



RANDWICK CITY'S future



CONSULTATION UPDATE

FOCUS GROUPS

Randwick City Council has undertaken one of its largest single community consultations in the history of the Council.

The community consultation was in response to State Government's Fit for the Future program released in late 2014.

The NSW State Government's Fit for the Future program requires Randwick City Council to consider amalgamating with its neighbouring councils Waverley, Woollahra, Botany, City of Sydney – forming a global city with more than half a million residents.

We don't support amalgamations, however, we are required to show the NSW Government that we can meet their requirements in some way, whether it be through their preferred global city option or a merger that is broadly consistent. The Government has made it clear that "doing nothing is not an option".

We have sought the views of residents, ratepayers and local businesses on the NSW Government's Fit for the Future program and what it means for our future.

This information has been used, along with a comprehensive financial analysis, to develop our Options Analysis package. A snapshot of the focus groups is included here, with the full information available on our website www.yoursayrandwick.com.au/future

View the Council's analysis and the full results of all community consultation in "Appendix B: Community Engagement" online at www.yoursayrandwick.com.au/future

Randwick Council's submission on the Fit for the Future program will be on public exhibition, through IPART, from July 2015.

PARTICIPANTS: 28

Purpose: To better understand the views of sectors of the community that are often under-represented in common community consultation programs.

28 people participated in one of the four hard to reach focus groups. The groups included an Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander (ATSI) communities focus group, a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities focus group, a people with a disability focus group and a younger people (under 30 years of age) focus group.

Key findings

- After discussing the impact of amalgamation on a range of topics there was no consensus within or across the groups on the best amalgamation option.
- The topics that were seen to be most critical for Council to consider were the overall savings, level of service provision and number of council employees (because this was often seen to translate to service provision).
- Some participants thought that the cost savings associated with larger council areas could be beneficial to improved longer term service provision, whilst others feared any amalgamation might jeopardise the current level of service provided by Council.
- Whilst there was no consensus on which of the options for amalgamation would be most appropriate for Council, the majority of the participants supported amalgamation where:
 - » Waverley Council and at least one other council were amalgamated. Waverley Council was identified as having similar values, connections with the coast and a similar demographic to Randwick
 - » The cost savings for council were positive. For this reason some participants selected some of the options which resulted in larger council areas
 - » There was no impact on rates
 - » The number of Council staff was consistent, as participants directly associated Council staff with service provision.

Who makes the final decision?

The State Government has appointed the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to act as the Expert Advisory Panel to review council Fit for the Future submissions.

IPART's draft assessment criteria state that they will determine all submissions to be either "fit" or "not fit" for the future.

According to IPART's draft assessment criteria, Randwick Council's proposal will be considered using the scale and capacity of the Independent Local Government Review Panel's preferred option – a global city (Randwick, Waverley, Woollahra, Botany, Sydney). They will then consider whether our proposal is 'broadly consistent' with a global city. If it is not 'broadly consistent' the Council's proposal will be determined to be "not fit".

If Council proposes to stand alone, IPART requires that we prove standing alone is "superior" to a global city merger in all areas of the criteria including scale and capacity, effectively managing infrastructure, sustainability and efficiency.