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May 21st, 2015

Attention: IPART

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To whom it may concern,

The proposal to amalgamate Leichhardt Council with adjoining bodies is inappropriate on many counts.

Firstly, the Government released criteria for a determination on whether, or not, a Council, was "Fit for the Future". An independent consultant demonstrates that Leichhardt meets **all** but one of the criteria & that shortfall will be addressed within three years. The amalgamated Council only meets four of the seven criteria & there is no indication of when, or how, that will change. Therefore, amalgamation should not be considered.

Arguments about scale and capacity have been forwarded as a justification for amalgamation. It is assumed that a larger Council in area & population will be more efficient & cost effective but this is NOT supported by current examples. Evidence from Queensland shows that local areas are now abandoning amalgamation and restoring local Councils because of detriments, rather than improvements in service under amalgamation. In Adelaide & Melbourne rates have risen and data is to be shown that any improvement followed amalgamation. IPART should recommend abandoning the proposal on these grounds.

Local Councils are in touch with and represent their community because they belong to that community. An arbitrary number chosen for an ideal number of metropolitan Councils has no scientific or logical basis. If a Council can stand alone, ie it is "Fit for the Future", it should be allowed to do so. Our community overwhelmingly rejects the plan for amalgamation because it is not in the best interests of local people.

Ray & Shirley Arthur

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