



# Newport Residents Association Inc.

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14<sup>th</sup> May 2015

The Chairman  
IPART  
PO Box K35  
Haymarket Post Shop  
NSW 1240

Dear Sir

## Re ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY OF COUNCIL FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROPOSALS

The Newport Residents Association (NRA) is very concerned about the assessment methodology intended to be applied by IPART in assessing local councils against the 'Fit For The Future' proposals, and lodge the following submission:

- The underlying premise in the IPART evaluation of Scale & Capacity has **no evidentiary justification** whatsoever and we refer you to research both in Australia and overseas that mega Councils are less efficient than medium size Councils. Please refer to:

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/no-evidence-that-local-government-amalgamations-will-improve-performance-20150504-1mzezy.html>

<http://clovermoore.com.au/future-of-local-government-in-nsw/>

<https://cabpra.wordpress.com/pittwater-fit-for-the-future/pittwater-obese-is-not-fit/>

- The IPART process, driven by what it calls financial outcomes is completely at odds with the first criteria of Scale & Capacity. This in our view has nothing to do with financial outcomes and will only lead to poor decisions being made regarding amalgamations. Councils were originally asked by the NSW Government in September 2014 to assess whether they were 'Fit For the Future' under guidelines set down. Pittwater Council commissioned KPMG to independently make an assessment based on that criteria and have done so with an assessment that this council was 'Fit For The Future'. The goal posts now appear to have changed with this 'Scale & Capacity' first criteria which seeks to ignore or rank as secondary the previous tests. We find this change deplorable.
- What is even more disturbing is that no account is being taken of what really marks a council as being 'Fit For the Future' i.e. the delivery of services to residents, for example;

Responsiveness of Council (judged by satisfaction surveys).

The ability of Councils to manage the environment its parks and reserves and climate change (especially significant to Pittwater which has 10 surf beaches and two large water bodies at the north and south being Pittwater & Narrabeen lagoon).

The ability of councils to manage other key resident oriented services such as infrastructure, active transport, planning and development and waste management.

- There is also little evidence that the social, cultural and historical context of a council's position will be taken into account. We remind you that our local Council of Pittwater was only formed 23 years ago specifically to address and serve the unique, sensitive aspects of this area.
- Amalgamation should only be considered if it is supported by the majority of the community which is the core purpose of its existence. Community support for an option should be the starting point in the evaluation process unless IPART and the Government considers democracy is irrelevant for NSW citizens. We believe that community interests are being put last, not first in this process.

In summary the main issues that concern our residents are community, environmental, cultural, independent and local values. No amalgamation should be considered without community support.

Yours sincerely,

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