

**Submission  
No 119**

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

**Name:** Cr Kathy Neilson

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## **Parliamentary Inquiry into the 'Fit for the Future' reforms**

I, Kathy Neilson, am a councillor on Randwick City Council but I am submitting this in a personal capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this Inquiry. I have grave concerns about all aspects of the IPARTs Fit for the Future methodology but I would particularly like to respond to points: k, j & n.

### **k) the known and or likely costs and benefits of amalgamations for local communities,**

\* I believe there is a hidden agenda behind the push for an increased population size of council areas which is as the IPART Methodology says and I am paraphrasing *it is to enhance the range of services and functions councils are able to undertake.*

\* In other words it is a convenient way for the state government to shift more responsibilities and greater costs on to local councils. Councils will have to raise rates and in inner city areas increase densities to encourage private companies associated with for example light rail or new road tunnels etc to undertake major infrastructure projects that in the past would have been undertaken by state government.

\* The major concern I have is that this could, in fact would, lead to greater inequality between local areas such as we find in countries like the USA where local government is responsible for more infrastructure etc. I do not want to see that sort of rich and poor divide as a result of this change.

\* I believe there is strong support for the role of government in service delivery and there is enormous support for government to provide services that deliver a healthier and fairer society, and that decisions about services should not be made just on value for money.

\* Contrary to what is being advocated by the IPART methodology Australians do not agree that the private sector or the market necessarily deliver the best or most efficient services.

**Another concern is:**

### **(j) evidence of the impact of forced mergers on municipal employment, including aggregate redundancy costs,**

\* I would hate to see any Council have to lose valued staff as a result of any amalgamations. I value very highly the work all Council staff perform for the city of Randwick. I do not want to see any member lose their job.

**Another concern is:**

**(n) protecting and delivering democratic structures for local government that ensure it remains close to the people it serves,**

\* As a conscientious councillor I take my role in decision making very seriously. I undertake inspections of Development Applications that are coming to council meetings. I know the location of almost all streets in my ward and can respond to the emails and phone calls coming from residents concerned about matters in my ward and beyond. However, if I am to represent a similar number of residents as for example a city of Sydney councillor I do not believe I could carry out my role as responsively as I do now. Nor do I think residents would have the same confidence that I could or would.

\* People expect local to mean LOCAL.