



Julia Finn MP Member for Granville

Dr Peter Boxall AO
Chair
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
Attn: Local Government team
PO BOX K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

PP 14/7/15

Dear Dr Boxall

IPART
Doc No
File No

Re: Fit for the Future proposals

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support for the submission by Holroyd City Council concerning the Baird Government's Fit for the Future local government proposals.

There is a strong community of interest across the existing Holroyd local government area – which will not be shared by the proposed new larger area to comprise Holroyd Auburn, Parramatta, the western third of Ryde, and the North Parramatta area of the Hills.

Furthermore, as noted in the submission by Parramatta City Council, Auburn, Holroyd, Ryde and The Hills Shire all withdrew from the process of discussion and analysis of the Independent Local Government Review Panel merger recommendation for the Parramatta local government area. The "Alternative Submission" developed by Parramatta City Council would cover a similar larger area comprising the whole of the current Parramatta and Holroyd, a significant component of Auburn, around half of Ryde and some areas of The Hills and Hornsby Shires.

The NSW Government claims that a Fit for the Future council is one that is: sustainable, efficient, effectively manages infrastructure and delivers services for communities and has the scale and capacity to engage effectively across community, industry and government. It is clear that Holroyd City Council meets these criteria and have provided information to this effect in their Submission.



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I note that a key criterion for a Council to be “fit for the future” is a population target. This is a spurious suggestion as Council rates and services are not collected or apportioned on a per capita basis. Population density per unit of rateable land can vary enormously. That said, at 108,000, Holroyd City Council is not small. The Granville electorate has one of the highest birth rates in NSW, which will inevitably lead to a natural increase in Holroyd’s population.

I would like to highlight a number of key points from Holroyd City Council’s submission:

- Holroyd City Council has listened to its community and will seek to achieve the outcome that best reflects the community’s majority preference. Their latest surveys show that 87% of the Holroyd community strongly opposes the merger of Holroyd and want to retain its local identity, services and community priorities and that the majority of residents are both highly satisfied with services received from Council.
- Independent analysis of Holroyd’s future performance in relation to the Fit For The Future criteria shows Holroyd Council will meet all 7 benchmarks by 2019/2020. The proposed merged entity will only meet 3 of the 7 benchmarks.
- Holroyd City Council’s existing long term financial plan provides a sustainable source of funding for future infrastructure, asset renewal and maintenance and will be able to maintain current services long into the future.
- TCorp’s own report found that Holroyd is financially sustainable now and well into the future. TCorp have assessed Council’s current Financial Sustainability Rating (FSR) as being ‘Moderate’ with a ‘Positive’ outlook. I understand this means that there would only be two councils out of the 152 in NSW which have a better FSR than Holroyd.
- The business case undertaken by MorrisonLow indicates that the merged entity fails on four of the seven Performance Benchmarks and is an inferior option in comparison to Holroyd as a Stand Alone Council.
- The NSW Government will offer councils who voluntarily merge the assistance of a fully funded facilitator, subsidised funding to prepare a merger business case, access to technical experts. The Auburn/Parramatta/Hills/Ryde merged entity may receive up to \$22.5 million in direct funding for the

merger however the cost to merge the councils into a single entity is estimated to exceed \$100m and would take approximately 3-5 years to achieve.

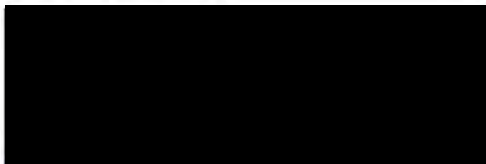
In my own discussions with local residents, around three quarters are opposed to Council amalgamations. None of those who supported amalgamations cited the possible strategic advantages of an enlarged Parramatta- rather they referred to perceived comparative service delivery. The remainder were proud to be residents of Holroyd City Council and saw no need for change.

I share the view of Holroyd City Council that a merger is not needed to achieve the Government's outcomes and that, on the contrary, Holroyd as a Stand Alone Council is a superior outcome to the proposed Independent Local Government Review Panel merger option.

I am also a Councillor on Parramatta City Council. It is notable that I was joined by two of the three Woodville Ward Councillors, who represent most of the area of Parramatta City Council within the Granville electorate, in voting against Parramatta's alternative proposal for a larger Parramatta and a separate Act of Parliament to recognise the City of Parramatta.

It is clear that the community I represent has rejected the notion that Holroyd should be amalgamated with adjacent local government areas.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Julia Finn MP
State Member for Granville

10 July 2015