

Submission to IPART – Fit for the Future

The process of scale and capacity appears to lack any credibility when compared with empirical evidence.

1. **Scale and Strategic** criteria should not be a threshold criteria.
There is no evidence that a large council is more effective, more productive or provides better services, in fact empirical evidence sourced from other countries, Queensland and academics in this area provide the opposite to what your assessment is suggesting.
2. It is unclear as to why you have **linked scale and strategic capacity**. The ILGRP report fails to give empirical evidence that connects these 2 areas. They should be separately assessed.
3. The notion of a **minimum population** is nonsensical and should in no way be part of the process. How can population size deliver better representation and services to local communities when 'local' is removed from the equation with population size?
4. **Strategic capacity of 'true partners with state government in rolling out their planned development'**. You are suggesting that councils ignore the planning consultation process with their residents and that the wishes of developers and their stakeholders take precedent over '**local democracy**' page 71 of the ILGRP report (25 October 2013). ?
5. **Target number of councils** – despite this criteria diluting local representation and having no real basis other than "it is easier for the state government to sit around the table with 15 full time mayors with political agendas than 150 mayors that represent their local communities, and if the political climate is right one of the major parties may have majority mayors to entice and dictate as required along party lines. This target number is a political agenda and should be abolished.
6. **Points 3,4,5 of Box 3.1 page 21** assumes that Strathfield Council does not communicate or source skilled staff from outside the LGA. This is nonsensical and should be abolished it is obvious that council sources staff from all areas where skilled and creative staff are found.
7. **High Quality political and managerial leadership**. To suggest that only mega councils can attract this criteria is a political agenda. If the ICCAC investigations are anything to go by it will be those with the most money in the big party machines that will be mayors and councillors. This criteria is ill defined and ambiguous.

