FACT SHEET

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

- This market research is the consolidated results of opinion polling conducted by Micromex across 14 Local Government Areas (LGAs) between January and June 2015.

- The 14 LGAs polled constitute one-third of all Sydney Councils involved in the Fit for the Future process. These 14 Councils represent almost half of Councils recommended for amalgamation.

- Total population of the combined LGAs polled is 1,156,417.

- Sample size was 7,416 – significantly more than the sample sizes used in regular Opinion Polls on voting intention which commissioned and published by mainstream media outlets. Such polls usually operating on a sample size ranging between 1,000 and 2,000.

- The larger sample size reduces the margin of error from the standard +/-3% to +/-1%.

- Polling was conducted by Micromex Research, primarily by random telephone interview. However results also contain small number of face-to-face polling undertaken in one LGA.

- Respondents were weighted to accurately reflect ABS demographic figures, as per standard opinion polling process.

- Respondents were presented with a range of options for their Council and asked to indicate their level of support on a scale of 1-5, in which:
    - 1 = Very supportive
    - 2 = Supportive
    - 3 = Somewhat supportive
    - 4 = Not very supportive
    - 5 = Not at all supportive

- Respondents were also asked to rank up to eight options for the future of their Council in order of preference. The options included no change/stand alone and the amalgamation option recommended under *Fit for the Future*.

RESEARCH RESULTS

- **59% were aware** of the *Fit for the Future* recommendation that Councils be amalgamated.

- **85% supported the stand alone option** (includes respondents who said they were very supportive, supportive or somewhat supportive).

- **61% identified the no change/stand alone option** as their first preference.

- **18% identified the Government's recommended amalgamation** as their first preference

- **21% identified a different option** (neither stand alone nor the Government's recommended amalgamation) as their first preference – the majority of these outcomes either embraced a 'stand-alone with joint regional services' option, or a much smaller amalgamation outcome than recommended by the State

Example Concept Statement and Questions

Read Out

Fit for the Future is the name given to the review of Local Government being carried out by the NSW State Government, in an effort to reduce the number of councils in NSW, and to make local government sustainable, efficient, and effective for future generations.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, whilst an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the local community's needs and local issues.

Under the review, councils need to demonstrate how they will become sustainable, provide effective and efficient services, create the scale and capacity needed to meet the needs of communities, and partner with the NSW Government.

Council has 2 options, being:

OPTION 1: The recommendation of the state government (insert specific merger details, i.e. Councils and projected population)

OPTION 2: To put forward a proposal to stand alone and not merge with any other council

Q1.   How supportive are you of Council being merged into with (insert specific merger details)?
    Prompt

- O   Completely supportive
- O   Supportive
- O   Somewhat supportive
- O   Not very supportive
- O   Not at all supportive

Q2.   How supportive are you of Council standing alone? *Prompt*

- O   Completely supportive
- O   Supportive
- O   Somewhat supportive
- O   Not very supportive
- O   Not at all supportive

Q3.   Thinking about the options we have just discussed, which is your preferred option? *Prompt*

- O   The recommendation of the panel
- O   Standing alone
- O   Other (please specify).......................................