

# PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL'S FIT FOR THE FUTURE SUBMISSION





Our Reference: F2014/02719  
Contact: Greg Dyer  
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Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

The Hon. Paul Toole  
Minister for Local Government  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

Mr Peter Boxall  
Chairman, IPART  
PO Box K35  
Haymarket NSW 1240

Dear Sirs,

### Becoming Fit for the Future

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the NSW Fit for the Future reform process. Parramatta City Council is proud to respond on behalf of the people of Parramatta and those at the heart of the geographic centre of Global Sydney.

The submission's requirements are clear, this letter sets out our formal response.

#### **Firstly. We have not submitted Template One**

Our neighbouring councils – Auburn, Holroyd, Ryde and The Hills Shire – all withdrew from the process of discussion and analysis of the ILGRP merger recommendation for the Parramatta Local Government Area. Without their input we have been unable to assess the financial and related outcomes of the recommendation in detail, therefore, we do not know whether that recommendation is in the best interests of our community.

#### **Secondly. We have prepared an “Alternative Submission”**

It is a bold, community driven plan created without agreement from neighbouring councils.

The ILGRP merger recommendation was aimed at creating a significantly larger council than Parramatta City Council's current boundaries provide – a council with significantly larger scale and capacity. When compared with that potential entity and despite everything that's already been achieved here at Parramatta City Council in terms of strong and improving financial performance and sustainability, as a standalone council, we cannot meet the standard laid down under the Fit for the Future criteria.

As a result, we have prepared an “**Alternative Submission**” which is outside the Template structure. It is community focused, benefit driven and delivers the synergies and outcomes that we believe this whole process was designed to deliver.



It outlines the role that the new council would play in the NSW Government's 'A Plan for Growing Sydney'. It shows the vital part to be played by Parramatta in its unique role as the second CBD. This illustrates it would benefit the overarching plan for Global Sydney. **It is our preferred model.**

### Thirdly. We have completed Template Two

It doesn't make the most of this once in a lifetime opportunity, but it is the proof of Parramatta City Council's capabilities as a professionally run council seeking ongoing positive improvement. It clearly demonstrates Council's capacity to efficiently and effectively deliver services to our community. It illustrates how we can harness the leadership and strategic power required of a council such as ours. It shows how we already deliver real growth and service to our community and the economy in which we live and work. **Yet it is still our second option.**

### Next Step

More work is required to ensure the best possible result for our community. We have suggested a detailed review as the next step in this process.

In the meantime, thank you for this opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scott Lloyd'.

Clr Scott Lloyd  
Lord Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Greg Dyer'.

Greg Dyer  
Chief Executive Officer

“Greater Parramatta is Sydney’s Western CBD. Located close to the demographic heart of Sydney Metropolitan Area, its scale and mix of commercial, health and education facilities make it a centre - a CBD - of metropolitan significance.”

*NSW Government Planning and Environment 'A Plan for Growing Sydney 2014'*

“Sydney needs a new approach to local government if we are to deliver the housing, jobs and transport people will need in the next 20 years. The Fit for the Future program will help councils and their communities to take advantage of emerging opportunities, to grow outside their existing boundaries and play an active part in shaping Sydney’s future.”

*Fit for the Future Website*

# **The need for a well funded and resourced council at the centre of Global Sydney:**

## **Parramatta City Council’s “Alternative Submission”**

### **Executive Summary**

The Fit for the Future process is an initiative aimed at creating synergies and savings for the benefit of the community, providing the foundations for Sydney as a global city.

Global Sydney needs Parramatta - located in its geographic and demographic heart - to be fully engaged in the Fit for the Future process.

Our neighbouring councils decided not to work with us to analyse amalgamation options and so we have determined a path on our own. This has led us to our preferred “Alternative Submission”.

The Fit for the Future process offers the opportunity for significant reform and improvement to Local Government in NSW. Here is how we, at Parramatta City Council can work with the State Government to deliver that reform.

## **1 The focus begins with the community**

Everything we do must ultimately deliver benefits to every corner of our community. Tangible benefits that directly enhance the quality of life for the people who live here. These benefits can be as important and basic as better more efficient services or as rewarding as living in a community that makes us feel proud because of its success, its amenities and its image as a great place to bring up a family. This will require energy, vision and leadership, which we believe Parramatta City Council can and will deliver.

## **2 Truly “Once in a lifetime”**

Parramatta City Council understands the need for the Fit for the Future reform process. We see it as a great opportunity to truly drive change for the better. It will bring efficiencies of scale that deliver savings, synergies of purpose that deliver value for money, aggregation of talent that produce innovation and better service.... all of it for the betterment of the community we live, work and play in.

We have prepared our “Alternative Submission”, because we believe that this opportunity is unlikely to come again and to miss it now would be to the great detriment of the community we serve.

## **3 Delivering the Second CBD**

For the “Plan for Growing Sydney” to truly succeed, Parramatta as Sydney’s second CBD must also succeed.

Parramatta is the beating heart of the growing economic force that is building in this part of NSW. We are its centre of gravity; we are attracting more people, more businesses and more opportunities.

Our quality amenities attract people from far and wide. Each business day our CBD swells by 120,000; each night

our restaurants, bars, cafes, sporting fields and entertainment precincts pulse with life. But this also means added pressure on our community who fund these things with the rates they pay.

Our “Alternative Submission” is aligned to the benefits for our community and from there to the role we will play in the ongoing development of Sydney as a global city. For Global Sydney to grow and develop further, Parramatta must also grow and develop in step with that ambition.

## **4** A strong council at the geographic centre of Global Sydney

Our “Alternative Submission” delivers the ambition of a larger council with greater scale and stronger capacity. But to do it requires the Parramatta LGA to be defined - just as with the first CBD – by its own Act of Parliament.

We believe this is vital; to provide for an expanded geographical area, a constitution relevant for a sub-regional authority – to deliver the appropriate planning powers and controls and the size and financial strength to fully partner state and federal government.

The newly created council would then have the following primary characteristics:

- Expanded geographical boundaries to include a significantly increased residential, commercial and industrial rate base capable of generating at least \$500m in revenue;
- A sub-regional planning responsibility supporting the Greater Sydney Commission in the implementation of the Metropolitan Strategy, including the planning of major centres, urban activation precincts, transport routes and nodes and the creation of regional level infrastructure and assets;
- Substantially increased resourcing and skills base, leveraging cost synergies to build a highly efficient and effective organisation with an expanded capacity to serve both existing local and an increasingly regional community.

Parramatta and its future development have significance well beyond Parramatta City Council’s current local government area boundaries. It is Parramatta City Council’s view that when considering the boundaries for reform of Sydney metropolitan councils, *it makes sense to define the boundaries for the new council serving the Parramatta region first*, which would then inform surrounding council areas. Parramatta City Council seeks to work with the NSW Government to define these boundaries.

## **5** The Right Time, the Right Place, the Right Council

What we are suggesting isn’t a leap of faith. It is a short step from where we are right now.

Parramatta City Council has the capacity. We have proven ability, strong and visionary leadership and the determination to deliver the reforms that Fit for the Future demands.

We believe this will greatly benefit our community, Sydney and NSW and that’s why we’ve put forward our “Alternative Submission”.

As a next step we want to work with the NSW Government to complete a detailed review, to quantify the costs and benefits of the plan we suggest and to determine the details of exactly how it can be delivered.

Our two submissions are attached. But we believe the “Alternative Submission” has the strongest chance of success to deliver what Fit for the Future truly means - A better community.

Thank you for the opportunity.