

**GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 6**

**INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Supplementary questions: LGNSW**

*Answers are to be returned to the Committee secretariat by Friday 21 August 2015*

1. In light of LGNSW criticism of the FFTF benchmarks, has LGNSW, as a member of the Ministerial Advisory Group, ever suggested an alternative measure for scale and capacity or non-financial benchmarks?

Answer: Yes.

2. Does LGNSW believe rates should increase to the levels in Victoria and Queensland?

Answer: No – LGNSW’s key point is simply that the Government’s assertion that amalgamations will drive down rates is demonstrably false – see page 10 of the LGNSW submission.

3. Are the residents of larger councils in NSW less well served by their councillors than the residents of smaller councils?

Answer: While LGNSW is firmly committed to local democracy, it supports voluntary amalgamations where councils and their communities determine this is the best course, and opposes forced amalgamations. The Government has not made the case that bigger is always better and there is a significant body of evidence to the contrary.

4. Do your member councils that have been formed as a result of a merger report that this has been detrimental to their community? If so, which councils?

Answer: While LGNSW supports voluntary council mergers, evidence shows that forced amalgamations do not always achieve better results – see page 10 of the LGNSW submission. That is why LGNSW continues to call for a focus on the real issue – financial sustainability - rather than structures.