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Submission:

From: Rami Shaarawi [mailto: [REDACTED]]

Sent: Saturday, 25 July 2015 12:06 PM

To: Local Government Mailbox

Subject: Amalgamations are enormously disruptive and would put at risk our plans for the future

Dear Sir / Madam:

I have learnt about the news of the State Government's plans to amalgamate the City into a mega-council with Botany, Randwick, Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra - a local government area with a population the size of Tasmania.

In view of that I would like to strongly support the City's submission to IPART that it should not be amalgamated

Such plan doesn't help to make Sydney City a leading and competitive business hub in the region. I believe, it would be more efficient, lucrative to the NSW's economy and Australia to keep Sydney City Council independent. I believe, amalgamation of councils would compromise the development and investment in Sydney City and risk loss of some important business opportunities on both local and global level now and in the future. From efficiency and productivity point of view the economic benefits of keeping Sydney City Council independent outweigh by far the financial benefits of amalgamation.

The economic gains 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.

Any disruption of the Sydney City Council means loss of money. Sydney City is the business hub of NSW and it is crucial to have its own independent City Council. Therefore, NSW government has to invest in the Sydney City Council if to generate more revenues for NSW and not the other way around. I think trial and error here are going to be costly.

It is worth considering what the leading independent financial auditors Price waterhouse Coopers said about the Sydney city council that it is 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.

If the current government think that this will help the economy then this is a big mistake. Accordingly, please stop such a short-sighted economic policy, and maintain an independent Sydney city council for a sustainable prosperous economy free of negative disruption.

Thank you

Best regards

Rami Shaarawi

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