

Author name: C. Jago

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Submission: Dear IPART

I wish to protest the way that the government has biased the outcome of your enquiry by some artificial assumptions as well as the inclusion of its planned outcomes as criteria for accepting the result.

In particular, inclusion of population criteria stands out as a way to require the Government's own preferred option without the need to resort to any factual discussion, as small councils can in some cases be as effective as larger ones. This goes hand in hand with the number of councils - two different ways to insist on the same predetermined outcome.

The ruling out of joint organisations represents a sour way to limit the strategic capacity of organisations focused on the government's definition rather than real benefits to local stakeholders.

The very tight timeline appears to indicate that the government has already decided to hold new local government elections on schedule in 2016 for a reduced number of councils, regardless of anything illuminated by the "consultation".

This exercise appears aimed at imposing larger, less accountable councils which respond more to developers and less to the democratic rights of local citizens.

From what I have already heard so far from my council in Canada Bay, the plan does not appear to stack up from a financial perspective, nor from a democratic perspective.

I suggest that the integration aspects of putting councils together (especially the technology bits, but also the issues of representation) will subsequently emerge as a major crisis, all the more so for being rushed for an artificial, unrealistic deadline.

Better to actually listen to the people now, and allow time for things to be done properly.

Kind regards

Charles Jago