URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Susan Rudland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>Dianne Knott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Susan Hatherly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Code</td>
<td>SPP10813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Number</td>
<td>FINAL</td>
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Urbis’s Public Policy team has received ISO 20252 Certification for the provision of public policy research and evaluation, social planning, community consultation, market research and communications research.

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You must read the important disclaimer appearing within the body of this report.
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Appendix B

Fact sheet

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City of Ryde presentation

Appendix D

Live voting results

TABLES:

Table 1 – Reforms presented for feedback at workshop

Table 2 – How supportive would you be of City of Ryde being amalgamated with other nearby Councils?

Table 3 – If you had to choose, which once of the following options would be your preference?

Table 4 – To help us reflect your views in shaping Council’s response to the proposed amalgamations, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements
1 Introduction

Urbis was engaged by the City of Ryde (Council) to assist in community consultation regarding the proposed changes to the model of local government outlined in the *Future Directions NSW Local Government – Twenty Essential Steps Report April 2013* (Future Directions Paper).

The Future Directions Paper, on public exhibition until 28 June 2013, outlines a number of proposed changes to the structure and operation of local government in NSW, including proposals to amalgamate Councils. At the time of writing, Council was preparing a submission to the Independent Local Government Review Panel regarding these proposed changes. Council resolved on 30 April 2013 to:

> … hold a consultation program with the community to receive their feedback on the proposal for amalgamation.

As part of this consultation program, Urbis assisted in the design and facilitated a community workshop on Monday 3 June 2013. A number of other consultation activities were also being undertaken by Council including an online survey and telephone survey of 600 respondents.

This report documents the workshop process and the feedback received from participants.
2 Workshop process

2.1 PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

Key activities undertaken by Urbis in advance of the workshop included:

- A review of relevant documents including:
  - *Future Directions NSW Local Government – Twenty Essential Steps Report April 2013*
  - Council’s draft submission
  - Council’s telephone survey questions.
- Development of a format and agenda for the workshop
- Preparation of materials in collaboration with Council’s Community Engagement Team, including a presentation, fact sheet and templates for recording feedback
- Preparation of discussion questions and questions for ‘live’ (real-time) polling.

Council coordinated the event and were responsible for administrative requirements and resourcing, including staffing, invitations and registrations, and venue arrangements.

The workshop was advertised to residents across the LGA in rates notices on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 May 2013.

2.2 WORKSHOP DETAILS

The workshop was held on 3 June 2013, from 7:30pm – 9:30pm at Council’s Civic Centre on Devlin Street, Ryde. A total of 138 people attended the workshop. Participants were seated in small discussion groups and each table was assigned a facilitator from Council or Urbis.

The workshop was run according to an agreed agenda (contained at Appendix A). Key components of the workshop included:

- Two presentations by the Acting General Manager, to inform participants of the proposed reforms and Council’s submission process. Participants were also provided with a two-page fact sheet (contained at Appendix B).
- Two small group discussion sessions, during which time participants were asked to comment on:
  - The strengths of the current model of local government
  - The potential opportunities, challenges and/or issues associated with the proposed reforms to local government.
- A live polling session which provided real-time insights into participants’ attitudes to the proposed amalgamations. Participants were asked to respond to a series of multiple-choice questions, indicating their answers using an individual ‘keepad’ device. The keepad technology provides immediate data collection and analysis, and enabled results to be presented at the event. Data is contained at Appendix C.

The discussions and live polling session were structured around questions agreed with Council ahead of the workshop. The questions related to the areas of the reforms on which Council sought community feedback to inform its submission (these areas are outlined in Table 1, overleaf).
Table 1 – Reforms presented for feedback at workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>SPECIFIC REFORMS ON WHICH FEEDBACK WAS SOUGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Governance | ▪ Ongoing professional development for Councillors  
▪ Strengthen the authority and responsibilities of Mayors  
▪ Require popular election of mayors in all Councils with a population of 20,000 or more  
▪ Provide additional governance options for larger Councils, to improve local representation  
▪ Take steps to improve Council-Mayor-General Manager relations. |
| Sustainability and finance | ▪ Develop a standard set of sustainability benchmarks  
▪ Require all Councils to appoint a qualified Chief Financial Officer  
▪ Strengthen the guidelines for Councils’ 4-year Delivery Programs  
▪ Place local government audits under the oversight of the Auditor General  
▪ Improve the rating system and streamline rate-pegging to enable Councils to generate essential additional revenue  
▪ Establish a State-wide Local Government Finance Agency to bring down interest costs and assist Councils make better use of borrowings. |
| Structural reform (including Council amalgamations) | ▪ Seek to reduce the number of Councils in the Sydney basin to around 15, and create major new cities of Sydney, Parramatta and Liverpool, each with populations of 600-800,000 people  
▪ Introduce a package of incentives for voluntary mergers that offers a higher level of support to ‘early movers’  
▪ For Auburn, Holroyd, Parramatta and Ryde:  
  □ Amalgamate (eastern third of Ryde might be included with North Shore group), or  
  □ Combine as strong County Council, and  
  □ Move northern boundary of Parramatta and western Ryde to M2. |

The following sections document the feedback received during the workshop in relation to each of the above areas of reform. While feedback was sought on all of the above reforms, participants’ discussion focused heavily on structural reform proposals and, specifically, the proposal to amalgamate Ryde Local Government Area (LGA) with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd LGAs. Many of the opportunities, issues and challenges raised in the context of governance, sustainability and finance proposals applied to the structural reform proposals. Proposed amalgamations are evidently the area of greatest interest, concern and contention amongst the community members who attended and this is reflected in the relative volume of feedback documented in relation to each of the reform areas.
3 Perceived strengths of the current model of local government

Participants were asked to reflect on the strengths on the current model of local government.

‘Local representation’ was the primary strength identified. Perceived benefits associated with local representation included:

- **Local knowledge:** The current model of local government was perceived to allow elected officials and Council staff to have a sound understanding of the context, needs and priorities of their local community. This was seen to be enhanced by elected representatives living or operating businesses in the local area. Participants indicated that having sound local knowledge means facilities and services are provided with community needs and values in mind. Reflecting this, during the live polling, 95.8% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that it is important that my local representatives are familiar with my area and its specific needs.

- **Accessibility of Council:** Participants also perceived Councillors and Council staff to be more visible, accessible and receptive under the current model, both physically through local offices and through communication channels, such as Council newsletters. Participants felt this makes Council accountable to the community and encourages engagement with the community in decision making. Council were also perceived to be better able to efficiently respond to issues because they are ‘part of the community’ and ‘on the ground’.

Participants identified a number of strengths specific to the City of Ryde and the Ryde LGA. These included:

- **The existing LGA boundaries align with ‘communities of interest’ and local residents’ identity:** Ryde is a diverse and “close-knit” community, and a number of participants identified a strong sense of belonging and local pride. Participants indicated that valued features of the Ryde area include its history (including alignment with northern Councils and sound management of heritage items), local environmental features, low level of development, business opportunities in Ryde (particularly Macquarie Park) and high quality public domain and services (e.g. parks, clean streets, libraries, transport).

- **Finances and assets** are well-managed at present.

- **Decisions are made transparently,** through Council meetings, publicly available reports, strong links to the local media and contact with local community groups. Some participants perceived that the views of Council and the community are currently well-aligned on a range of issues, including the provision of services, local economic development and the development of key properties and sites in the LGA.
4 Feedback on proposed structural reform

Participants were asked to identify potential opportunities, challenges and issues associated with the structural reform aspects of the Independent Local Government Review Panel’s proposal. As previously mentioned, amalgamation and structural reform was an area of considerable contention and interest. The following summarises feedback received in relation to the proposed structural reforms, outlining opportunities, challenges and issues associated with the proposal.

Participants expressed mixed views regarding amalgamation, ranging from support to opposition. The majority of participants expressed negative views towards amalgamation, and generally more challenges and issues were identified than opportunities. Negative views in regard to amalgamation, were generally in the context of the specific proposal to amalgamate Ryde with Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn LGAs. There was limited support for amalgamating with these Councils to the west of Ryde, primarily on the grounds that Ryde residents are more closely demographically and economically aligned to Councils to the north and east, including a historic alignment with northern and eastern Councils under the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC).

Results from live voting reflect these sentiments:

- Just over one quarter of participants (26.9%) expressed outright opposition to amalgamation
- Nearly half of all participants (47.1%) supported amalgamating with Willoughby, Lane Cove and Hunters Hill Councils
- Less than 1% expressed support for amalgamating with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils.

There was a common view expressed that greater efficiency and economies of scale can be achieved without amalgamating LGAs. Suggestions included strengthening Regions of Councils (e.g. NSROC) and entering into service agreements to meet shared needs. Participants referred on a number of occasions to the model of service provision and collaboration seen in the NSROC, noting that its operations could be used as a model.

4.1 OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities identified in relation to structural reform and amalgamation included:

- **Greater efficiency and less duplication of services in the region**: Amalgamation of Council’s was seen as an opportunity to achieve greater efficiency through the rationalisation of resources, reduced duplication of services, and opportunity for shared services and resources.

- **Regional perspectives**: A number of participants thought that amalgamating LGAs would encourage Councils to take a regional perspective, resulting in improved strategic planning, infrastructure provision and management of population growth.

- **Stronger voice for Councils**: Some participants perceived that larger Council organisations would be in a stronger position to interact and negotiate with State and Federal governments.

- **Greater consistency and uniformity across regions** in relation to strategic direction, planning controls and quality and connectivity of services.

4.2 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

There was limited support for amalgamation, and a range of challenges and issues were identified by participants. Perceived challenges and issues included:

- **Ryde residents identify more strongly with areas to the north and east of the LGA**: Participants suggested the proposed amalgamation does not reflect communities of interest or natural catchments, and that Ryde is demographically different from the suburbs proposed for amalgamation. Many participants noted that Ryde has historically aligned with northern Council’s through the
Northern Sydney Region of Councils (NSROC). Participants subsequently indicated greater support for amalgamating with Councils to the north or east of Ryde LGA.

- **Administrative challenges and economic impacts** associated with overhauling structures and processes, including the costs of restructuring and loss of local employment.

- **Impacts on the responsiveness and quality of services provided by Council**, resulting from reduced capacity, increased pressure on services generated by a larger population and competition between suburbs for limited funds. Reflecting this, 86.8% of participants indicated during live voting that they agreed or strongly agreed that *I am concerned about the potential impact of amalgamations on services in my local area*. Some suggested that the efficient provision of shared services relies on there being shared community needs and demographic characteristics. A large number of participants felt that these characteristics are not shared strongly between Ryde, Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn.

- **Economic impacts on City of Ryde residents**, including views that rates will increase in order to subsidise other Council’s and that property values may decrease.

- **A loss of local identity and sense of place** amongst community members, with a number of participants suggesting it is difficult to develop and retain a strong sense of community and local character at a larger geographical scale. Concern regarding the loss of local identity is also reflected in the results of live polling, where 92.1% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that *it is important to me to retain a sense of local identity within the City of Ryde*.

- **The loss of local representation** and knowledge of community needs, as a result of having fewer Councillor’s and Council staff, and distant Council offices.

- **Reduced community rights and loss of voice**, with Council being less accessible and with a diminished ability to thoroughly consult the community. The reduced ratio of Council staff to population was of key concern.

- **Loss or ‘swallowing up’ of local assets**, in particular Macquarie Park and Macquarie University, relative to Parramatta, as Sydney’s second Central Business District (CBD). There was a view from some participants that amalgamating Councils would benefit from these significant and valuable local resources, providing little in return.

- **Research supporting amalgamation**: There was some discussion regarding the rationale for amalgamating Council’s and scepticism about the research underpinning the decision. A particular query related to the range of 600,000 – 800,000 people as the ‘optimal size’. Participants were keen to see the research and many indicated they would like more information in order to formulate an informed view. The results of live polling reflect this sentiment, with 20.7% of participants indicating they would like more information before determining their support for amalgamation.

- **Longevity of the reforms and comparisons to Queensland**: Participants drew a number of comparisons between the proposed reforms and the experience of Queensland, noting that a number of Queensland Councils are reverting back to smaller models of government – or ‘de-amalgamating’. A number of participants thought it likely that if the proposed reforms in NSW proceed, that we too will in time revert back to the current model, at significant cost and time.
5 Feedback on governance reforms

The following section summarises feedback received in relation to reforms to governance at the local government level. Participants were generally supportive of high quality governance and improved processes, but also identified a number of challenges associated with implementing these reforms and minimising potential negative impacts on the current strengths of smaller local government organisations. Many participants felt that governance improvements could be achieved without amalgamating Councils.

5.1 OPPORTUNITIES

The most commonly identified opportunities include:

- **Improved quality of staff and Councillors**, as a result of opportunities for additional training. Participants suggested training should occur throughout staff and Councillor’s career. This included prior to their entering local government, as well as routinely throughout the term of their employment. In the case of Councillors, one participant suggested this training could be similar to training that is run for Company Directors.

- **Attraction of highly skilled Councillors** as a result of improved ability of Council’s to pay staff and there being ‘a bigger pool to draw from’. The ability to pay Councillor’s was thought to be particularly positive, as it would enable Councillor’s to operate full time and avoid the conflicting priorities and interests that can result from their performing multiple roles. There was also a view from some participants that there would be reduced likelihood of corruption amongst larger, amalgamated Councils.

- **The proposed popular election of the Mayor** drew a range of views, though was generally considered a positive change. Those who supported the proposal felt it gave them line of sight between the community and head decision maker. Interestingly, some participants were not aware that Mayors in Ryde aren’t currently popularly elected.

- **Stronger weight and voice to Councils**: It was again noted that amalgamated, larger Councils will be stronger and better able to negotiate and advocate with State and Federal Governments.

A smaller number of participants identified the following opportunities:

- **Consistency and uniformity in regulation**, particularly in the application of planning controls, ensuring fairness, providing certainty and contributing to consistent local character.

- **Reduced politicisation**: By requiring elected officials to govern in the regional interest, a number of participants felt that larger Council organisations would positively reduce political grandstanding and opportunities for minority interests to capture political attention.

- **Local Boards providing local representation**: A small number of participants felt that the proposed Local Boards provide a sound platform for local issues to be raised.

5.2 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

Key challenges and issues identified in relation to the proposed governance reforms include:

- **The loss of local representation**: This was again a central issue, with participants noting that the proposed changes to the structure of Council’s may reduce the number of Councillors representing Ryde and see the community represented by Councillor’s from beyond the local area. There were concerns about the limited local knowledge of out-of-area Councillors and the impact this would have on the ability of Council to meet community needs.

- **Limitations associated with the proposed training**: included administrative costs and time requirements. Some participants also perceived that training is not an adequate solution to Councillors potentially not having a good knowledge of the Ryde LGA under a larger, regional government area.
- **Concerns regarding the effectiveness of the Local Boards** in giving each suburb or former Council area a voice. Some felt that the views of the largest suburbs will prevail and that the Boards would face difficulties in balancing the competing interests of different suburbs.

- **Another level of bureaucracy**: It was suggested that the Local Boards will introduce an unnecessary, additional layer of government, bureaucracy and ‘red-tape’.

- **Electoral processes**: Some participants noted that it may be necessary to amend the process for electing Councillors and the Mayor, should the proposed governance reforms proceed.

- **Improved governance can be achieved without amalgamation**: There was general support amongst participants for improving governance structures, and the recommendations in the Panel’s report however, many participants felt that improvements to governance did not need to be accompanied by structural reform to Councils. The current model of subcommittees under the Northern Region of Councils was noted as a good model, which brings together the views of many Councils on different issues.
6 Feedback on sustainability and finance reforms

Participants were asked to comment on the range of sustainability and finance reforms proposed, and a range of opportunities, challenges and issues identified. These are summarised in the following section.

6.1 OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities identified include:

- **General support for improved financial standing**: Steps to improve the financial management of Councils were considered positive by many participants. There was particular support for the appointment of a Chief Financial Officer and compliance with financial standards.

- **Value in sharing resources**: Some participants acknowledged the contribution that pooling resources, sharing services and reducing duplication would make to the financial sustainability of local government.

- **Reduce rates**: Some participants saw an opportunity through the reforms to reduce rates due to cuts in administration costs, while others encourage the review rate structures. Suggestions included managing rates more equitably and applying special rate variations to achieve agreed, specific outcomes.

- **State contributions could be higher**: There was a view expressed by some participants that the State government should make greater contributions to local government, to improve fiscal sustainability.

6.2 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

Challenges and issues include:

- **Scepticism regarding financial rationale for amalgamation**: Participants expressed interest in the research supporting amalgamations and local government reform. There was some scepticism as to the accuracy of financial arguments, and some expressed a desire to see the evidence that the proposed reforms are the best solution.

- **Financial impacts**: Some participants thought that the City of Ryde’s finances would be negatively impacted by amalgamating with Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn, given these Councils’ poor financial performance. There was a perception that Ryde would be ‘carrying the burden’ of these Council’s.

- **Financial sustainability can be achieved without amalgamation**: Many participants felt that this could be achieved without amalgamating Councils however, with several noting it is already occurring through Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCS).
7 Conclusion

This report has documented the findings of a community workshop regarding proposed reforms to local government in NSW, outlined in the Independent Local Government Review Panel’s Future Directions Paper.

The workshop, held on 3 June 2013 and attended by 138 people, provided participants with an opportunity to find out more about the proposed reforms, and provide their feedback. The workshop was one of a number of consultation activities undertaken by the City of Ryde to inform the preparation of a submission to the Review Panel.

Based on the considerable attendance at the workshop and the nature of feedback received, it is evident that the proposed reforms are contentious and of interest to the Ryde community. Participants demonstrated a high level of pride in and attachment to their community, and emphasised the importance of local representation, decision makers’ knowledge of local needs and issues, and Council being accessible and accountable.

An area of particular concern in relation to the reforms is the proposal to amalgamate Ryde with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils. Therefore, much of the discussion at workshops focussed on challenges and issues associated with this particular aspect of the proposals. There is greater support for amalgamation with northern Council’s on the basis of shared interests and identity, and an established relationship through NSROC.

Participants at the workshop were generally supportive of improving the governance and financial sustainability of local governments, though many felt that these outcomes could be achieved without amalgamation. NSROC was cited on a number of occasions as a well-functioning regional network, already achieving efficiencies through collaboration.

There is a high level of interest in the rationale for reform (particularly amalgamation) and concern regarding the adequacy research underpinning the proposed changes. Participants indicated a strong desire to know more and receive further information, to inform their views on the proposed reforms.
Disclaimer

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Appendix A  Workshop agenda
# City of Ryde community workshop – Council amalgamations

## WORKSHOP AGENDA

**RYDE CIVIC CENTRE**

**MONDAY 3 JUNE 2013, 7:30PM – 9:30PM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Welcome and overview of the session</td>
<td>Urbis facilitator Urbis</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Presentation of context</td>
<td>Acting General Manager, Roy Newsome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Introduction to Discussion Session 1</td>
<td>Urbis facilitator</td>
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| 4.   | Discussion session 1: Living in Ryde  
What do you think are the key strengths of the current model of local government? | All |
| 5.   | Outline of the Independent Local Government Review Panel’s proposals | Acting General Manager, Roy Newsome |
| 6.   | Introduction to Discussion Sessions 2 and 3 | Urbis facilitator |
| 7.   | Discussion session 2: Opportunities afforded by proposed reforms  
Thinking about the proposed reforms to local government, what do you see are the potential opportunities around:  
- Governance  
- Sustainability and finance  
- Structural reform (amalgamation) | All |
| 8.   | Discussion session 3: Issues and challenges associated with the proposed reforms  
Thinking about the proposed reforms to local government, what do you see are the potential challenges around:  
- Governance  
- Sustainability and finance  
- Structural reform (amalgamation) | All |
| 9.   | Invite attendees to circulate | Urbis facilitator |
| 10.  | Notes displayed and community members circulate to review | All |
| 11.  | Resume seats and introduction to voting | Urbis facilitator |
| 12.  | Live voting | All, led by Urbis facilitator |
| 13.  | Thank you and close | Mayor Ivan Petch |
Community workshop, Council amalgamations

Local government in New South Wales (NSW) is currently undergoing a period of reform. The City of Ryde is seeking community input about potential changes to the way your area is governed.

BACKGROUND

In March 2012, the Independent Local Government Review Panel was established by the NSW Minister for Local Government to look into how local governments in NSW operate and are structured.

In April 2013, the Panel published *Future Directions for NSW Local Government: Twenty Essential Steps*. The report outlines a number of proposed changes to the way that local governments in NSW operate.

PROPOSED CHANGES THAT AFFECT CITY OF RYDE INCLUDE:

**Governance**

- Ongoing professional development for Councillors
- Strengthen the authority and responsibilities of Mayors
- Require popular election of mayors in all councils with a population of 20,000 or more
- Provide additional governance options for larger councils, to improve local representation
- Take steps to improve Council-Mayor-General Manager relations

**Sustainability and Finance**

- Develop a standard set of sustainability benchmarks
- Require all Councils to appoint a qualified Chief Financial Officer
- Strengthen the guidelines for councils’ 4-year Delivery Programs
- Place local government audits under the oversight of the Auditor General
- Improve the rating system and streamline rate-pegging to enable Councils to generate essential additional revenue
- Establish a State-wide Local Government Finance Agency to bring down interest costs and assist Councils make better use of borrowings

**Structural Reform (Council Amalgamations)**

- Seek to reduce the number of councils in the Sydney basin to around 15, and create major new cities of Sydney, Parramatta and Liverpool, each with populations of 600-800,000 people
- Introduce a package of incentives for voluntary mergers that offers a higher level of support to ‘early movers’

*For Auburn, Holroyd, Parramatta and Ryde:*

- Amalgamate (eastern third of Ryde might be included with North Shore group), or
- Combine as strong County Council, and
- Move northern boundary of Parramatta and western Ryde to M2

To view the Report, go to [www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au](http://www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au) or scan the QR Code below if you have a ‘QR CODE READER’ App on your smart phone.
WHAT MIGHT AMALGAMATING COUNCILS MEAN FOR THE CITY OF RYDE?

There are a range of benefits and challenges associated with amalgamating Councils. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Benefits</th>
<th>Potential Challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stronger relationships between state and local government</td>
<td>1. Costs associated with restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increased ability to advocate for community outcomes at a regional level</td>
<td>2. Disruption associated with restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increased ability to generate revenue</td>
<td>3. Reduced localised presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opportunities for greater efficiency due to economies of scale and shared resources</td>
<td>4. Fewer elected representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Planning and delivery of facilities and infrastructure at a regional level</td>
<td>5. Loss of local employment</td>
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WHAT ARE COUNCIL’S VIEWS?

The City of Ryde resolved on 30 April 2013 to prepare a submission on the proposed changes. Council has some concerns regarding the amalgamation options and is investigating alternatives.

Council is seeking community members’ views on the proposed amalgamation. Activities being undertaken include a telephone survey of approximately 600 residents, an online survey, and a workshop on Monday 3 June 2013.

In addition to providing feedback to Council, you can make your own submission to the Independent Local Government Review Panel by visiting www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au.

Submissions close Friday 28 June and can be made:

- Online  www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au
- Email info@localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au
- Post Independent Local Government Review Panel, C/-Locked Bag 3015, Nowra NSW 25

Check back regularly at www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/amalgamation to find out more information.
Local Government Reform

Community Workshop 3 June 2013
Welcome

• Purpose of the workshop
• Outline of format
• Ground rules
• Housekeeping
Introduction to the City of Ryde

TOTAL POPULATION: 110,390
(estimated resident population 2012)

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE LAST 5 YEARS: 5.6%
(population size 104,502 in 2008)

POPULATION PROJECTION:
2021: 122,354 2031: 135,508

POPULATION DIVERSITY:
37% OF COMMUNITY NESB

SUBURBS WITHIN RYDE:

- Chatswood West
- Denistone
- Denistone East
- Denistone West
- East Ryde
- Eastwood
- Gladesville
- Macquarie Park
- Marsfield
- Meadowbank
- Melrose Park
- North Ryde
- Putney
- Ryde
- Tennyson Point
- West Ryde
Introduction to the City of Ryde

NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS:
12 Councillors – 4 from each of the 3 Wards
The Mayor is elected by Councillors each year

ELECTIONS:
Council Elections held every 4 years
The City of Ryde’s financial position was recently assessed by Tcorp (NSW Treasury), as part of Independent Local Government Review Panel’s report:

**RYDE TCORP RATING:** **SOUND**

**RYDE TCORP OUTLOOK:** **NEGATIVE**

**SOUND MEANS:** “adequate capacity to meet our financial commitments in short medium and long term”

**NEGATIVE MEANS:** there is the potential for deterioration in our capacity to meet financial commitments
Independent Local Government Review Panel

WHY WAS THE PANEL ESTABLISHED?

NSW Minister for Local Government established the Panel “to develop the options to improve the strength and effectiveness of local government in NSW”

WHO IS ON THE PANEL?

Professor Graham Sansom | Ms Jude Munro | Mr Glenn Inglis

WHAT ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO COMMENT ON?

*Future Directions for NSW Local Government* was published in April 2013. The final report is anticipated in September 2013.
The panel has been asked to investigate and identify options for governance models, structural arrangements and boundary changes for local government in NSW, taking into consideration:

- Ability to support current and future needs of the community
- Ability to deliver infrastructure and services efficiently and effectively
- The financial sustainability of each local government
- Consideration of incentives to voluntary boundary changes
WHAT IS THE PANEL’S PROCESS?

- **Stage 1** (Jul 2012 – Oct 2012)
  Setting the scene
  Identifying key community issues
  Consultation Paper

- **Stage 2** (Apr 2013 – Jun 2013)
  Proposed changes and models
  Presented in ‘Future Directions’ paper

- **Stage 3**
  WE ARE HERE

- **Stage 4** (Nov 2012 – Mar 2013)
  Developing concepts
  Identifying options and possible applications
  ‘Case for Change’ paper

- **Stage 4** (Jul 2013 – Sept 2013)
  Final report
  Review submissions and draft final report to Minister
That Council advise the Independent Local Government Review Panel that while Ryde Council understands the principle of local government boundary adjustments, it does not see a future for the Ryde area as part of an enlarged Parramatta City and that in consequence, Council does not propose to attend the “Metropolitan Councils” workshop at Parramatta on 15 May 2013, but instead will attend as observers, at the Northern Sydney Councils workshop at Chatswood on 14 June 2013.
Actions by Council

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- Community Council meeting
- Telephone survey of 600 residents
- Community Workshop
- Online Survey (still open on website)
- Letterbox drop to all residents

COUNCIL WILL BE MAKING A SUBMISSION

Draft submission will be presented to Council on 25 June. Submission to include community feedback

Submission due in by 28 June 2013
Discussion Session 1: Strengths

What do you think are the key strengths of the current model of local government?
Recommendations from the Independent Local Government Review Panel

Council is seeking your feedback on the following key themes covered in the report:

- **Governance**
  - “how decisions are made and communicated”

- **Financial Sustainability**
  - “Council’s ability to continue to provide services into the future”

- **Structural reform**
  - “proposed amalgamations”

City of Ryde
Lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep
Recommendations from the Independent Local Government Review Panel

GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ongoing professional development for Councillors
- Strengthen the authority and responsibilities of Mayors
- Require popular election of Mayors in all councils with a population of 20,000 or more
- Provide additional governance options for larger Councils, to improve local representation
- Improve Council-Mayor-General Manager relations
**SUSTAINABILITY & FINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Develop a standard set benchmarks to help measure long-term financial sustainability
- Strengthen the guidelines for councils’ 4-year Delivery Programs
- Improve the rating system and streamline rate-pegging to enable Councils to generate essential additional revenue
- Establish a State-wide Local Government Finance Agency
Recommendations from the Independent Local Government Review Panel

STRUCTURAL REFORM / AMALGAMATION PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL: “Seeks to reduce the number of councils in the Sydney basin to around 15, and create major new cities of Sydney, Parramatta and Liverpool, each with populations of 600-800,000 people”
## Recommendations from the Independent Local Government Review Panel

**COMPARATIVE VIEW - PROPOSED AMALGAMATION COUNCILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>2013 Forecasted Population</th>
<th>2018 Forecasted Population</th>
<th>5 year growth</th>
<th>TCORP RATING</th>
<th>TCORP OUTLOOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>110,157</td>
<td>118,057</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>SOUND</td>
<td>NEGATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>80,972</td>
<td>90,904</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>SOUND</td>
<td>NEGATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>179,163</td>
<td>192,603</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>NEUTRAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>105,772</td>
<td>116,990</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NEUTRAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AMALGAMATED COUNCIL</strong></td>
<td><strong>476,064</strong></td>
<td><strong>518,554</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.9%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion Session 2: Opportunities

Thinking about the proposed reforms to local government, what do you see are the potential OPPORTUNITIES around:

• Governance
• Sustainability and finance
• Structural reform
Thinking about the proposed reforms to local government, what do you see are the potential CHALLENGES AND ISSUES around:

• Governance
• Sustainability and finance
• Structural reform
Please move around the room
To help us reflect your views in shaping Council’s response to the proposed amalgamations, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements.

How supportive would you be of City of Ryde being amalgamated with other nearby Councils?

1. Completely supportive
2. Supportive
3. Somewhat supportive
4. Not very supportive
5. Not at all supportive
6. I do not have a view
7. I would like more information in order to form a view.
Live voting

To help us reflect your views in shaping Council’s response to the proposed amalgamations, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements.

If you had to choose, which one of the following options would be your preference?

1. Merge with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils
2. Merge with Willoughby, Lane Cove, and Hunters Hill Councils
3. Merge with Canada Bay and Strathfield Councils
4. Merge with Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Councils
5. Oppose amalgamation
6. Other alternative
7. I would like more information in order to form a view.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me to retain a sense of local identity within the City of Ryde</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about the potential impact of amalgamations on services in my local area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that my local representatives are familiar with my area and its specific needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Ryde will become more financially sustainable through amalgamation with Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn Councils</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, amalgamations are likely to result in greater efficiencies in the delivery of services for the City of Ryde</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you and close – City of Ryde Mayor
Thank you for attending
### Table 2 – How supportive would you be of City of Ryde being amalgamated with other nearby Councils?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all supportive</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like more information in order to form a view</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat supportive</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very supportive</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely supportive</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have a view</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3 – If you had to choose, which once of the following options would be your preference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merge with Willoughby, Lane Cove and Hunters Hill Councils</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose amalgamations</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need more information in order to form a view</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merge with Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Councils</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other alternative</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merge with Canada Bay and Strathfield Councils</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merge with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4 – To help us reflect your views in shaping Council’s response to the proposed amalgamations, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me to retain a sense of local identity within the City of Ryde</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about the potential impact of amalgamations on services in my local area.</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that my local representatives are familiar with my area and its specific needs</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Ryde will become more financially sustainable through amalgamation with Parramatta,</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, amalgamations are likely to result in greater efficiencies in the delivery of services for the City of Ryde

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holroyd and Auburn Councils</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, amalgamations are likely to result in greater efficiencies in the delivery of services for the City of Ryde</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>