

Author name: P. Jenkyn

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**IPART QUESTION:**

"Is it appropriate to define a Council improvement proposal on a minimum population size or a target number of Councils in the metropolitan regional area?"

**COMMUNITY ANSWER:**

The answer to that question is clearly no. All the credible research and evidence reveals that sustainability, efficiencies, strategic capacity and the like are not dependent on population size or an arbitrary number of councils within a metropolitan area. The Government has produced no credible or empirical evidence to the contrary.

Clearly the most appropriate structure for the future that satisfies IPART criteria is for all Sydney Councils to remain as they are, and for each of them to belong to an appropriate Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCs). ROCs properly constituted would be able to consider regional and strategic issues and cooperate on joint services. This can be done in a way that strengthens local government's ability to be an effective partner with state government.

If State Government is serious about partnering with local government it can commit to either doing away with rate-pegging or alter it so as to allow councils more flexibility in raising rates with community support. The Government needs also to commit to meeting the costs that it has shifted to councils for tasks that the government is responsible to perform.

Local Government is all about local communities and local governance. This is the first and most important criteria in any consideration of local government and whether councils are 'fit for the future'. Councils provide many and varied services to their communities.

Hunters Hill has a real sense of belonging and recently celebrated 150 years as a Municipality. Both its residents and council have a strong commitment to protect its significant national heritage and community values.

**SAVE HUNTERS HILL MUNICIPALITY COALITION (SHHMC)**

Ross Williams Emeritus Mayor and Phil Jenkyn OAM

SHHMC Co-convenors

Web: [www.savehuntershill.org](http://www.savehuntershill.org)

20 May 2015