

Re: proposed amalgamation of the City of Sydney with Botany, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Councils

To whom it may concern

I am writing to oppose the proposed amalgamation of Sydney City with the above LGAs for the following reasons.

- 1: In my view the City of Sydney being the premier local authority in NSW is clearly a special case which should not be simply amalgamated for doctrinaire or political reasons.
- 2: the Council is already of significant size with a very large population and considerable annual budget. As stated in some Council advisory data - the proposed amalgamated Council would have a combined population the size of Tasmania with no extra responsibility or authority.
3. I strongly oppose amalgamation based simply on a quest for larger administrative areas. Very large and unitary local government authorities require appropriate strategic powers to plan effectively. Under our present system of local government the powers to plan are insufficient, most notably in the planning infrastructure transport and environmental sectors.
4. In my view the City is already of scale and responsibility that justifies classification as a regional authority. It does not need to be of a larger scale than it already is to perform such a regional planning role.
5. The area surrounding the City of Sydney should definitely not be amalgamated without a re-think of the powers and responsibilities of local government.
- 6: Sydney City is economically viable with sufficient capital to fund its ambitious program. The City estimates that investment of \$30 - \$40 billion will be expended during the next decade. The heavy costs of amalgamation with other authorities having lesser resources would dilute and negate these immensely important ongoing programs.
- 7: Sydney City has an excellent track record in urban design, environment and significant support for bikeways and the ongoing light rail project. It could have achieved even more had its powers been extended as referred to in No 4 above.
- 8: Sydney City is also the lead authority in Australia in terms of its understanding and support for the creative industries and creative city policies - substantiated in my Doctoral thesis completed in 2012.
See: http://www.unsworks.unsw.edu.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=UNSWORKS&docId=unsworks_11018. The City of Sydney's work in establishing urban villages is key in this regard and would have been greatly facilitated given new and wider powers over infrastructure, roads and public transport networks.

9: In cases where there is strong local opposition to amalgamation the local views should be listened to carefully. According to a City of Sydney, a random survey commissioned to an independent company found that 80% of residents and 70% percent of businesses strongly opposed boundary changes. These figures are an extraordinary endorsement for the "No" position.

10. According to A Background Paper prepared for the LGNSW Learning Solutions workshop in 2015 'Amalgamations: To Merge or not to Merge?' "*...it would be more productive for all parties to focus on the critical functions councils undertake – or need to undertake – on behalf of their communities (such as promoting community wellbeing, constructing and maintaining essential infrastructure, facilitating economic development, managing the environment, providing leadership and delivering a sense of identity).*"

I strongly support those views.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rodney Jensen PhD

