

**Meeting Date: Tuesday 17 February 2015**

**Location: Council Chambers, Level 6, Civic Centre, 1 Devlin Street, Ryde**

**Time: 7.30pm**

*Council Meetings will be recorded on audio tape for minute-taking purposes as authorised by the Local Government Act 1993. Council Meetings will also be webcast.*

### NOTICE OF BUSINESS

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## 1 FIT FOR THE FUTURE - CITY OF RYDE'S RESPONSE

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**Report prepared by:** Group Manager - Corporate Services  
**File No.:** CSG/14/3/14/7 - BP15/153

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### REPORT SUMMARY

This report outlines Council's previous responses to the Independent Panel's reports and recommendations as detailed in its final report - 'Revitalising Local Government'. (The report recommended for Ryde's LGA to be split with its western portion to be amalgamated with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils with the remaining area being amalgamated with Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby Councils). Council has on a number of occasions, rejected this proposal.

This report also provides a brief summary of Council's actions in responding to that report that include undertaking community surveys, a public meeting and an independent assessment of the Panel's recommendation to break up the City of Ryde's Local Government Area (LGA). It should be noted that Council has previously supported exploring other models with Councils to the north and east of its LGA. While the community feedback opposed any amalgamations, when asked for their preferred amalgamated option, the community supported Ryde merging with Councils to the north and east of its LGA.

More recently, in October 2014, the Minister for Local Government announced the 'Fit for the Future' initiative, that requires all Councils to provide a response to the Independent Panel's recommendations by 30 June 2015, by completing either of the two (2) templates provided;

- Template 1 being for a Council Merger Proposal; or
- Template 2 being a Council Improvement Proposal.

In determining how Council would respond to the Minister for Local Government's request, the City of Ryde initiated a number of discussions and meetings with its neighbouring Councils, together with discussing this matter at the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) meetings and joint NSROC / SHOROC meetings.

This report details the result of the most recent discussions from the Northern Sydney 'Fit for the Future Symposium', held at Willoughby Council on 5 February 2015.

A summary of the key outcomes from the Symposium and the recommendations that are proposed for Council to endorse are;

- (a) That the City of Ryde reaffirms its rejection of the recommendations as detailed in the Independent Panel's final report that proposes to split the City of Ryde partly between Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn Councils with the balance being amalgamated with Councils to the east and north, comprising Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby Councils;

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

- (b) That the City of Ryde complete Template 2 – Council Improvement Proposal, to demonstrate that the City of Ryde is sustainable in its own right;
- (c) That in addition to completing Template 2, Council also endorse investigating a modified Joint Organisation (regional body) proposal to meet the State Government's scale and capacity criteria, on the basis that there are other Councils in northern Sydney interested in participating in this proposal with the City of Ryde;
- (d) That the City of Ryde endorse undertaking a shared community engagement strategy with those Councils that confirm interest in exploring a modified Joint Organisation (regional body) proposal as detailed in part (c) above;
- (e) That Council endorse the General Manager writing to the Mayor and General Manager of the Councils that attended the Symposium, to confirm their Council's position by Wednesday 18 March 2015, in respect of parts (c) and (d) above;
- (f) That the City of Ryde endorse a business case (cost benefit analysis) being undertaken of the Independent Panel's recommendation for the Councils of Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Willoughby and Ryde to amalgamate (costs to be on a shared funding basis); and
- (g) That the General Manager write to the Mayor and General Manager of Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils to formally advise that the City of Ryde rejects the Independent Panel's recommendations for the western area of the City of Ryde to merge with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils and to advise that Council is exploring other options as detailed above.

The report and recommendations are now submitted for Council's consideration.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- (a) That the City of Ryde reaffirms its rejection of the recommendations as detailed in the Independent Panel's final report that proposes to split the City of Ryde partly between Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn Councils with the balance being amalgamated with Councils to the east and north, comprising Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby Councils;
- (b) That the City of Ryde complete Template 2 – Council Improvement Proposal, to demonstrate that the City of Ryde is sustainable in its own right;
- (c) That in addition to completing Template 2, Council also endorse investigating a modified Joint Organisation (regional body) proposal to meet the State Government's scale and capacity criteria, on the basis that there are other Councils in northern Sydney interested in participating in this proposal with the City of Ryde;

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

- (d) That the City of Ryde endorse undertaking a shared community engagement strategy with those Councils that confirm interest in exploring a modified Joint Organisation (regional body) proposal as detailed in part (c) above;
- (e) That Council endorse the General Manager writing to the Mayor and General Manager of the Councils that attended the Symposium, to confirm their Council's position by Wednesday 18 March 2015, in respect of parts (c) and (d) above;
- (f) That the City of Ryde endorse a business case (cost benefit analysis) being undertaken of the Independent Panel's recommendation for the Councils of Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Willoughby and Ryde to amalgamate (costs to be on a shared funding basis); and
- (g) That the General Manager write to the Mayor and General Manager of Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils to formally advise that the City of Ryde rejects the Independent Panel's recommendations for the western area of the City of Ryde to merge with Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils and to advise that Council is exploring other options as detailed above.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 Presentation – Fit for the Future Symposium – 5 February 2015 (FINAL)
- 2 Joint Media Release – Fit for the Future Symposium

Report Prepared By:

**Roy Newsome**  
**Group Manager - Corporate Services**

Report Approved By:

**Gail Connolly**  
**General Manager**

## ITEM 1 (continued)

### Background

In April 2012, the Independent Panel was appointed to improve the effectiveness of Local Government and help drive the strategic directions set out in 'Destination 2036 Action Plan'. The Panel published its final report 'Revitalising Local Government' in October 2013, which included details of how Local Government should be reshaped with a number of recommended amalgamations.

At its meeting of 25 June 2013 Council endorsed a submission to the Independent Local Government Review Panel ('ILGRP') rejecting the proposed splitting and subsequent amalgamation of the City of Ryde with adjoining Councils.

In preparing that submission, Council undertook a survey of residents seeking their feedback on amalgamations generally and also on specific amalgamation options including the ILGRP's proposal. Consultation consisted of a telephone survey (600 respondents), an online survey (256 respondents) and a community workshop (140 attendees). Only 3% of telephone respondents, 4% of online respondents, and 1% of workshop attendees supported the ILGRP's recommendation of a merger with Parramatta, Auburn, and Holroyd. By contrast, when asked of their preferred amalgamation option, 42% of telephone respondents, 47% of online respondents, and 47% of workshop attendees supported a merge with Willoughby, Lane Cove, and Hunters Hill. 38% of telephone respondents, 36% of online respondents, and 27% of workshop attendees opposed amalgamations outright, with the remaining respondents supporting other options or undecided.

In October 2013 the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) released its final report proposing a number of Council amalgamations. It proposed that the City of Ryde would be split up and amalgamated with Parramatta, Auburn, and Holroyd to Ryde's west and amalgamated or combined into a strong Joint Organisation with Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, and Willoughby in the east.

Despite Council's submission, the ILGRP retained its recommendation to split and amalgamate the City of Ryde. At its meeting of 25 February 2014, Council endorsed a further submission categorically rejecting any proposal that would fundamentally split the current local government area. It was supported by an independent report commissioned by Council and undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning, which showed stronger travel linkages and communities of interest between the Ryde LGA and the North Shore as compared to the areas to the west.

Acting on the recommendations of the ILGRP's report, on 10 September 2014 the Office of Local Government announced its Fit for the Future program. Under this program, Councils were required to submit an assessment of their status in response to the ILGRP's proposal by 30 June 2015. Submissions were required to address a range of set criteria and within the templates provided. This documentation was issued to Councils on 31 October 2014.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

It should be noted that the templates do not allow the Independent Panel's Joint Organisation model to be applicable for Metropolitan Councils. The templates only gave Metropolitan Councils two (2) options, either justify why Council met the State Government's scale and capacity criteria and sustainability criteria, or propose to merge or amalgamate with other Councils.

At this point in time, the City of Ryde cannot satisfy the 'scale and capacity' criteria established by the NSW Government. In addition, Council has resolved to not complete the merger template. Hence Council is not in a position to submit a complying template under either option provided by the State Government.

On 30 October 2014 the City of Ryde hosted Mayors, Councillors and senior staff from Hunters Hill, Willoughby, Mosman, North Sydney, Lane Cove, and Ku-Ring-Gai Councils, to discuss the Fit for the Future program. Attendees confirmed their Councils' opposition to the proposed amalgamations and agreed to further explore a shared services model.

At its meeting of 11 November 2014, following a Mayoral Minute, the City of Ryde reaffirmed its opposition to the ILGRP's proposal and its support for consideration of a shared services model.

Following discussions between the City of Ryde and other Northern Sydney Councils, Willoughby Council, on 5 February 2015, hosted a Northern Sydney Symposium to discuss the next steps required in response to the 'Fit for the Future' program and to further explore the possibility of a shared service model or modified joint organisation (regional body) proposal.

**Discussion**

Northern Sydney Councils that attended the Symposium were Ku-ring-gai, Ryde, Willoughby, Hunteres Hill, Lane Cove, North Sydney and Mosman Councils.

The presentation that was provided to the attendees of the Symposium is provided for Council's information (**ATTACHMENT 1**).

At the Symposium, the following questions were asked of the 36 Councillors present (4 from City of Ryde);

- 1) Do you support the merger model which has been put forward by NSW Government?

***Outcome from meeting:  
This was not supported.***

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

- 2) Do you support a business case (cost benefit analysis) being undertaken. This would be one piece of work not funded by the State Government?

***Outcome from meeting:***

***This was supported, noting it is proposed for NSROC to coordinate this task on the basis of shared funding by Councils.***

- 3) Do you support investigating alternative merger models to that put forward by the NSW Government?

***Outcome from meeting:***

***This was not supported.***

- 4) Do you support investigating options for some type of joint organisation (regional body) being formed by Northern Sydney Councils to meet the requirements for greater scale and capacity?

***Outcome from meeting:***

***There was no overall support for this proposal, however it is recommended that the City of Ryde explore this option with those Councils who expressed an interest at the Symposium.***

- 5) Do you support a shared community engagement strategy?

***Outcome from meeting:***

***There was no overall support for this action, however it is recommended that the City of Ryde support this action with those Councils who expressed an interest in exploring the joint organisation (regional body) at the Symposium.***

- 6) In respect of a shared communications strategy that proposed forced amalgamations,

- i. Do you support a shared communication strategy that is implemented prior to the March State election?

***Outcome from meeting:***

***This was not supported.***

- ii. Do you support a shared communications strategy that is implemented after the March State election?

***Outcome from meeting:***

***This was not supported.***

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

- iii. Do you support a shared communications strategy that is implemented both before and after the March State election?

***Outcome from meeting:******This option was supported (based on a shared funding arrangement amongst Councils).***

- 7) Do you support equal shared funding of the cost benefit analysis and communication strategy (opposing forced amalgamations)?

***Outcome from meeting:******This option was supported.***

As a result of the Symposium, a Media Release from all Mayors that attended the meeting, was agreed and is shown at **ATTACHMENT 2**.

Proposed Actions

Therefore, from the discussions at the Symposium, and to ensure that the City of Ryde can demonstrate that it has explored all reasonable options when responding to the Office of Local Government's 'Fit for the Future' requirements, the following actions are recommended;

- 1) That the City of Ryde again restate its rejection of the recommendations as proposed by the Independent Panel;
- 2) That the City of Ryde complete Template 2 – Council Improvement Proposal, in demonstrating that the City of Ryde is sustainable (it should be noted that Council does not meet the required scale and capacity criteria as detailed in the 'Fit for the Future' documentation);
- 3) That the City of Ryde supports an investigation of a modified joint organisation (regional body) to meet the State Government's scale and capacity criteria. It is also recommended that Council write to all attendees at the Symposium to confirm which Councils are committed to working with the City of Ryde on this matter.

It is also proposed for the City of Ryde to coordinate this initiative;

- 4) That the City of Ryde supports undertaking a shared community engagement strategy with Councils that confirm their support in exploring a modified joint organisation (regional body). This will ensure a standardised approach is taken in survey questions, comparative analysis etc.

It is proposed for the City of Ryde to coordinate this initiative.



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

- 5) That the City of Ryde supports undertaking a business case (cost benefit analysis) of the State Government's proposed mergers for Northern Sydney Councils. This had overall agreement at the Symposium and it is proposed that NSROC will coordinate this action on a shared funding basis;
- 6) That the City of Ryde writes to Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd Councils to formally advise that the City of Ryde rejects the amalgamation proposal as detailed in the Independent Panel's report and that it is exploring other options.

**Summary**

This report has outlined Council's previous resolutions and recent actions that have been taken by the City of Ryde in conjunction with other Northern Sydney Councils in determining the framework of how Councils individually and collectively will respond to 'Fit for the Future'.

This report has outlined that while there was no overall consensus on some key issues, that the City of Ryde should explore a range of actions to demonstrate that it has properly considered the options contained in the Independent Panel's Report, analysed the relevant data/business cases and explored other reasonable alternatives to those contained in the Panel's report.

It should be noted that whilst the NSW Government does not support the establishment of Joint Organisations in the Sydney Metropolitan area, it is considered that Council could explore this option with surrounding Councils as it has potential merit.

However, any Joint Organisation (regional body) would need to fulfil the intent of the 'Fit for the Future' initiative. Therefore it should be reasonably expected that such a body would be responsible for matters such as; subregional land use and infrastructure planning; subregional community and cultural planning; subregional economic development and tourism (potentially including centres of excellence) and joint service initiatives (such as waste). Councils should be approached to participate on this basis.

**Financial Implications**

Council, in its September 2014 Quarterly Review, endorsed \$2 million being placed in Council's 'Fit for the Future' Reserve that was earmarked to ensure the level of funding for Council's asset maintenance and renewal was brought up to suitable levels in 2015/2016 and beyond.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

Also, at the December 2014 Quarterly Review, a further \$1 million is recommended to be transferred to this Reserve. These additional funds will allow Council to continue to cover the maintenance of Council's infrastructure assets whilst also providing the funding for any other initiatives that Council may undertake in responding to the State Government's 'Fit for the Future' deadline.

Therefore, any contributions or expenditure that is required to be made in preparing Council's submission on 'Fit for the Future' by 30 June 2015, will be covered by this Reserve.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# Fit for the Future Forum

*Assessing the potential for a shared position on  
Fit for the Future Local Government reforms in  
Northern Sydney*



**Panel Members**

*Mr John Harrison (Facilitator)*

*Clr Richard Quinn (President of NSROC)*

*Mr Percy Allan (Former Secretary of the NSW Treasury and Chairman of the NSW Treasury Corporation)*

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# Welcome to Willoughby

Mayor of Willoughby City  
Councillor Gail Giles-Gidney

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

# Using your keypad

**kp1** Press the number on your keypad to select your choice.

**kp1** To change, press another number. The last number entered will be the number recorded.

**kp1** You will have a 10 second countdown clock appear after all answers have been read out, however entering your response can be done once the question is on screen.

**kp1** All keypads are to remain in this room.



*"connecting you with your audience"*

**e:** [kp1@kp1.com.au](mailto:kp1@kp1.com.au) **m:** +61 418 256 579

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

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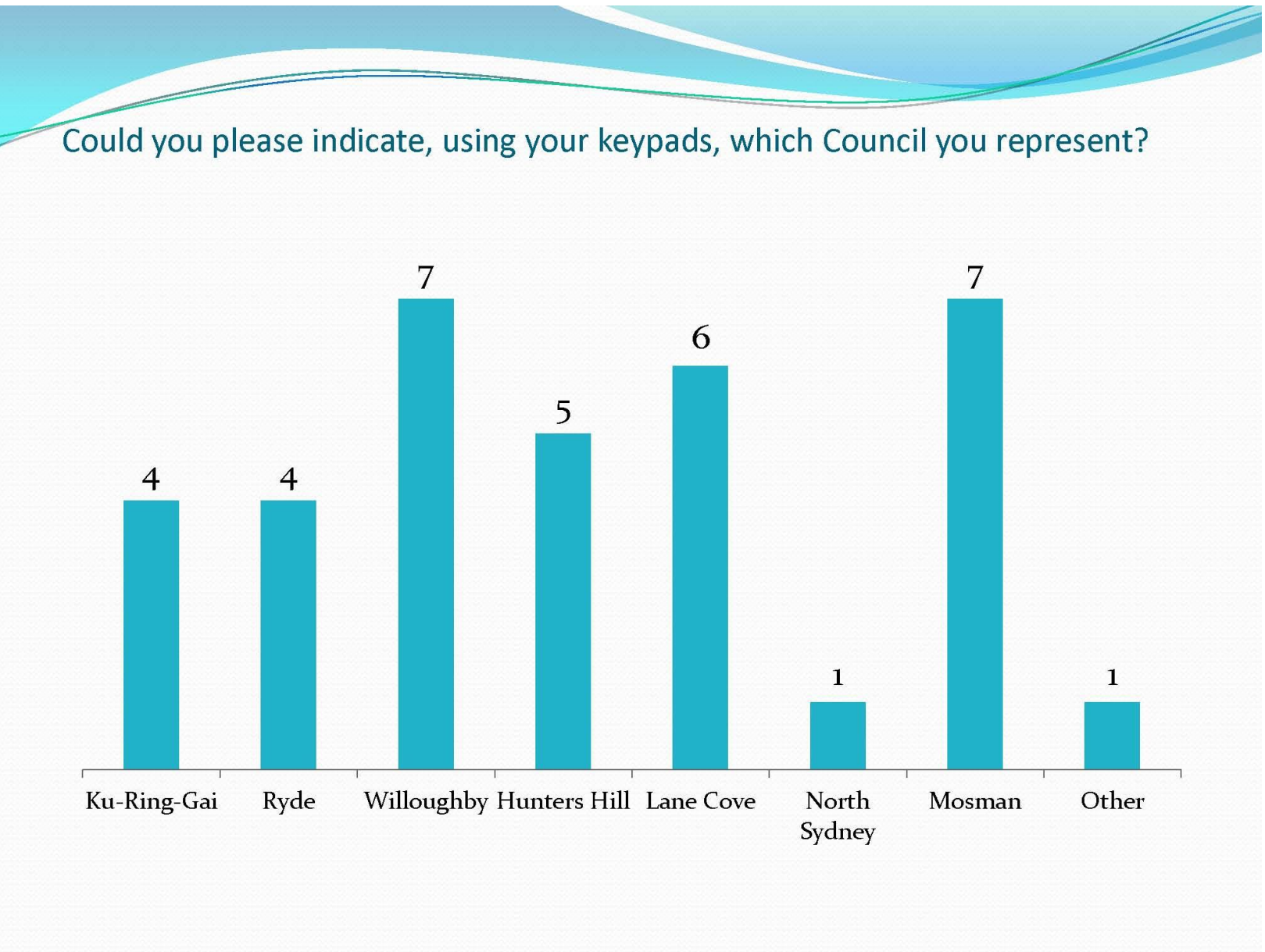
## Test Question

Could you please indicate, using your keypads, which Council you represent?

1. Ku-Ring-Gai
2. Ryde
3. Willoughby
4. Hunters Hill
5. Lane Cove
6. North Sydney
7. Mosman
8. Other

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

## Tonight's Objectives

1. To provide information that may lead to a shared position on 'Fit for the Future' being agreed by all or some Northern Sydney Councils.
2. To consider whether any shared business case analysis should be undertaken as part of the FFTF due diligence process.
3. To consider if there is support for all or some Councils to investigate an alternative model to the proposed FFTF merger structure (an independent evaluation of any agreed options/models and their identified benefits could be undertaken).
4. To consider what elements of public communication and community consultation should be undertaken through joint action, such as developing:-
  - a. An advocacy and communications strategy (*pre-election and post-election*).
  - b. Community engagement initiatives (eg a survey).



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

## Fit for the Future Criteria

According to the NSW Government a **'Fit for the Future'** Council is:

- Has the scale and capacity to engage effectively across community, industry and government
- Financially Sustainable
- Efficient
- Effectively manages infrastructure and delivers services for communities;

The NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' documents focus on two key areas:

1. Scale and capacity
2. Financial sustainability

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

## Scale & Capacity

**Scale and capacity** is the first hurdle in Fit for the Future documents, financial sustainability is subordinate

Under Fit for the Future, a Council is deemed to have scale and capacity if the Panel's recommended amalgamation configuration is adopted. No justification is provided by government, or required from the councils that are to merge

In rural areas, Councils have the option of building 'scale and capacity' by forming **Joint Organisations (JO)**.

The Panel also recommended JOs as an option for Metropolitan Sydney, however the government has excluded the option. There is no explanation as to why Joint Organisations are appropriate in one part of NSW, but not others

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**



**The Government's objective is that there are amalgamations in metropolitan Sydney to significantly reduce the number of Councils**

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# Financial Sustainability

Common view in the industry is that the nominated financial indicators are snapshots and do not reflect actual viability in the short or long term

In the LGNSW commissioned review of TCorp's Report, Comrie states:-

“In my opinion some of TCorp's indicators are more appropriate for assessment of the financial worthiness of private sector entities (and in particular their worthiness to take on more debt) than for a sphere of government.

Local governments generally have more reliable revenue streams, discretion regarding expenditure and stable and predictable operating environment than is typically the case for entities in the commercial business world.”

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

## Financial Sustainability cont.

Few Councils meet the tests put forward as part of the Fit for the future package, including the biggest!

**However, Northern Sydney Councils have the financial capacity to meet the criteria over time**

A merged group of Councils will not currently meet the tests either.

There is no evidence that **financial sustainability** will be improved through amalgamations as proposed

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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# Question 1

Do you support the merger model which has been put forward by NSW Government?

That is: One council comprising North Sydney, Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Willoughby, Mosman, part of Ryde  
AND

One council comprising Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai

For **Yes** push button 1

 3

For **No** push button 2

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ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

## Merger Analysis – Government Groupings

*“The primary purpose of a merger business case is to provide councils with the necessary information to allow them to determine whether a proposed merger option is the right outcome”*

*“Undertaking a merger business case **does not commit a council** to merging – it simply helps councils to better understand the benefits and costs of a merger option.”*

The starting point for each Council is the Panel’s recommendations. Analysis of the NSW Government’s preferred configuration of Councils is important to support whatever position a Council takes.

All proposals will need to reference the recommended model and provide evidential support and a business case.

The State Government will fund 50% of the cost up to \$75k

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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## Question 2

Do you support a business case (cost benefit analysis) being undertaken for the groupings - one council comprising North Sydney, Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Willoughby, Mosman, Ryde & another for Kuring-gai and Hornsby. This would be one piece of work, not funded by State Government.

For **Yes** push button 1



For **No** push button 2





ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

# Merger Analysis – other combinations

The Minister has repeatedly stated councils are free to suggest alternative combinations

The Sansom Panel Report does not provide justification for the merged combinations or set a specific population target size.

Other combinations could be tested through community engagement questions

*“Undertaking a merger business case does not commit a council to merging – it simply helps councils to better understand the benefits and costs of a merger option.”*

The Government will fund 50% of the cost

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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## Question 3

Do you support investigating alternative merger models to that put forward by NSW Government (for example, investigating mergers that involve fewer or different councils than proposed by the Government)?

For **Yes** push button 1



For **No** push button 2



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

## Regional Action Alternative

- Forming a Joint Organisation (JO) is not an option in the FFTF templates for councils in Metropolitan Sydney
- No justification has been given, it seems this position has been taken because it would mean that the number of councils in Metropolitan Sydney would not be reduced
- There are currently pilot JOs on trial in five regions across the State and they have prescribed and optional functions
- The concept of a Joint Regional Authority (JRA), a modified version of a JO, was developed over the latter part of 2014 by the Mayoral Working Party as an alternative to mergers
- The JRA would have a policy and services component, similar to Hunter ROC and mean Councils retain budgets and the majority of functions

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

## Regional Action Alternative

- The JRA would include the functions Government has prescribed in all the pilot JOs:-
  - regional strategic planning - land use planning, infrastructure, economic development, transport, health, education and training, land management, sustainable tourism, ageing population
  - inter-governmental collaboration
  - regional leadership and advocacy.
- Regional service delivery is optional under a JO, but would be a key focus of the JRA in order to deliver scale and capacity.
- A number of governance structures for the service delivery component could be utilised:-
  - Alliance Contracts/ Agreements – existing NSROC model; or
  - Council controlled service company; or
  - Council specialisation ‘centres of excellence’

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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## Question 4

Do you support investigating options for some type of Joint Organisation being formed by Northern Sydney Councils to meet the requirement for greater Scale and Capacity?

For **Yes** push button 1



For **No** push button 2



ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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## Question 4a

Loss of which key function would prevent you from supporting the JRA option

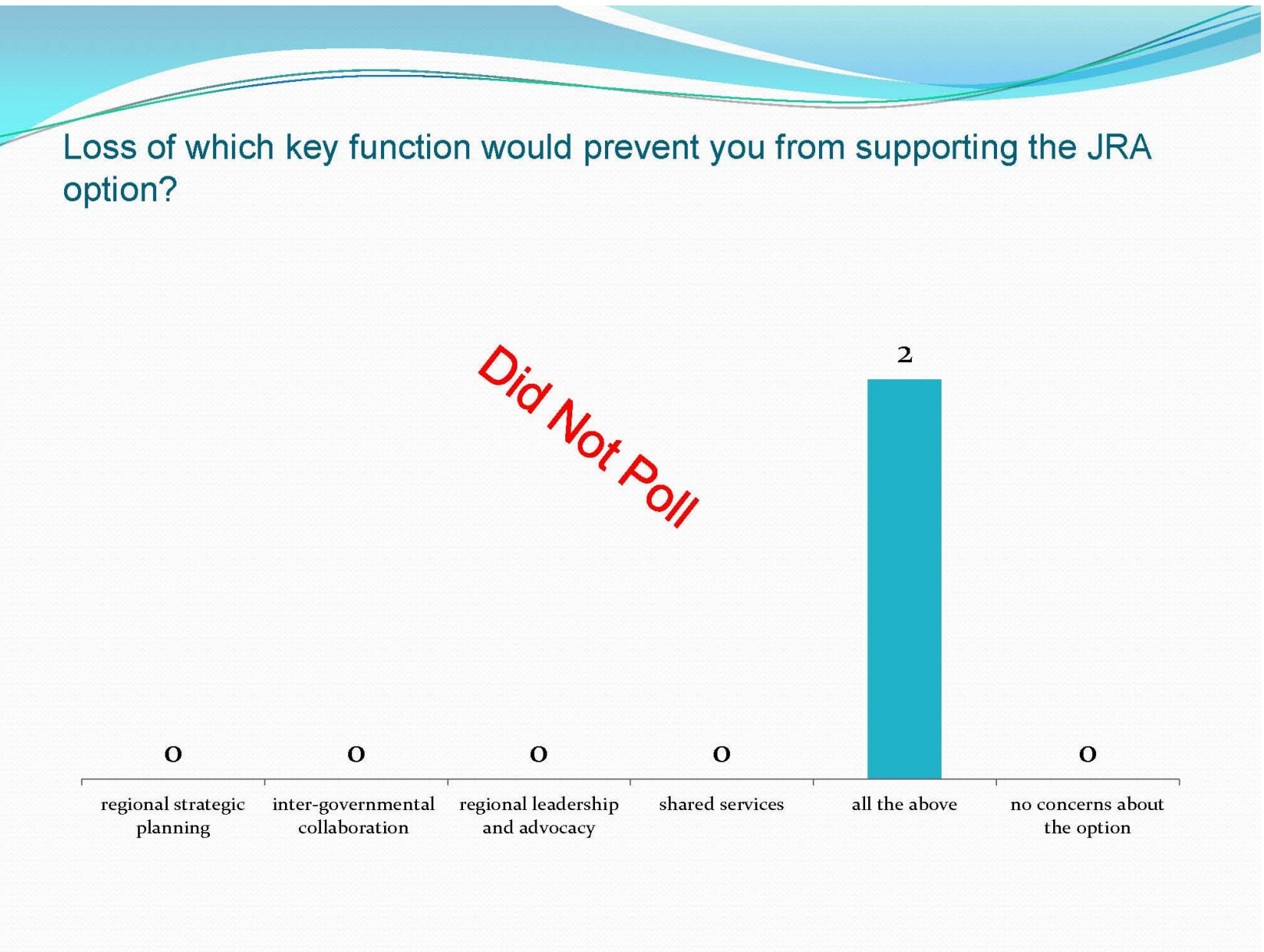
(Push corresponding button):

1. regional strategic planning
2. inter-governmental collaboration
3. regional leadership and advocacy
4. shared services
5. all the above
6. no concerns about the option

**Did Not Poll**

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# Community Engagement

A shared approach to community engagement across the region has the following advantages:-

- Standardised approach to survey questions
- Allows comparative analysis
- More cost effective

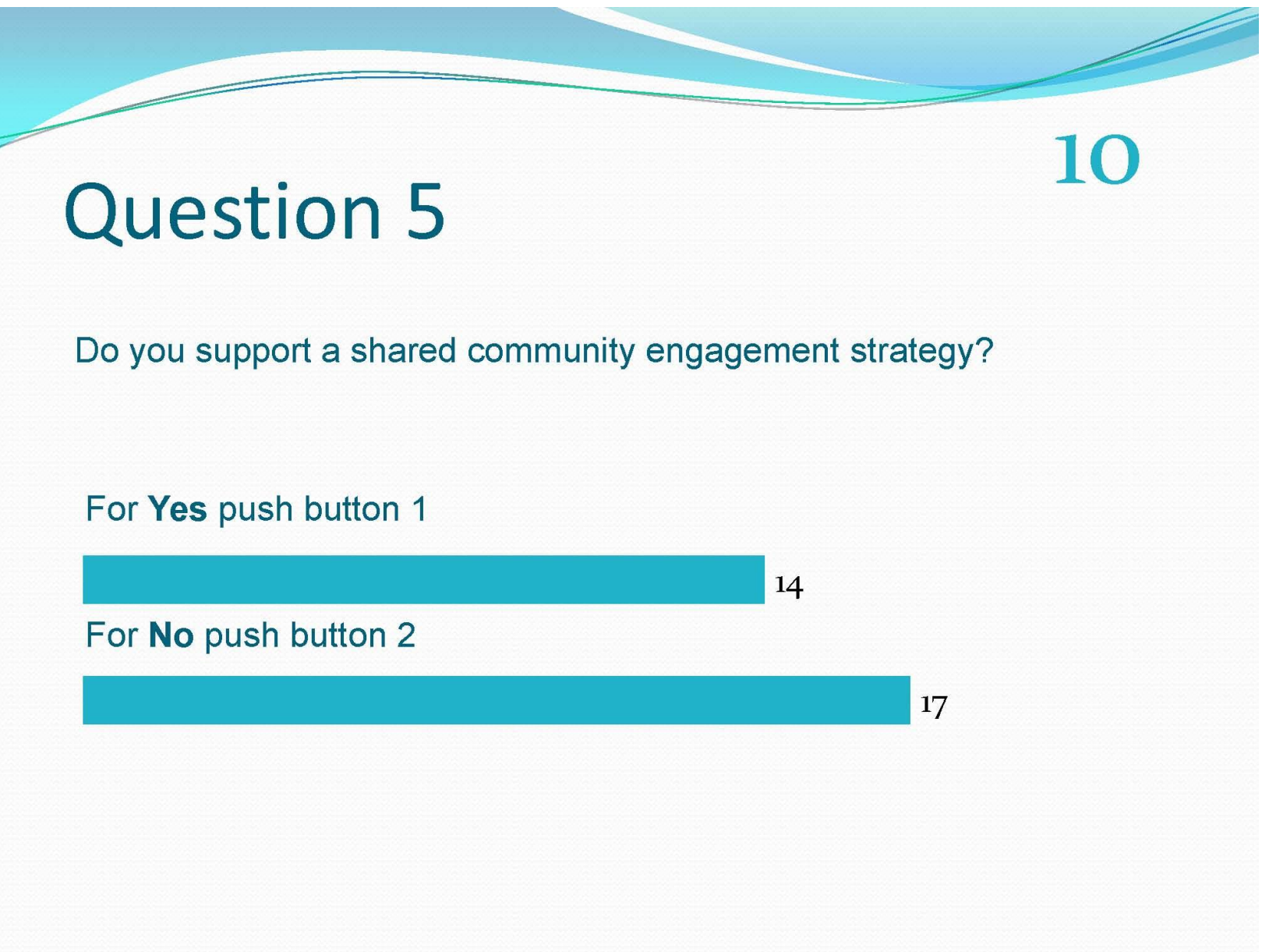
Community surveys would involve a mixture of deliberative (information provided before questions asked) and telephone polling

Individual Councils can undertake community meetings and other methods to flesh out the evidence base



ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

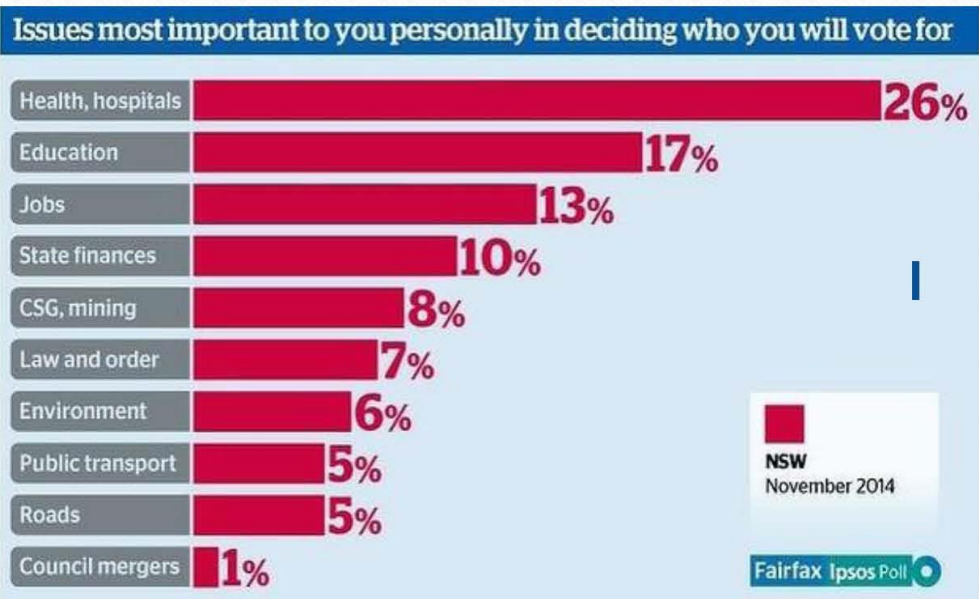
# Communications Strategy

1. Current government policy is ‘no forced amalgamations’
2. What messages should be out there – before the March elections?
3. What messages and actions – after the March elections?

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# SMH Poll



•48 per cent agree with the state government that there are too many councils, while 45 per cent oppose a reduction.

•But only one per cent of voters said the issue would determine which party they supported.

•If councils refuse cash incentives to merge voluntarily: 54 per cent of voters opposed forced mergers and 40 per cent supported them.

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

## The Rhetoric...

The Fit for the Future program has been accompanied by the following consistent Government messaging...

- 'Councils are not financially sustainable...'  
**No Relationship between population size and financial results, 7 of the 10 largest Councils\* had an operating deficit in 2013/14).**
- 'Councils are losing a \$1.0m a day...'  
**The combined Financial Operating results for metropolitan councils\* in 2013/14 was a \$22M surplus**
- 'Councils need scale and capacity...'  
**No new functions have been outlined for councils and no business case has been produced**

\*The 2013-14 figures do not include City of Sydney

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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## Question 6

In respect to a shared communications strategy that opposes forced amalgamations:

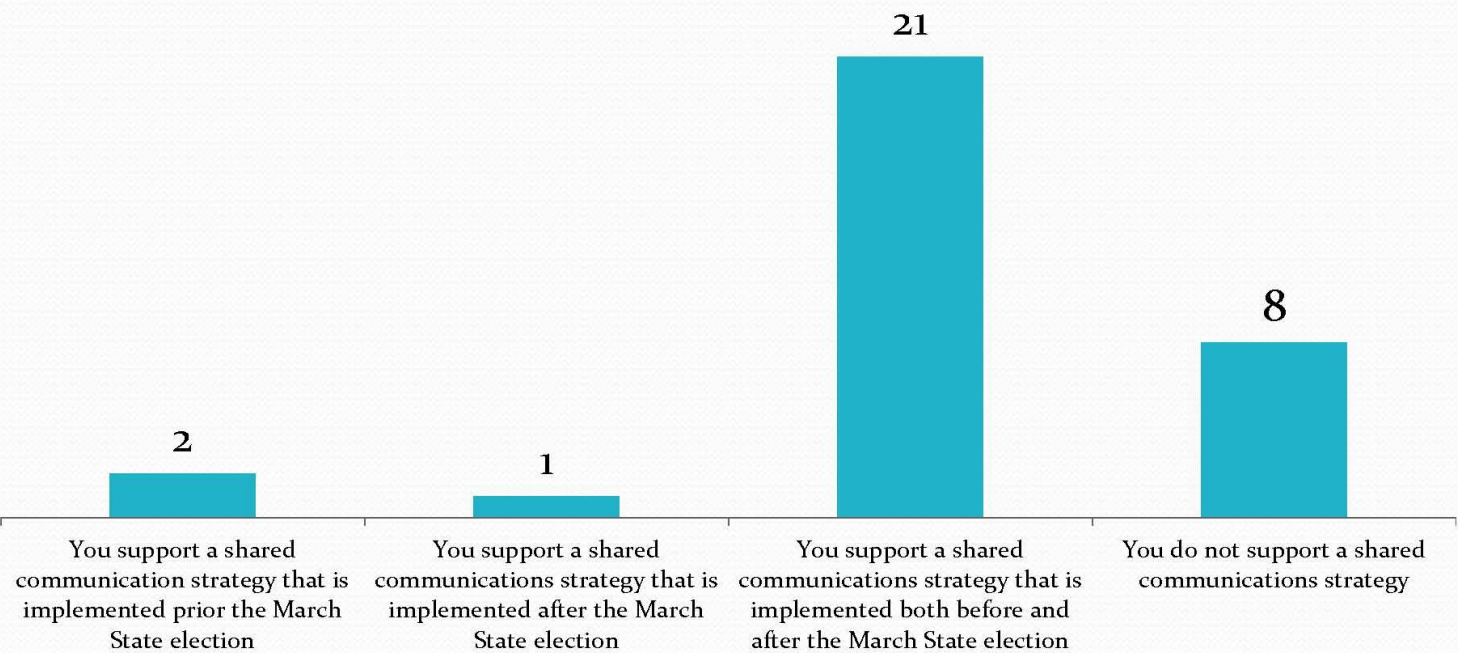
(Push corresponding button):

1. You support a shared communication strategy that is implemented **prior** the March State election
2. You support a shared communications strategy that is implemented **after** the March State election
3. You support a shared communications strategy that is implemented **both before and after** the March State election
4. You do not support a shared communications strategy

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

In respect to a shared communications strategy that opposes forced amalgamations:



**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# Fit for the Future Funding

1. Fifty percent funding for the Business Cases for both the Sansom-recommended mergers or alternative combinations is available from government. Funding of the remainder could be shared on an equal basis by participating Councils
2. No State Government funding is available to consider an alternative option such as the JRA, analysis of this option will require funding by councils. Funding could be shared on an equal basis by participating Councils
3. No State Government funding is available for a communications strategy or community engagement\*, funding could be shared on an equal basis by participating Councils

\*Proposed community consultation will include the same survey questions being asked of residents/ratepayers in all participating Councils by way of telephone and online.

ITEM 1 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

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## Question 7

Do you support equal shared funding of the Cost Benefit Analysis, and Communication Strategy (opposing forced amalgamations)?

For **Yes** push button 1



For **No** push button 2





**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**



# Open Forum

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**



# Next Steps

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

February 11, 2015

**A Joint Press Release From:**

- Councillor Richard Quinn Mayor of Hunters Hill Council and President of the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC)
- Councillor Bill Pickering Mayor, City of Ryde
- Councillor Jennifer Anderson Mayor of Ku-Ring-Gai
- Councillor David Brooks-Horn Mayor of Lane Cove
- Councillor Gail Giles-Gidney Mayor of Willoughby
- Councillor Jilly Gibson Mayor of North Sydney
- Councillor Peter Abelson Mayor of Mosman and President North Shore Regional Organisation of Councils (SHOROC)

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**Northern Sydney Mayors Reject State Government  
Proposals for Council Amalgamation**

Seven northern Sydney councils met to consider a collective response to the NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* local government reform agenda which includes the merger of councils. The majority of those attending confirmed their opposition to any forced amalgamations of councils.

Mayor of Hunters Hill and President of the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC), Councillor Richard Quinn, confirmed the position following a forum attended by more than 30 Local Government Councillors and General Managers from across northern Sydney held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February.

"Mayors and Councillors are continually seeking improvement for our organisations, and we recognise that we must continue to evolve as we endeavour to meet the needs of our local residents. However, there is no empirical evidence that mergers, as proposed by the NSW government, will provide any benefits to the local communities that we serve."

This echoes a similar position taken by five inner-west Councils last week.

Councillors considered a number of options for taking a shared approach in their responses to Government's *Fit for the Future* agenda, which are due for submission by 30 June.

"There was overwhelming support from the forum for Councils to jointly commission an independent analysis of the Government's merger model, with the majority accepting that a more detailed strategic and economic appraisal is needed".

"We need further information to consult with our communities on where their best interests lie and how our current strategic capacity stacks up against the Government's requirements".

"Councils take very seriously their role of promoting local community participation and social engagement, and understand the importance of local identity and culture in helping to build and enhance a harmonious global city", Councillor Quinn said.

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