

What is Waverley Council's position on amalgamation?

In October 2014 Council resolved:

That Council does not support amalgamation with any other Council unless it can be demonstrated that there are sufficient benefits of a preferred amalgamation to Waverley, and this is supported by the Waverley community.

How did Waverley Council come up with the six options?

In 2014, Council carefully considered which options it wanted to at look further. Council resolved to explore what, if any, benefits there are in the following options:

- Waverley Council remaining by itself
- A City of Sydney, Waverley, Randwick, Woollahra and Botany Bay amalgamation
- Waverley, Woollahra, Randwick and Botany councils amalgamating
- Waverley, Woollahra and Randwick councils amalgamating
- Waverley and Randwick councils amalgamating
- Waverley and Woollahra councils amalgamating.

In exploring these options we have used independent advice in order to better understand what each means for us. In this [information pack](#), we have looked at advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Why is Council not looking at an option for a potential merger of Waverley, Randwick and Botany or Waverley, Woollahra and City of Sydney?

Council carefully considered which options it wanted to look at further. Council's submission is required to be completed by June 30 and the six options chosen for review are those Council felt were the priority for consideration.

Will amalgamations result in a rates rise?

The Independent Local Government Review Panel in its final report Revitalising Local Government recommended a review to improve fairness and equity within the rates system. This review is about to start and is due to be completed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in mid-2016.

In terms of amalgamation, any new merged council would be responsible for identifying and introducing an appropriate rates structure that is both fair and equitable for all ratepayers of the new council and will be required to do extensive community consultation before doing so. A significant transition period, potentially over a number of years, is likely needed to ensure minimal impact of any rate changes to ratepayers.

Why is a rate review being done now and will an amalgamation mean my rates will increase?

The Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) looked at local government revenues and highlighted a number of issues. As part of their Final Report, the ILGRP recommended that

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) undertake a review of the rating system with a focus on reducing or removing excessive exemptions and concessions and improving equity within the rating system. The review by IPART is due to commence shortly and is expected to be completed by mid-2016.

Any new Council entity will also be expected to undertake extensive consultation with the community to determine a rating structure that is both fair and equitable to any merging partners. It is expected that there would be a transition period covering a number of years whilst any merger takes place.

Why has each option in the information pack used the maximum 15 elected representatives when some LGA's have less than the maximum?

The State Government is not proposing to change the Local Government Act (NSW) that allows for no more than 15 elected representatives per LGA. Whilst councils can opt for a lesser number of elected representatives (eg. Waverley Council currently has 12), we used the maximum number of 15 for each of the potential options to enable fair comparisons between each.

What does 'scale and capacity' mean?

Scale and capacity looks at the unique characteristics of each area – geography, population, economic and transport flows, communities of interest and local identity.

What opportunity will the community have to provide feedback?

To inform our submission due by 30 June, Waverley Council will be seeking feedback from the community from 25 February to 15 March through a variety of channels, including:

- A statistically valid phone survey of both residents and businesses, undertaken by an independent consultant
- An online survey, open to all of Waverley
- Hard copy surveys available at all customer service points, including the Seniors Centre
- Youth engagement program.

Community feedback will provide a central component of Waverley Council's Fit for the Future submission to the State Government.

Where can I find more information about local government reform?

The Fit for the Future website provides more information about the package, visit:

www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au

The Office of Local Government website has links to the Independent Review Panel reports, visit:

www.olg.nsw.gov.au/strengthening-local-government/local-government-reform/independent-review-of-local-government

Waverley Council's website has an overview of information, with links to Council reports and media releases, simply click the 'local government reform' button on the homepage:

www.waverley.nsw.gov.au