

I would like to add my strong support Leichhardt Council's position that the residents of the Leichhardt LGA are best served by council remaining a stand-alone council

The Council's position to retain its current status is based on the following:

1. Leichhardt Council meets 5 of the 7 essential criteria now, and is forecasted to meet all in two – three years. By contrast the proposed mega-council would not meet these criteria within ten years.

2. Capacity and scale: increasing the population of the LGA would not make it any more likely to make it operate more efficiently since it already operates very effectively, and the evidence is that increasing the scale may make it more likely to be less efficient.

3. The "Fit for the Future" criteria prescribed by the State Government ignore many issues that are valued by local residents:

- **Local representation** – would be substantially inferior in the proposed merger
- **Consultation** –increasing the constituency from 56,307 to 342,000 individuals would make consultation both far more complex and far more expensive.
- **Rates** – possible increases to cover the substantial costs of merging the councils.
- **Local facilities** –libraries, pools, gym, sporting facilities, which may be rationalized in a merged entity.

These issues need to be further explored before any amalgamation is proposed.

4. Amalgamation is not the only solution to ensure financial efficiency of council services. Joint Organisation models have been successfully employed by existing Councils.

5. As a final point I would simply add that the criteria for determining fit for the future are structured around an extraordinarily narrow set of criteria. The capacity to develop and enhance community and local identity; participation of residents in decision making processes and many other non economically instrumental criteria need to be taken into consideration in any further deliberations on whether or not to proceed with local government amalgamations.

I oppose Leichhardt Council being forced into any amalgamation, given the likely outcome is to turn council's good performance into an inferior one, that it substantially reduces representation and may lead to inferior services in the LGA.

Any proposed amalgamation should be put directly to the residents to allow them the opportunity to voice their will with regard to any proposals.

Best

