

# WEST PITTWATER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Representing the communities of McCarrs Creek, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay and Morning Bay  
Box 289, Church Point, NSW 2105

[www.wpca.org.au](http://www.wpca.org.au) e-mail: [community@wpca.org.au](mailto:community@wpca.org.au)

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The Chairman  
IPART  
P.O. Box K35  
Haymarket Post Shop  
NSW 1240

8th May 2015

Dear Sir,

## **RE: ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY OF COUNCIL FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROPOSALS**

The West Pittwater Community Association (WPCA) is concerned about the assessment methodology of local council Fit For The Future proposals, and lodge the following submission:

- The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) terms of reference relies heavily on particulars and statistics supplied by Councils without any requirement for that data to be tested or verified regarding the merit of amalgamation with respect to cost reductions, rationalisation of costs, reliability of assumptions and so forth. The WPCA is concerned this could result in ineffective use of funds from unanticipated hidden expenses and prolonged and inefficient merging of services and amenities.
- The IPART process, driven by financial outcomes, effectively shuts the residents out of any balanced and democratic evaluation process. Of great importance to our offshore community is effective delivery of services to residents, however there is:
  - NO service aligned benchmark such as customer satisfaction surveys and problem responsiveness being used to evaluate submissions. Only financial benchmarks are utilised. This does not take into account effective service delivery.
  - There is NO mention or evaluation of the Council's ability to manage the environment which is of utmost importance to our offshore community e.g. coastline and waterways, parks and reserves, climate change.
  - There is NO mention or evaluation of the Council's ability to manage other key resident oriented services such as infrastructure, active transport, planning and development, and waste management.
  - There is little evidence that the social, cultural and historical context of a Council's position will be taken into account e.g. our local Pittwater Council was formed only 23 years ago specifically to address and serve the unique, sensitive aspects of the area.
- An underlying assumption in the IPART evaluation of scale and strategic capability is that large councils are more effective and efficient than smaller ones. We do not accept this. There is much evidence that mega Councils such as those being proposed by LGRP are less efficient than medium size Councils. Mega Councils are less responsive, more susceptible to political and developer bias, and more removed from the needs of their communities. Refer to:

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<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/no-evidence-that-local-government-amalgamations-will-improve-performance-20150504-1mzezy.html>  
<https://cabpra.wordpress.com/pittwater-fit-for-the-future/pittwater-obese-is-not-fit/>  
<http://clovermoore.com.au/future-of-local-government-in-nsw/>

- Amalgamation should only be considered if it is supported by the majority of the community, the core purpose of its existence. There is insufficient emphasis on community consultation and nothing about a proposal requiring the (majority) support of the community to be accepted. We believe community support is the most important aspect above others such as scale, capability and financial measures. Community support for an option should be the starting point in the evaluation process as opposed to the IPART process that puts community interests last.

In summary the main issues that concern our residents are community, environmental, cultural, independent and local values. We do not support amalgamation based primarily on data provided by councils, without service oriented benchmarks, nor on the assumption bigger is better. The residents of a council should be the most important advocate for change, something that is being overlooked.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Wiener  
President  
WPCA

Copy to

The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP  
Minister for Planning  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Hon. Mike Baird, MP  
Premier and Minister for Western Sydney  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Hon. Paul Toole, MP  
Minister for Local Government  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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