

# Inquiry ‘impressed’ by Ryde, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove merger model

Northern District Times October 29, 2015

Rosaline Walters



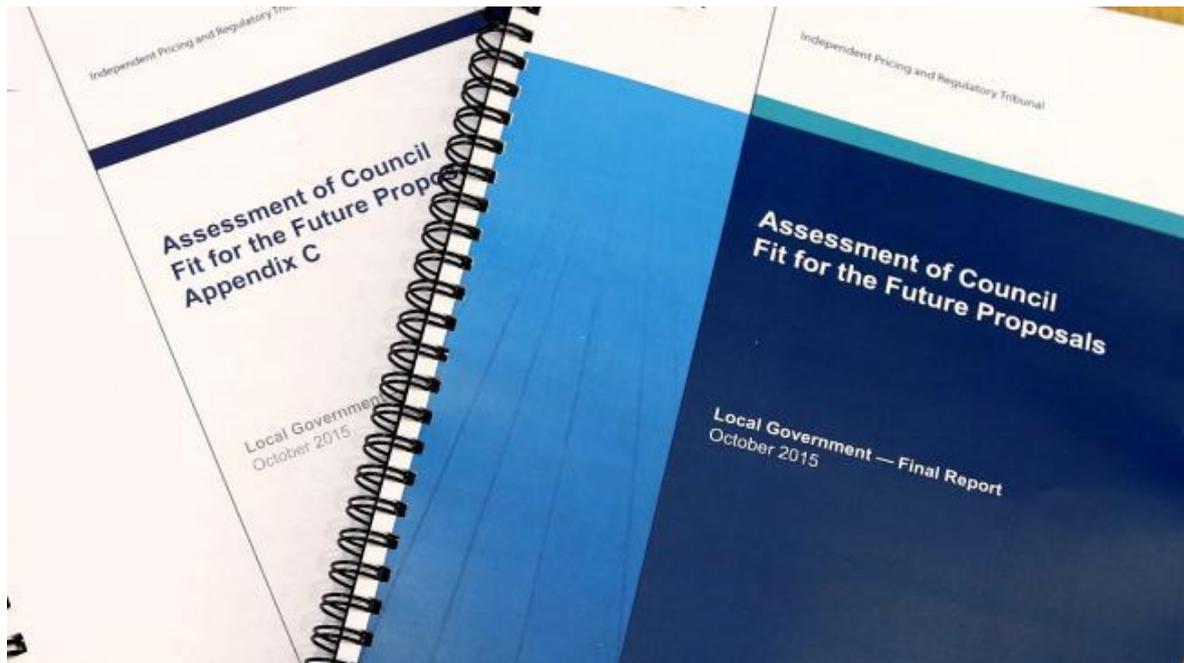
*Hunter’s Hill mayor Richard Quinn, Ryde Council mayor Jerome Laxale and Lane Cove mayor Deborah Hutchens. Picture: David Swift*

**A bipartisan Legislative Council report tabled today has recommended that rather than force council amalgamations, the Baird government copy Ryde, Hunter’s Hill and Lane Cove’s Joint Regional Authority model instead.**

Ryde mayor Jerome Laxale said that the report was a “very big tick” of approval for the joint regional authority (JRA).

“We believe in reform and we believe the JRA is a much better reform vehicle than forced amalgamation,” he said.

[IPART REPORT DECLARES NORTHERN DISTRICT COUNCILS UNFIT](#)



*IPART's review of local councils' Fit For The Future proposals found that 71 per cent of Sydney metropolitan councils were unfit. Picture: Stephen Cooper*

Recommendations 16 and 17 of the report stated that the councils should be able to form joint organisations, and that these be based on the joint regional authority model.

“(The committee) sees very real merit in this style of joint organisation being given statutory support in preference to forced amalgamations,” the final report stated.

Hunter’s Hill Mayor Richard Quinn said that the Legislative Council report confirmed that the JRA model was the superior option.

### [RYDE AND HUNTERS HILL COUNCILS CALL FOR IPART REPORT TO BE PUBLIC](#)

The sentiment was echoed by Lane Cove Mayor Deborah Hutchens.

“I urge the State Government to heed the advice of this Inquiry or, if not, publically address why every Council in Sydney should be denied the opportunity to use the Joint Regional Authority model,” she said.

The Legislative Council committee was formed in May to inquire into the state government’s local government reforms, which required councils to prove they were “fit for the future” or be merged with surrounding councils.

Last week, a report released by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal found 71 per cent of Sydney metropolitan councils were “not fit”, including Ryde, Hunters Hill and Lane Cove.



*Councils have until November 18 to respond to IPART's findings. Picture: Stephen Cooper.*

Under the state government's reforms, Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde and Wiloughby councils would be amalgamated into one Lower North Shore Council.

The IPART report was a blow for Ryde, Hunter's Hill and Lane Cove, who had instead proposed that they form a joint regional authority.

The authority would allow each council to remain autonomous while providing efficiencies and subregional planning.

Today's report was released by the Legislative Council's Local Government in New South Wales inquiry, which is chaired by Paul Green from the Christian Democratic Party.

Also on the committee are two Liberals, two Labor members, a National and Greens MP.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/news/inquiry-impressed-by-ryde-hunters-hill-lane-cove-merger-model/story-fngr8gwi-1227587197374>