



# Young Shire Council



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## **YOUNG SHIRE COUNCIL SUBMISSION ON “METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT OF COUNCIL FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROPOSALS – CONSULTATION PAPER APRIL 2015”**

On behalf of Young Shire Council I would like to thank the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the proposal “Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future proposals”.

Young Shire Council has resolved to support a merger with our neighbouring Councils of Boorowa and Harden in accordance with the recommendation of the Independent Local Government Review Panel.

This decision was made following:

- A commitment by all three Councils to investigate the options
- Together with the NSW State Government financial support a Consultant was engaged by the three Councils to independently review our options
- The options were taken to our community for their input
- Taking into consideration our public forums and submissions received, Council then made its decision to merge with Boorowa and Harden

Of the three Councils recommended to merge in our region both Young and Boorowa have resolved the merger of the 3 Councils. Unfortunately, Harden Shire Council recently has made an alternative resolution to merge with Cootamundra Shire Council.

As the situation currently stands, Council has been advised by the Office of Local Government (OLG) that Fit for the Future (FFTF) Template 1 relating to a merger requires a resolution of all Councils involved to support the merger. This framework does not align with the resolutions of Young Shire Council and Boorowa Shire Council.

It is the strong belief of this Council that the assessment framework and methodology should accommodate the scenario where 2 Councils have resolved to support a merger of 3 Councils which is aligned with the recommendations of the Independent Panel, regardless of whether the third Council supports the proposal or not.

In addition to the above I would also submit and support the following feedback for consideration to IPART in finalising the methodology of assessment:

- All of the FFTF documentation and commentary to date has strongly referred to having adequate scale and capacity broadly consistent with the recommendations of the independent panel as the first benchmark to meet. A lack of definition of the term “broadly consistent” has made it difficult for Councils to analyse the likelihood of



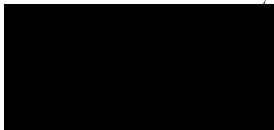
alternate proposals being considered adequate. Perhaps a benchmark definition of "if a proposal provides combined population, revenue and land area that is within 10% of the recommended proposal for a Council then it may be considered as broadly consistent, anything outside these parameters will not be accepted as providing adequate and scale and capacity".

- It is Councils opinion that should IPART and subsequently the Government not support the two Councils proposals (i.e. Boorowa and Young) they should still be considered "fit for the future" and be provided with the same support as Councils assessed as being "fit for the future".
- It is not clear as to whether proposals that involve mergers across proposed Joint Organisation boundaries will automatically result in a "not fit" assessment. Council believes this should be the case.
- Clarification of what will be recommended for Councils deemed "not fit" should be provided. Will the recommendation for Councils deemed "not fit" be consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Panel?
- Council strongly supports having the opportunity to present either individually or as groupings of Councils to IPART to support their submissions.
- Any online portal system should not contain hold points or points where if a certain box is not checked then the rest of a template cannot be completed (refer to earlier commentary for context).
- IPART should give weighting to the timing and breadth of consultation with communities. As an example the submission of a Council that consulted with its community before taking a preferred position should be considered more favourably than a Council that consulted with its community after making a decision on its preferred position.

Young Shire Council strongly believes that every Council should be able to put forward its preferred position and not be unnecessarily restricted by a submission framework.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to provide our submission to assist our Council and our Region to create the proposed "Hilltop Region".

Should you wish to discuss any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.



JOHN WALKER  
MAYOR