

Report of the NSW Upper House Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government

29 October 2015

The Committee consisted of Chair Paul Green (Christian Democrats), Lou Amato and Catherine Cusak (Liberal Party), Ben Franklin (National Party), Peter Primrose and Ernest Wong (Labor Party) and David Shoebridge Greens.

The Committee made the following unanimous Recommendations:

1. That the NSW Government commit to a policy of no forced amalgamations of local councils (see R 11).
2. That the NSW Government make Joint Organisations for regional cooperation available to all councils in NSW (see R 16).
3. That the NSW Government work with local government on a statutory model for Joint Organisations based on the Hunters Hill, Ryde and Lane Cove model as a cooperative and consensus model for local council reform in Metropolitan Sydney (see R 17).
4. That the NSW Government consider amending the electoral legislation to introduce donation and spending caps for candidates at local government elections (see R 15).

The Committee made the following unanimous Findings:

1. That the Boundaries Commission needs to become more independent and its process strengthened (see F 7).
2. That a number of recommendations of the ILGRP that were unrelated to structural reform should have been implemented before considering amalgamation (see F 3).
3. That IPART's appointment was too late in the process, the deadline for council proposals was too short, the methodology prescribed by the Government was too restrictive and rushed (F 2&4).

Other Recommendations and Findings:

In addition to the above, there are other recommendations and findings that also reflect badly on the Government, and how it has and is mishandling this whole process. These include: unfair and misleading labelling of councils as 'unfit', failure to remove rate-pegging and cost-shifting before considering structural change, IPART not having the demonstrated skills or capacity to assess the overall 'fitness' of councils, and 'scale and capacity' is a flawed criterion.

Final Report [here](#). Chair of Committee Paul Green (Christian Democrats) [here](#), Luke Foley (Labor) [here](#) and David Shoebridge (Greens) [here](#). PRIME7 News [here](#).

Save Our Councils Coalition (SOCC)

Phil Jenkyn