

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 July 2015 7:09 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Subject: amalgamations

Dear Sir/Madam,

I live in the Sydney LGA and have already experienced one amalgamation when South Sydney and Sydney were combined. This, although appearing relatively painless, certainly lead to a less personal feel when it came to dealing with the council on local issues. This is apart from the considerable cost expenditure needed to resolve all the day to day issues required to complete the amalgamation. This cost must have detracted from the councils ability to provide services, investment opportunities and complete various public projects.

Apart from the diminution of representation that any further combining of councils will undoubtedly cause I do not wish the cost burden to be repeated, and although the government is offering a monetary package to enable access to concessional borrowings I see this as an unnecessary impost on rate payers as Sydney does not have existing significant borrowings.

There is little evidence to suggest that that bigger is better. Research published by Brian Dollery of the University of New England in the Institute of Public Administration's journal-January 2015 compared Brisbane City Council (pop 1 million) with City of Sydney (pop 200,000) and two clusters of south-east Queensland councils and NSW councils. Both these clusters had populations of approx 125,000. Dollery stated that "our financial analysis of BBC casts considerable doubt over the continuing mantra that bigger is better in the context of contemporary Australian government. He went on to say that "between 2008 and 2011 the three comparison groups consistently outperformed the BBC in the key areas of financial flexibility, liquidity and debt serving ability". Not exactly a ringing endorsement of the perceived efficiencies provided by larger councils.

The Samson report appears to focus on 'strategic capacity' but does not seem to provide any detailed evidence to support any perceived gain in terms of efficiency savings.

There is simple to many 'what will happen' questions in relation to rates, services, developments etc to clearly make an informed decision as to the merits of this proposal, therefore, City of Sydney should be left as the single entity it currently is.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Graham

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