

Fit or the Future – Leichhardt

I am a ratepayer of Leichhardt Council, and a former director over 21 years of two Sydney Local Government Areas, North Sydney and Woollahra. I have considered the IPART Fit for the Future criteria and proposals for amalgamations throughout Sydney, and the responses of Leichhardt, North Sydney and Woollahra. I support the contention of Leichhardt Council there will not be benefits to me as a ratepayer, as a user of Council services, or as a participant in the community, through amalgamations of the nature and scale proposed by the IPART. The modelling and studies commissioned by all three Councils indicate in fact adverse effects on rates and services, and poorer community communication.

I concur generally with the dot points in the Leichhardt Executive Summary. No doubt further efficiencies of scale can be achieved by local councils through regional contracting and the like, but the majority of Council services are very location specific, and rely on local knowledge, and close communication between Councillors and staff and the community. What is needed is structural reform which treats Local Government as a proper tier of government, not a political plaything of successive State administrations, as has been too often the case in New South Wales.