

Author name: K. Sajowitz

Date of submission: 31 July 2015

Submission: The FFTF process has advantages, flagging to some organisations the need to become more professional in their day to day operations, identify and address areas of improved efficiencies and cost savings, despite the significant costs the process of compiling a submission has had a positive impact on many areas of NSW council operations. Each NSW council especially those in rural areas have individual characteristics that add to the social fabric of NSW creating a diverse and comfortable environment for its people, this should not be discouraged by adopting a one size fits all criteria and risk taking away "Community" People of NSW should always be the number one priority and the State Government would ignore that at their peril.

The JO concept has many advantages, Oberon recognised this early and for years has benefited as a CENTROC member, this advantage can only improve as the JO model evolves as part of the FFTF concept in turn building a stronger more efficient council.

Oberon is a large LGA with a unique set of circumstances governing its administration. Acres of non rateable land throughout the LGA ie forestry, NSWNP and state asset Jenolan Caves diminish the income pool, The NSW Govt should be reassessing this situation and provide a level playing field for councils throughout the state. As a result of the forestry activity heavy traffic uses the Oberon LGA roads, primarily the responsibility of council to maintain. Our climatic conditions also play a huge part in road maintenance and infrastructure. So many variables need to be considered and evaluated.

Oberon boasts a vibrant expanding timber industry, thriving tourist sector and innovative farming industry. As a result of the newly adopted LEP the potential for a boom in the sale of both residential and industrial land is already attracting many enquiries and new residents to the area; this will increase councils income stream.

Oberon is investing time and money into building cultural capital in the town, our community is vibrant, well serviced by community facilities and all age groups are catered for. The recent opening of the 66 bed Aged Care Facility has not only benefited the community and outlying areas but shows what a community can achieve, this facility was lobbied for long and hard for many years.

Communities do not want to be treated as numbers on a sheet of paper in the minister's portfolio, the local council areas of NSW are made up of people with diverse needs and expectations. People are NSW most valuable resource their expectations must be taken into account when the decisions re FFTF are taken.

Amalgamation will take the incomes of 80 council employees out of Oberon, children out of schools, council work from local business – the town will suffer.

Council amalgamations mean each Council's LEP will all be lost and amalgamated and it won't be for the benefit of the local communities who care deeply about their local areas.