

FIT FOR THE FUTURE ASSESSMENTS COMPLETE

1:00pm Friday 16 October 2015

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has today handed its assessment of council proposals under the Fit for the Future reforms to the NSW Government.

Each of the 139 proposals (received from 144 councils) has been assessed as either 'fit' or 'not fit' against the Fit for the Future criteria established by the Government last year. The eight Far West councils were not required to submit proposals.

IPART Chairman Dr Peter Boxall said the council proposals to either stand-alone or merge were assessed according to whether they delivered the scale and capacity, financial sustainability, efficiency and the ability to effectively manage infrastructure and services for the community as required under the criteria.

While councils were required to consider the merger options put forward by the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) in 2013, alternatives put forward were also assessed, along with the input from more than 1500 submissions received during IPART's public consultation process on the proposals.

"We are pleased to have delivered our assessments on time to assist the Government in deciding on the next steps in its Fit for the Future reforms," Dr Boxall said.

"We have consulted extensively with the councils on their proposals and thank them for their submissions, presentations and assistance during our assessment process."

Dr Boxall said the assessments are largely dependent on the information provided by councils, along with the examination of long-term financial reports and other available data by IPART experts and external consultants.

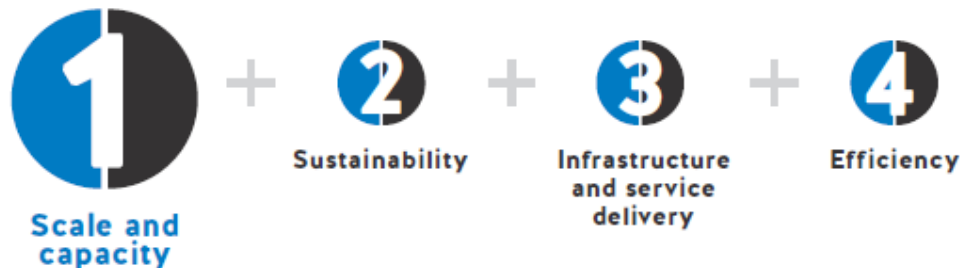
Additional information was requested from most councils, including meetings to clarify and illuminate key issues or at a council's request.

Copies of the council proposals, assessment methodology and submissions received for each council are available on IPART's website www.ipart.nsw.gov.au. Those submissions where the author requested confidentiality have not been posted. The IPART assessments will also be available when Government releases the report.

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ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROPOSALS

The NSW Government established 4 criteria that NSW councils must meet to be considered Fit for the Future (FFTF).



IPART's role, as the appointed Expert Advisory Panel, was to:

Determine how these criteria can best be measured

Assess local government proposals against these criteria

Provide advice to NSW Government on whether a council meets the criteria

IPART's role was **NOT** to determine the criteria or make the final decision about what happens to councils following the Fit for the Future assessment.

THE STAGES SET OUT BY GOVERNMENT

1	Release of Independent Panel final report	8 January 2014
2	Release of the FFTF criteria by Government	10 September 2014
3	Councils prepare submissions and consult with their communities	September 2014 - June 2015
4	IPART consults on and finalises assessment methodology	April - May 2015
5	Councils finalise and lodge submissions	30 June 2015
6	Close of public submissions	31 July 2015
7	IPART's advice to the Minister	16 October 2015

The Minister then considers and announces outcomes and next steps.