

IPART submission
Ingram

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Dear IPART,

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

The City of Sydney has scale and capacity

The City of Sydney delivers high quality services and infrastructure while keeping rates and charges low. The residential population recently topped 200,000 and there are 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. The City of Sydney has completed over 250 major projects including parks, playgrounds, childcare, pools, libraries, theatres, community and cultural spaces - more than any other NSW council. The COS is now working on 370 projects as part of a ten-year plan.

The COS has committed to reducing carbon emissions 70 per cent by 2030 and has already slashed them by 21 per cent and are on target to achieve 26 per cent by 2016.

City of Sydney was Australia’s first Carbon Neutral Government They have installed solar panels and low-carbon LED street lights, and built the largest urban water recycling program in Australia.

The City of Sydney is 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 COS are a “benchmark against which other councils could be compared” and the NSW Government’s own Treasury Corporation rate COS finances as “strong” with a “positive outlook” – the only NSW council to receive this rating.

The City of Sydney is in a period of unprecedented investment

In 2013-2014, COS oversaw \$3.95 billion of development, over four times more than the nearest council. In the past decade, there has been development approved worth \$24 billion. Last year COS 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. This has been achieved this while maintaining commitment to sustainability, design quality, heritage and livability.

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.

THIS SUBMISSION RECOMMENDS:

The City of Sydney has scale and capacity to be Fit for the Future.

No major structural should change be undertaken to the City’s boundaries at this time.

Priority action is needed to deliver important reforms to the NSW local government legislative and regulatory framework for governance, financing and collaboration/coordination.

To enable integrated strategic planning, local government areas excised and transferred to state agencies (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Barangaroo Delivery Authority and UrbanGrowth NSW) should be reintegrated into the City local government area.

I support the City's submission to IPART.

Your Sincerely

Susan Ingram