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Date of submission: 21 May 2015

Submission: We have lived in the Mosman community for over 40 years, and feel we have a very good and personal relationship with our local council. We have raised four children at local schools and there is a strong sense of community associated with our area and the local council. We feel it is imperative to have this personal connection with local government. If the proposed council amalgamation goes ahead, why do we need another less personal layer of government, perhaps we should then do away with State governments. We strongly object to the proposed council amalgamations.

We question the following criteria -

a. Scale and Strategic Capacity criteria should not be threshold criteria. There is no evidence that a large council is more effective, has lower rates, nor that it provides better services than a small council. In fact there is evidence that small councils are amongst the best in NSW and across Australia. Scale and Strategic capacity should not be threshold criteria.

b. Scale and Strategic Capacity should not be linked. There is no evidence to link the scale of a council with its strategic capacity therefore: The two criteria should be assessed separately.

c. Scale – Minimum population: There is no evidence that bigger is better in fact the evidence is the opposite – that smaller is better for councils. There should be no number and no minimum population size.

d. Setting a target number of councils in metropolitan/regional areas. IPART itself has clearly acknowledged that there is currently no evidence whatsoever for such a target. There should be no target number of council for metropolitan/regional areas.

e. Joint Organisations were originally recommended by IPART, then ruled out by the Government in metropolitan Sydney. Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCS) are doing a great job in enabling significant savings for councils and should be able to be built on as a further business case model. Joint Organisations should be retained as an option for all councils, with time allowed to develop business cases.