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Submission: Following a public meeting a committee was established to prepare a submission to The Independent Local Government Review Panel on Oberon's opposition to amalgamation with Bathurst.

The Committee comprises Brian Dellow, [REDACTED]

It is the view of the committee and the townspeople of Oberon that there be NO amalgamation.

Our district comprises a rural community of about 5,200 people with a town population of about 2,700 persons. It is situated in the eastern part of the Central Tablelands and is a unique environment perched on the Oberon Plateau at an altitude of 1100m, just west of the Dividing Range. It is not situated on a major highway and may be regarded as a geographically isolated community which may have contributed to its charm and character.

The Oberon Council was formed over 100 years ago. It is a rural council in step with and in tune with the wishes and desires of rural people and their values. Council staff and local residents are friends and neighbours and hence staff are readily approachable. The community understands the relationship between the forests and the timber industries, agriculture and the environment. There is always cooperation and consultation, not confrontation as could be the case if a Council that did not understand the issues were to take over Oberon.

The Oberon Councillors are all Independents. They put aside their political affiliations upon election, do not form party political groups and weigh each issue on its true merits. The townspeople appreciate this and this is one of the reasons why the Council enjoys such widespread support. Larger Councils appear to be riven by factions and this is another strong argument against amalgamation.

The Oberon Council is well managed and financially healthy. Under the recent Mid West Regional Performance measures it was given a Sustainability Rating of Sound, whereas Bathurst only achieved a rating of Moderate. In the ten Performance Ratios published by the Independent Local Government Review Panel, Oberon outperformed Bathurst in the majority of cases. Coupling Oberon with Bathurst would seem to this committee to significantly lower the financial status of Oberon.

Oberon has all the facilities that one expects to find in a town of its size. It has its own water supply, an excellent sewerage system, undercover tennis courts, squash courts, sporting fields, netball courts, an equestrian centre, heated swimming pool, aged care units and hospital to name just a few. In addition it has a very efficient and dedicated SES and a Rural Fire Service. A 66 bed aged care facility is now operating in Oberon.

The town has developed a strong progressive and responsible local identity and achieved a demonstrable community pride and optimism which is evidenced by its many strongly viable businesses, its agricultural industry, its medical services, social, sporting, cultural and service clubs and religious organisations.

Brian V Dellow  
Chair of the Committee