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Submission: I am a ratepayer of Leichhardt Municipal Council. I am strongly opposed to any merger and support a stand-alone position for the council. I believe that Leichhardt residents and ratepayers would be better off and best served with the council remaining stand-alone.

I support the council and have full confidence in its ability to meet all the 7 Fit for the Future benchmarks by 2015/16.

I support each of the grounds outlined by Council in the executive summary of the Council Improvement Proposal submission, including most particularly:

- A loss of sense of identity and place in Leichhardt as it is merged with neighbouring Councils that do not share a similar sense of community (i.e. no shared community of interest).
- A loss of representation in local government matters as it will be much harder for the community to effectively engage with councillors. Each new councillor will, because of the very large population, be representing the equivalent of almost 23,000 people - compared to less than 5,000 currently for Leichhardt Councillors. This is the equivalent, under a new Inner West Council, to approximately 2.5 councillors (rather than the current 12 councillors) for the entire Leichhardt population of almost 57,000 people.
- A lack of international and national evidence cited by either the Independent Review Panel or the NSW Government supporting the claims that local government amalgamations result in cost savings to the community or are more financially sustainable than stand-alone councils. This is supported by the work of local government expert Professor Brian Dollery from the University of New England.