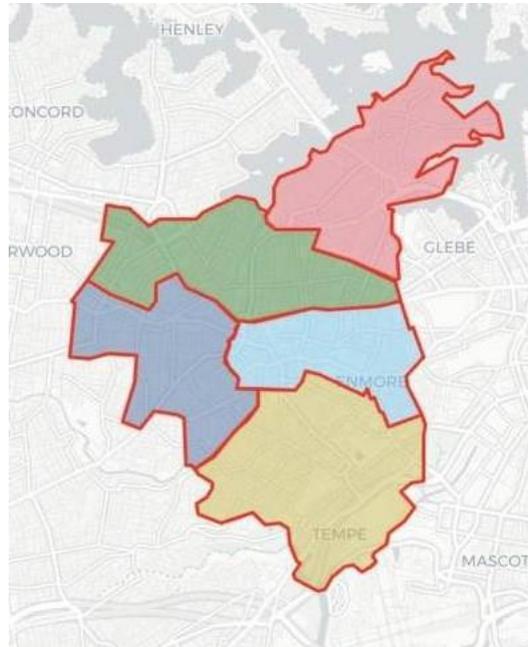


INNER WEST



Engagement outcomes report
*Independent de-amalgamation
cost benefit report and poll
question public exhibition*

Contents

Summary	3
Background.....	3
Engagement methods.....	4
Promotion.....	4
Engagement outcomes	4
Who did we hear from?	4
What did they say?	6

Summary

A De-amalgamation Cost Benefit Report and de-amalgamation poll question were placed on public exhibition between 31 August and 15 September 2021. A total of 413 participants viewed the information on the project page, of those 151 viewed multiple pages and 112 completed the survey. All comments provided by the participants are included in this report from page six.

Feedback received through Your Say Inner West:

- Question one – 93 responses (19 respondents did not answer that question)
- Question two – 109 responses (3 respondents did not answer that question)

And 25 via email:

Twenty-four of the emails were sent via an online email petition tool 'The Action Network' actionnetwork.org

Note: We have redacted all names and contact details from the submissions included in this report.

Background

In 2016, the NSW Government formed Inner West Council by bringing together Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils. Recently, the NSW Government made it possible for Councils to put forward a business case for de-amalgamation. In our local government area, de-amalgamation would mean separating the one Inner West Council into the three original councils: Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville.

Inner West Council is considering preparing a de-amalgamation proposal for the NSW Minister for Local Government who is responsible for the final decision.

At its meeting on 24 August 2021, the Council decided the following:

1. Place the cost benefit report and the resolved de-amalgamation poll question on public exhibition, in keeping with the community engagement policy, with the outcomes of the consultation to be reported to the second Ordinary Council meeting in September; and
2. YES and NO cases on de-amalgamation be included on Council's website, E-news, Flyers and the Inner West Council Newsletter;
3. Both YES and NO cases be translated into several languages;

4. Both the YES and NO cases be brought back to Council for approval after endorsement from the NSW Electoral Commission;
5. Council make clear to the community the caveats and limitation of the Morrison Low Report as they have identified in their report; and
6. The case for demerger references the statement in the legislation that State Government will fund the demerger.

Engagement methods

The community was invited to provide feedback online via Council's engagement hub yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au

Other options for the community to provide feedback were:

- By mail
- By phone
- Through an interpreter and voice relay via TTY and SMS

Promotion

The project was promoted through Council's communication channels:

- Council website
- Social media - Facebook
- Press release
- Council e-news
- Your Say Inner West special bulletin

Engagement outcomes

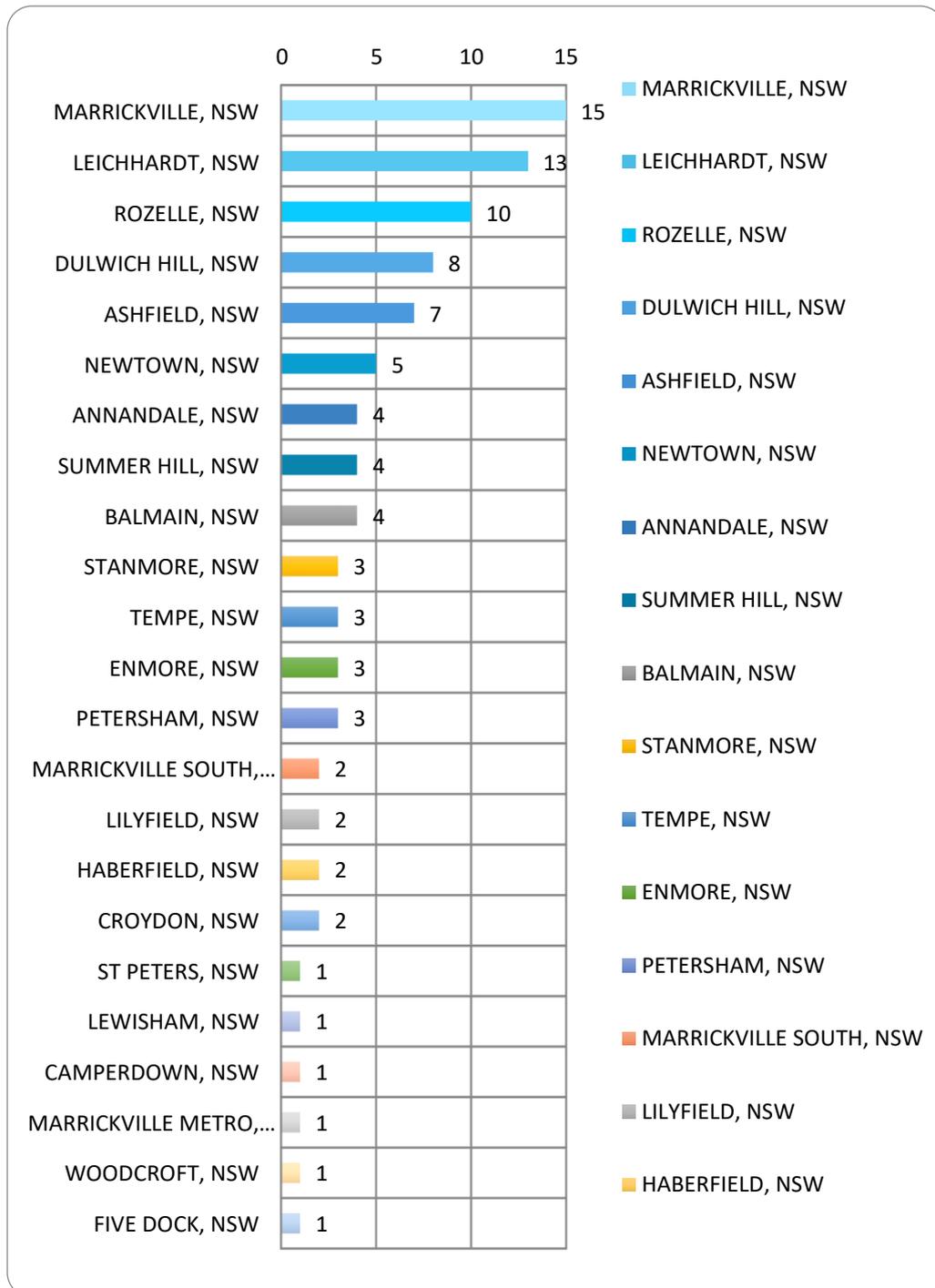
Who did we hear from?

We asked respondents to select the suburb they lived in. The list of selected suburbs is extensive and shows that people across the Local Government Area have provided feedback.

The top five suburbs we received feedback from were:

- Marrickville 19
- Leichhardt 13
- Rozelle 10
- Dulwich Hill 8
- Ashfield 7

Question: Suburb



What did they say?

Question one – Would you like to provide feedback on the De-amalgamation Cost Benefit Report? 93 Responses

No.	Comment
1	I find it appalling that we would need to pay additional costs for de-amalgamation when we had no say in this to begin with.
2	Amalgamation hasn't worked - the area is too large and too diverse to be managed under the one banner. The de-amalgamation should be done at no cost to rate payers many of whom didn't want the amalgamation to happen
3	yes
4	<p>What a proposed disaster. As a citizen, the amalgamated council has worked very well for me. REMEMBERING councils were AMALGAMATED BECAUSE of the cost of overt CORRUPTION ENDEMIC to all tiers of Government as a hangover of the first white settler colony of New South Wales, Pre-Federation.</p> <p>There has ALSO been lobbying to DO AWAY WITH the Independent Anti-Corruption Inner West Ombudsman. The Inner West council AND ALL TIERS OF GOVERNMENT in New South Wales need to MAXIMISE TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY to CITIZENS, TAXPAYERS AND CONSTITUENTS</p>
5	Despite its qualifications, it clearly demonstrates that there will be considerable financial burden on residents if de-amalgamation occurs. The term, 'economies of scale' comes to mind. Sharing facilities is much more sensible and economical than fragmenting them.
6	<p>Unsurprisingly, the report confirms that de-amalgamation would have large one-off and ongoing costs as the scale benefits of amalgamation are all lost again. What conceivable case is there for undoing this expensive reform? Personally, I have noticed no degradation in council's services whatsoever since the merger; I also find that I can live with fewer councillors serving larger 'electorates'.</p> <p>My question is: why even risk a vote on this? We've seen some really</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>dumb precedents, where complex questions have been boiled down to emotive, yes/no votes – try Brexit – what happens if you ask, and you get an angry, ill-informed answer? While I'd hope for a cooler examination of the issues here, what is the counter-factual? What would happen if Council simply toughed it out and refused to hold a vote? It wouldn't be Newtown without a few printed cries of rage from the extremes of the political spectrum; let them rant I say, and leave our rates lower and our services better.</p> <p>Given the report, I am puzzled why the question is even being put to the vote. I will also consider supporting any councillors who oppose this vote, at the coming elections.</p>
7	<p>I think it would be very important to have a short, clear, summary of the Report in front of all voters on polling day – The Report finds that de-amalgamation would mean major disruption once again (just like we had when the amalgamation happened) AND your rates would go up significantly. Basically the only benefit you might experience is greater access to your local councillors; everything else is a disadvantage. (In all languages used locally)</p> <p>If consultation with the community and surveys are finding that people are dissatisfied with some aspects of the current Council arrangements (such as access to Councillors; levels of community involvement and consultation), why doesn't the Council explore ways that these concerns might be addressed? Could the number of Councillors be increased, for example? Asking about de-amalgamation is like asking about Brexit – the question should never have been put, and people should not have been offered the opportunity to shoot themselves in the foot.</p>
8	<p>The de-amalgamation cost-benefit report makes it patently obvious that there is great cost and little benefit to de-amalgamation. The ongoing costs are astronomical and the minor benefit of more councillors in the Inner West area (frankly, I'm not even sold on that being a benefit) are not worth the millions that will be pushed onto rate payers</p>
9	<p>It should also be mentioned that the considerable expense of the 3 into 1 amalgamation process after 2016 to 2021 would be completely wasted.</p>
10	<p>No.</p>

No.	Comment
11	I would have liked to have seen a simple cost analysis of services / rates in the deamalgamated structure or comparison of previous rates/services prior to amalgamation v current. However- I should note that my assumption is that amalgamation has resulted in cost savings and other efficiencies.
12	The report, commissioned by the amalgamated IWC should include information from the Boundaries Commission reports into demergers completed, exponential rate increases flowing from rate equalisations and special rate variations being sought by amalgamated councils. Information from investigations undertaken by the Save our Councils Coalition and the metropolitan council audit committee should also be represented. The Save our Council Coalition has reviewed the financial performance of merged councils. In our 2019 analysis Council Amalgamations: A Sea of Red Ink, SOCC says there is little evidence that amalgamated councils have made the savings promised, for example in 2017-2018 only two of the seven metro merged councils were in surplus while, of the smaller councils, saved by court action, 13 of the 14 councils were in surplus.
13	Yes
14	De-amalgamation is not a good idea.
15	The cost to amalgamate would need to be recovered or at least justified in the de-amalgamation
16	Yes
17	We should be spending money on services not reports
18	yes
19	Yes
20	Yes
21	not required - enough damage has been done to Marrickville with the amalgamation.

No.	Comment
22	No. Stop wasting effort on de-amalgamation. It feels like a ridiculous status issue. There are more important issues affecting the community to be thinking about.
23	I support the De-amalgamation proposal.
24	I think the Cost-Benefit Report and Summary should have mentioned the increased democratic representation that would likely result from a de-merger.
25	I am shocked that after 5 years the Inner West Council is looking at de amalgamating. I have lived in Leichhardt for 41 years and really hated the idea of the amalgamation... the cost was huge and now there is no personal service at all. No one answers the hone... all correspondence is via email and often just a standard response is sent. Everyone I speak to hate the Inner West Council.
26	yes
27	<p>Just wanted to give some feedback on the way this question is presented. The report target audience is not the one who needs to answer the question. The summary, does not include the most relevant information for the community to make the decision.</p> <p>Also the critical impact is barried under a lot of complex wording and numbers and tables, instead of one clear summary of the impact and potential increase in cost per household per quarter.</p> <p>At least the risks are mentioned.</p> <p>Please be fair, not everyone have the time and the expertise to be informed from such long and complicated reports.</p> <p>Here's the summary of the risks:</p> <p>The risks from a three council de-amalgamation of Inner West Council may be lower considering that</p> <p>Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils were operating successfully before the merger, however there</p> <p>are likely to be challenges associated with unpacking and establishing new service levels, organisational</p> <p>operating procedures, systems, processes, policies, plan and organisational behaviours.</p> <p>While there are some minor differences in the three communities</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>(growth, density and ethnicity), they also have many features in common (demographic, economic and employment profiles). The relatively similar community of interest profiles suggest the risks in separating the communities are lower than they might otherwise be, but also the differences are not significant enough to make the Inner West Council less effective delivering services to three constituent councils. Perhaps the largest risk arises from the fact that the future councils, who will make many of these key decisions, are yet to be elected. Their political alignment, policy program and priorities will not be known for some time and may impact on the realisation of planned benefits. The Queensland de-amalgamations that took place in 2014 provide an insight into organisational dynamics. Those organisations experienced significant redundancies and staff displacement during the transfer process from the originating council to the new councils. Those redundancies occurred through voluntary and forced processes as the newly formed council ran as lean as possible for the first year or two after establishment.</p>
28	<p>It would appear there are negligible financial benefits to be gained from going through a long, arduous and expensive de-amalgamation process which would then require extensive expenditure on new independent IT systems and the like and result in reduced services to ratepayers. It would be an example of pure bureaucratic waste of funds. The money would be better spent throughout the inner west area on infrastructure and other improvements. The report itself implied de-amalgamation was a high risk, low return strategy. Scrap the idea. I think the inner west council is doing a good job.</p>
29	<p>I'm sure deamalgamation is beneficial but I think the horse has left the gate now, we are one - we are InnerWest.</p>
30	<p>Yes</p>
31	<p>I only support deamalgamation if the cost to carry out the change and the ongoing costs are materially favourable for a resident of Tempe (which includes me).</p>

No.	Comment
32	<p>My citizenship ceremony was delayed in Jul2021 due to COVID-19, one of the main reasons I applied for citizenship was to finally have a say in my community and country of 20 years domicile.</p> <p>I will and hope to be able to vote for de-amalgamation of Inner West Council.</p>
33	<p>The report seems to focus almost entirely on financial analysis and doesn't adequately represent the full range of qualitative benefits from deamalgamation.</p> <p>The one page summary, focusing only on rate impacts, is misleading and it certainly seems like the Council is trying to push the community not to deamalgamate without fairly representing both sides of the story. In my opinion in almost every aspect the amalgamated council has been worse for my local area (Rozelle) and we do not have anything like the representation and inclusiveness that we used to.</p>
34	<p>Five years ago the councils merged and the NSW government artificially forced the council rates to be kept at the same level through the trick of using state government funding to make up the shortfall. As soon as that period ended, our rates jumped. Now that we're de-merging the estimate is that they'll go up again. It's like a ratchet, apparently. The rates can only go up. In that sense, I'm suspicious of the assumptions that went into the report.</p> <p>I've gone through the detail of the report and see some of the assumptions that are up for debate like, for instance, that we're getting a higher level of service now but to go back to the previous level of service split across three councils would be prohibitively expensive, etc. My direct experience has been that the services I care about locally have essentially been lost to poorly designed overly bureaucratic systems and I've seen no gains. In short, I'd be happy to go back to Leichhardt council's previous levels of service which would reduce a lot of these cost estimates.</p> <p>In terms of representation and a sense of community, the current council is too big and bureaucratic and I never had an issue with either the service levels nor rates of the previous council.</p>
35	<p>It's clear that a de amalgamation would result in an increase in costs and therefore an increase in rates.</p>

No.	Comment
36	Yes. I support deamalgamation. I do not want my council area to be so big. I feel that Ashfield gets a rough deal. I don't actually mind what it costs to do this,
37	I strongly support de-amalgamation on the inaccessible ivory tower of bureaucracy the amalgamated council has begun
38	<p>The Report does not include any discussion of the costs relating to the 'loss of opportunity' associated with a complex and extended de-amalgamation. There will be a considerable time and resource drain associated with putting together the case for amalgamation, lobbying the state government, managing the transition and bedding down the new council structures. This means that for a period of years at every level of council, rather than focusing on opportunities to improve the IWC - they will be spending their time managing the complexities of de-amalgamation. There is a huge cost associated with this administrative 'stasis' which should be included in the Report. How much IWC resource capacity will be lost by the preoccupation with amalgamation? When it comes to strategic planning, forecasting, long term projects - will these be shelved in the intervening period? Every minute of resource spent focused on amalgamation has a cost, of course. But there is also a significant loss of opportunity and momentum, if the amalgamation ultimately fails.</p> <p>The report includes a the cost/benefit of 1) the Status Quo; and 2) De-Amalgamation - but it needs a third category which is 3) Pursuing De-Amalgamation Unsuccessfully. It is important that ratepayers are made aware of how much it will cost the IWC to proceed down this path and fail. That risk is highly relevant to the Poll Question. If it is a certainty that Amalgamation can happen and will be funded by the State Government, a person may be inclined to support it. But if there is a risk of significant costs and administrative stasis, resulting in no change to the LGA, a person may be inclined to not support it given the risk.</p> <p>For these reasons, it is important that IWC makes clear the level of uncertainty associated with the possibility of amalgamation, its costs and the extent to which any of it will be funded by the State Government. Risk is critical to any Cost Benefit analysis - but there is insufficient weighting of risk in this document. At a minimum, the report should rate as High/Med/Low the risk that the Minister would support de-</p>

No.	Comment
	amalgamation and the extent to which the State Government would fund the de-merger.
39	I believe the current elected council has not committed to realising benefits from the scale of the merged council areas. This is a true failure of council to the rate payers if the inner west and they should be held to account. The report therefore is highly skewed as a result and following the next election a commitment is made to realising benefits rather than trying to live in the past. Truly realising the benefits of a merged inner west council can save rate payers money and allow investment to a truly great amalgamated area that is our home.
40	None of these de-amalgamation costs should affect rate payers.
41	Thanks for doing it - what a waste of money this exercise is. Just another example of Brexit politics as if separation will just solve all the worlds problems.
42	I do not support this. I would much rather see this money spent on beneficial inner west outcomes. Examples are: food waste bins for all households, increased tree planting, better social services etc etc
43	Any cost that happens as part of the de amalgamation should be provided by the NSW government as they forced the amalgamation in the first place!
44	De-amalgamation is a waste of time and resources. The amalgamated council delivers more professional and capable staff and councillors and more consistent planing and services. Stop living in the past
45	The cost benefit report was very obtuse and used language that made obvious the fact that it was biased toward the status quo.
46	<p>There are several problems with the Morrison Law (ML) Cost Benefit report that was tabled at the Inner West Council meeting on August 3.</p> <p>1. It is written from the framework of accepting the NSW government's pro-amalgamation policy and, therefore, is a political report. It spends most of its 65 pages presenting an argument for the IWC to stay amalgamated, and does not investigate how a de-merged council may work, including which services could remain shared.</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>2. The May 24 Inner West Council (IWC) meeting agreed that an independent assessor would be asked to look at a range of issues related to de-amalgamation, not just the costs. The ML report includes cost estimates, but does not say how they were arrived at.</p> <p>3. The ML report states that the community is “largely satisfied with the performance of Inner West Council and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils” based on a general “satisfaction” survey done in June. It provided no reference to any concerns about the forced merger in 2016, opposition to the rate hikes, or that a majority of councillors are so unhappy with the results of the merger that they opted for a residents’ poll on the question.</p> <p>4. It gives away its partisanship at the beginning with the following sweeping statement: “The social analysis suggests that the social and community impacts have not changed as a result of the merger and therefore there are no significant advantages or disadvantages of either the merger or any potential de-amalgamation.”</p> <p>5. The ML report estimates the IWC merger would have cost \$24.3 million and states (without providing a source) that the net costs (one off and then ongoing) for any proposed de-amalgamation would be higher. It says the cost to de-amalgamate would be \$26.2 million and ongoing costs would be around \$22.1 million.</p> <p>6. The ML report says the \$26.2 million would cover redundancies, information, technology and council establishment costs. While there would certainly be a financial cost to de-amalgamate, it could be far less than that for amalgamation in the first place depending on how the de-amalgamation takes place. The NSW government handed out just \$10 million to merge the three councils, falling well short of what was needed. The cost of sacking and paying out staff in the three former councils has never been made public. According to the ML report: “Scale and capacity were the key drivers for the merger. The Independent Local Government Review Panel’s assessment of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville determined that while the councils were financially sustainable, all individually lacked scale and capacity. “ The report then lists a number of issues it deems to be positives, including maintaining “ongoing relationships with executives including, for example, deputy secretaries, chief executive officers and executive</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>directors of the Departments of Communities and Justice, Planning, Industry and Environment, Multicultural NSW, Create NSW and the Public Service Commission”.</p> <p>It does not once mention a decline in services, less face-to-face assistance, or the rise in rates.</p> <p>It assumes the three councils will be returned to their previous financial positions, and lists a number of potential financial and non-financial risks including: transition structure; transitional costs; efficiencies generated by Inner West Council; establishing a fully functioning new organisational structure; and a lowering of morale among staff.</p> <p>Again, no data is given for some these assumptions.</p> <p>The cost of three sets of councillors compared to one combined one may well be less, depending on whether wages are being spent on councillors, middle managers or general managers. For example, each council would not need a special Mayoral \$500,000 coms budget!</p> <p>After detailing all the problems, the ML report then states: “The risks from a three council de-amalgamation of Inner West Council may be lower considering that Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils were operating successfully before the merger.”</p> <p>Further, it states: “The relatively similar community of interest profiles suggest the risks in separating the communities are lower than they might otherwise be.”</p> <p>It notes that amendments to the Local Government Act set out a pathway for councils to de-amalgamate, within 10 years of the merger, and that the NSW government is liable to pay for this.</p> <p>“The Local Government Amendment Act 2021 does make provisions for the NSW Government to fund the cost of a de-amalgamation.”</p> <p>Interestingly, it states that the greatest risk to any de-merger would be political.</p> <p>“Perhaps the largest risk arises from the fact that the future councils, who will make many of these key decisions, are yet to be elected. Their political alignment, policy program and priorities will not be known for some time and may impact on the realisation of planned benefits.”</p> <p>It states that Special Rate Variations (rate rises) would have to imposed on residents in any de-merger or else there would be a “funding gap” which would lead to a “reduction in service levels, asset rationalisation and an SRV”.</p> <p>In fact, this is what is already being planned as a result of the forced</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>amalgamation, and the budget going into the red.</p> <p>The ML report says a big expense of any demerger would be the “requirement to establish three information technology and communication (ITC) systems for the de-amalgamated councils”. But pro-deamalgamation councillors have contested this, insisting that the shared IT services could be maintained and upgraded to a more purpose built system when needed.</p> <p>The massive one-off IT and other high cost matters created by the original amalgamation does not have to be replicated.</p> <p>The three de-amalgamated councils could use the same technology system until it becomes obsolete and only at that point they could work on customizing their IT to their own individual future needs.</p> <p>The ML report quotes from an independent survey of 1,002 residents, undertaken by Micromex Research in June, which apparently showed that “general satisfaction” with the IWC.</p> <p>One resident who was polled told me that the questions were so vague, they could only voice their concern about service cuts and rate hikes when asked if they had “any other comment”.</p> <p>Interestingly however, the ML report said the lowest level of satisfaction was recorded in Balmain ward.</p> <p>The ML report ended with a “potential benefits” section. Improved representation was one.</p> <p>“One of the benefits of de-amalgamation is the improvement in representation. The number of people represented by each councillor will decrease under a de-amalgamation arrangement, providing easier access to their councillors and the council.”</p> <p>Each Inner West Councillor currently represents a little over 14,000 people. “Under a de-amalgamated model this number would be between approximately 4,000 and 8,000 depending on the council and final number of elected members.</p> <p>Another benefit would be for a de-amalgamated council to “reset”, including its IT services, “moving ICT into the cloud rather than setting up new infrastructure”.</p> <p>Another benefit it listed was “further efficiencies”, although that could also be read as further sell-offs and staff cuts.</p> <p>The report also identified an improved ability to work with community groups as a benefit.</p>

No.	Comment
47	No.
48	I think that De-Amalgamation costs are under-estimated as most government projects are. The real issue, which again is will those increased costs provide improved and more rapid responses for the individual local areas.
49	<p>The report is comprehensive but not always easy to understand. A lot of money has been spent on amalgamation and the benefits of the larger sized Inner West LGA are real when it comes to negotiating better planning, infrastructure and environmental outcomes with State government, other stakeholders and developers. Amalgamation has given us bargaining strength and improved facilities and services across the LGA which may not have occurred otherwise.</p> <p>De-amalgamation would be a retrograde step for such similar communities of interest and activities.</p>
50	From my regular readings of various reports since the amalgamation took place, there has been NO cost saving resulting from the amalgamation, on the contrary. Expenditures have increased and services have decreased.
51	Not at this time.
52	Yes
53	No.
54	I don't support de-amalgamation if there will be a cost to rate payers or a rise in rates.
55	There is very little detail as to how the outcomes of the report were achieved. There is no information on why this question is even being asked.
56	No
57	This is a waste of time and money. This report is a representation of councillors that refuse to negotiate.

No.	Comment
58	The summary needs to convey the results in a simpler manner so that all residents can easily understand the costs of undergoing a de-amalgamation
59	I do not support de-amalgamation. The Inner West Council should stay as is.
60	What brazen disregard of those who would have to pay for these shenanigans. More than \$26 million of our rates thrown into the wind, to wind something back with minimal benefits, increased rates and triplicating of councillors, staffing, consultants et al. What a wanton waste of ratepayers hard-earned. You have 1 job, to run a single council - how about you focus on that instead? If you are not up to it, be it elected or employed, time to take your leave and let someone else do it.
61	<p>'even the authors of the morrison low report do not stand behind it in not guaranteeing it's accuracy nor reliability so the report should not be used to inform this debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ML did not even update their projections with actual outcomes from their pre amalgamation 2015 report thus did not present any current data based on known facts -insufficient detail of methodology was given -no account of the consequences of amalgamation were given in terms of the loss of community representation ie cancelled precinct committees and vastly reduced number of councillors -only 1 approach was given which was not based on current data and ignored the experience of councils that have already de-amalgamated nor outcomes for councils that avoided amalgamation -in 2017 the 3 old lga data was presented along with iwc consolidated data so it is possible to again present disaggregated data and why this wasnt done requires explanation -time limitations stated in the light of availability of computer generated disaggregated data is not acceptable -the ML claim that outputs based on actuals would be extremely difficult to validate and justify is an excuse to not do the work as they did not use known data in their projections -the report has a pro amalgamation bias and does not adequately present possibilities of the 3 lgas sharing expensive items eg computing technology and other assets

No.	Comment
	<p>-the report did not adequately list the consequences of amalgamation eg staff costs rising to 56% of total operations expenditure according to the YE22 10 year LTFP up from 48% in YE16 but rather cited potential loss of key staff, low morale and cultural separation from the inner west council not going well if de-amalgamated but failed to mention the cost of cultural identity lost on amalgamation</p> <p>-there are many more examples of deficiencies and bias in the report but the important point is that the report is not fit for purpose</p>
62	Yes. The state government is required to pay for the cost of de-amalgamation. Your report is incorrect and misleading.
63	It is very thorough, clear in its methodology, analysis and findings
64	No
65	The one-off and ongoing costs of reversing the amalgamation will ultimately result in additional costs for rate payers with very little guarantee of benefit these should be further expanded upon. The benefits are not tangible and can not be quantified, whereas the costs can. This report outlines significant financial impact on rate payers and this is not focused on enough.
66	As a "high level" report, it has assumptions which predetermine the outcome. Times have changed and the renewed separate Councils would make changes to those proposed by the advocate.
67	It would appear from the report that the costs outweigh the benefits. Given that the State government is looking at a big deficit because of the Covid 19 pandemic and that it has a different political orientation than the Inner West Council, I would be very surprised if they agreed to fund the one off de amalgamation costs. Plus there are also extra ongoing costs post de amalgamation which would make it very hard for the new Councils to maintain existing services or provide new ones.. Thus the total costs of de amalgamation would be borne by the ratepayers for very little if any obvious gain, which in my view makes the process unviable.
68	The cost of rates has gone up, we can't afford de-amalgamation, I am totally against it.

No.	Comment
69	No.
70	yes
71	It does not provide sufficient information on the additional costs of remaining as one amalgamated council. It also only really deals with \$\$ costs not all the other benefits that arise to ratepaying community of smaller better representation by councillors re community needs
72	I support a return to the three areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils
73	<p>As noted in the report, "The Local Government Amendment Act 2021 does make provisions for the NSW Government to fund the cost of de-amalgamation", so why has modelling for a 100% state government funded de-amalgamation been provided in the report? Note that the council have resolved to "Write to the Premier, Minister for Local Government, Leader of the Opposition, and cross benchers in the NSW Parliament asking for their support for the NSW Government to pay 100% of costs of de-amalgamation".</p> <p>The report makes note of many costs associated with de-amalgamation such as Information Technology costs, however, it does not explore the possibility of keeping common back-end solutions for example in IT which would mean it would not encounter such high de-amalgamation costs (estimated at \$12.5million for IT alone) and still allow it to benefit from economies of scale.</p> <p>The report fails to highlight that Marrickville ratepayers would likely be better off with a de-amalgamated council because, even with the proposed SRV (which may not be realistic if NSW Government fund the de-amalgamation), rates still remain lower than they would under a harmonised Inner West council. And after the SRV expires they would be significantly less than the Inner West.</p>
74	No
75	No
76	Yes

No.	Comment
77	<p>As a resident i i strongly call for de-amalgamation of the Inner West Council. In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils were amalgamated into one local government area by the State Government without democratic approval or vote by residents of these councils. The few Councillors in IWC are too few t orepresent too many residents. Unlike full time State Parliament MPs, these few councillors are part time and have no staff in electoral offices.</p> <p>Since amalgamation services have been de facto reduced for residents in all three former council areas. The result was sell-offs and staff cuts.il</p>
78	<p>The report needs a better exec summary and outline. As it stands, the material is descriptive rather than evaluative.</p>
79	<p>Yes, I believe the costs of de-amalgamation to ratepayers and community is too great. The former three councils were too small to operate efficiently and cost-effectively. Ashfiled is ridiculously small, Leichhardt poorly funded and Marrickville only just managed to survive. The benefits of amalgamation take time to be realised.</p>
80	<p>Yes I would</p>
81	<p>Yes, I think the size and breadth of the council means that there are conflicting priorities that are adding to the cost. Due to the fact that the economies of scale could not be reached, it would be better to have each council independently managed in a way that is reflective of the community needs. The former councils achieved higher satisfaction and really addressed the nuances of their particular areas, this has been lost in the amalgamation and led to increased costs that are not sustainable.</p>
82	<p>Constituents were ignored about the amalgamation and now that it has been running for 5 years we do not see improvements</p>
83	<p>Yes</p>
84	<p>I believe the DE-ALMAGATION of Inner West Council is essential regardless of the presumed or actual costs goes ahead, De-Amalgate the sooner the better!</p>

No.	Comment
85	<p>I have looked at the report and it seems to me to be very pro amalgamation. I do not think it has adequately analyzed the costs of a de-merger and I think this needs to be costed by a truly independent organisation that would also look at other issues that are important- not just the economic costs. I think the forced merger was a dreadful idea and the majority of the councillors and I suspect the ratepayers were opposed to it. We now have a huge, impersonal LGA with services provided by IWC being far below what we previously received from Leichhardt Council and with a rates hike to boot. I think a de-merger happening sooner rather than later would be a good step forward as I do not think the situation will improve. I believe that the merger was a political decision rather than a means to save money- it has failed us!</p>
86	<p>I have read the report and believe it is a fair and accurate assessment.</p>
87	<p>YES. Cost's should not come into it. Just get it done.</p>
88	<p>I believe council is and should be about local small issues and government. The amalgamation seeks to create larger scale government working in state government responsibly.</p>
89	<p>Yes</p>
90	<p>The Morrison Low Report identified some benefits in working with local groups in a de-amalgamated Council. That supports community opposition to the current size and reduced local representation that the amalgamation has introduced. Bush care, Precincts and Open Council have been among the losses the community faces. These points need to be clearly articulated.</p> <p>Local Government meant local Councillors who lived and perhaps worked in their area. Returning to a higher ratio of local representation would be another benefit.</p> <p>Existing services may continue to be shared as was the case prior to amalgamation so the cost benefit needs to allow for those savings in estimates of costs for the de-amalgamated areas.</p> <p>The report admits ,belatedly, that there is little evidence on which to base expectations. That point should be made clear in responding to it.</p> <p>Evidence being gained by Bayside (which is also organising a campaign) may be helpful in informing the debate</p>

No.	Comment
91	Yes fine
92	<p>I am a resident of Leichhardt and have read the Morrison Low Report with some concern.</p> <p>I watched the Council meeting on this issue via Webcam and understood it was to be an independent Report looking into cost estimates and other related de-amalgamation issues, so I am disappointed that it appears to support and endorse the NSW Govt's pro-amalgamation policy.</p> <p>I also note that Morrison Low was employed to prepare a business case for the merge of the three councils in 2015. I believe it is a deeply flawed approach to engage the same firm that was hired to prepare the business case for the merged councils. The Report even states under Scope that "This information has been validated and used to inform this cost benefit analysis". Hardly an objective, independent or valid study. For the sake of independence, both real and apparent, a different firm should have been engaged.</p> <p>The approach it takes is to support the idea that the Inner West Council (IWC) should remain amalgamated. Critically, it fails to thoroughly investigate how the de-merged councils could successfully share some services.</p> <p>It does not explain how the Report's costings were arrived at. It estimates the IWC merger as \$24.3 million and states, without providing a source, that the net costs - one off and then ongoing - for any proposed de-amalgamation would be higher. It states the cost to de-amalgamate would be \$26.2 million and ongoing costs would be around \$22.1 million. But surely the costs would be contingent on a de-amalgamation process, including any shared efficiencies.</p> <p>While there would be costs to de-amalgamate, this should be offset against the ongoing costs to residents in the form of ongoing rate hikes and reduction in services.</p> <p>The Report acknowledges that the option to de-merge is available within 10 years of the merger, and which, importantly, the NSW government is liable to fund.</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>I also take issue with the assertion that the community is “largely satisfied with the performance of Inner West Council and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils” based on a general “satisfaction” survey done in June. In my experience (and that of others I know) this is far from the case. Compared to our experience living in the former Leichhardt LGA the impact of the merger has been negative. Since the merger I find the new IWC website to be incomprehensible, tracking planning applications is hit and miss, it is practically impossible to speak to a Council officer, everything is via voice mail or email, and it assumes everyone has access to a computer. Council services have deteriorated, we experience diminished representation, while rates have risen - the IWC is simply too big to operate effectively and efficiently. So much for "IWC has sufficient scale and capacity to perform more effectively than its former councils."</p> <p>Furthermore, there is no reference in the Report to the controversy surrounding the forced merger in 2016 and the impact on the community. Importantly, it fails to mention the fact that polls conducted in Leichhardt (and no doubt in the two other councils) were uniformly opposed to amalgamation.</p> <p>I am exceedingly disappointed in this Report and appalled a) that it was selected in the first instance given it prepared a cost analysis for the merged councils, and that b) it is so obviously biased against de-amalgamation.</p>
93	Yes, I've lived in Marrickville and St Peters for 27 years and have lived through the amalgamation of councils to the Inner West Council.

Question two – Would you like to provide feedback on the question to be asked at the election on 4 December which is:

“In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils were amalgamated into one local government area by the State Government. Do you support the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?”

109 responses

No.	Comment
1	yes
2	Yes. As the current council is a mess and has shown to be completely mismanaged by the current mayor et al. Our rates have increased with no cost benefit and services have deteriorated. Meanwhile money has been wasted on new signage, coloured brochures, court costs etc.
3	Yes
4	No
5	NO. ABSOLUTELY NOT.
6	I hope residents would read the cost benefit report before answering this question. Just in case they don't, it'd be useful to outline the pros and cons in dot point form at the same time the question is asked with "What it will mean for you" as a heading. I think the question as it stands lends itself more to a 'yes' answer because many long-term residents will look back fondly (and unrealistically) on how things used to be. Amalgamation has removed some of the local 'feel' of council operations despite being more efficient and responsive. Also some residents prefer familiar, local and personal/face-to-face council interactions to those that are electronic and less personal (although I've found email responses to my queries to be very friendly and I've felt that the respondent has listened and attended to them).

No.	Comment
7	Can I suggest, given the high costs of de-amalgamation, you add that in the event of a majority 'yes' vote, council will hold a second vote on a concrete set of options for how the cuts would be made or the additional rates raised? Obviously the choice of option would be one for the incoming de-amalgamated councils.
8	No - what waste of time and resources, just leave it as it is.
9	<p>I am quite concerned that the question emphasises de-amalgamation, even though the Report commissioned is quite clear that it would generally be a disadvantageous move. Voters might easily answer 'yes' without having the implications clear in their mind. Why not ask the more pertinent question:</p> <p>[In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils were amalgamated into one local government area by the State Government. At the time, provision was made for a review of the decision five years on.]</p> <p>Do you support the continuation of the amalgamated Inner West Council?</p>
10	Add to the question the cost of de-amalgamation. Such as "Do you support the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated at the potential cost of \$26.2 million, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?"
11	I stand for de-amalgamation. Each of these areas has high populations and different community needs which would benefit from the original government areas. The amalgamation plan was to cut costs and jobs, while only providing disadvantage to the communities.
12	This question does not make it clear that services will still be shared after de-amalgamation or what the cost will be, so it is insufficient
13	No. De-amalgamation leads to higher operating costs and increased government bureaucracy. Keep the councils merged. The council is working fine.

No.	Comment
14	It's a pretty bland question with no context around it.
15	yes
16	<p>The preamble should include the fact of forced amalgamation in 2016.</p> <p>Eg In May 2016 the NSW government forcibly merged Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils into the Inner West local government area. Since 2016 the clear deficits in the merged system have been identified.</p> <p>The question itself should be simplified.</p> <p>Eg Do you support a return to smaller councils by demerger, where the level of services, rates and planning controls support the communities of local government areas in Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?</p>
17	No
18	I will vote no.
19	Would like it but at what cost?
20	<p>I support the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated, however I am absolutely opposed to the current approach by Mayor Darcey et al who are not putting the best interests of the Inner West first. It seems this has become a politicised debate and the rate-payers are the ones left suffering. It seems that at every turn the current Mayoral team have hindered any movement toward de-amalgation.</p>
21	<p>Use simple English such as "seperate" rather than de-amalgamate. Or simplified further "Do you support the IW LGA returning to the former...."</p>
22	<p>Only if it restores the services to my local street (BAY ST Croydon) that have now stopped. it is not good enough just to pick up our bins once a week. together or separate we pay our rates. Please gives us what we pay for.</p>

No.	Comment
23	No. The costs to amalgamate were horrendous. Why would the ratepayers have to pay again with no gains?
24	Yes I would like to provide feedback that I do not support this proposal
25	Unless a person has read the report and considered what it means then asking the question is stupid as people will just answer yes or no based on preconceptions. Just like in polling re how many COVID deaths the community is willing to accept where a majority think around 1000 is too many without knowing the average death rate due to influenza. This is just stuffing around.
26	yes
27	No. The services offered through an amalgamated council are far superior.
28	I do not support de-amalgamation
29	Yes
30	<p>I believe the question should have two words added reworded. Eg "In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils were forcibly amalgamated into one local government area by the NSW State Government.</p> <p>Do you support the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?"</p>
31	<p>I have read the report and am shocked that rate payers will foot the bill for this change. Most ratepayers did not want the amalgamation and only after 5 years it is proposed to de amalgamate. Where is the personal service? Gone? Even paying rates online is a nightmare and I am very computer literate. Bring back personal service ... bring back someone who answers the phone.. stop making these huge changes which cost enormous amounts of money!!! I prefer to have the Leichhardt council as a</p>

No.	Comment
	<p>single entity with massive changes. My nature strip was dug up and two large NBN boxes were inserted. I emailed the council... had to do this twice as no one responded. No one answered my SEVERAL questions... but just forwarded my email to the company who dug up the nature strip. Of course I only got a standard /stock reply. How is this personal service? The Inner West council is a disaster!!!</p>
32	<p>I think the question should be rephrased to: In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils were amalgamated by the State Government into one local government area - known as the Inner West Council. Do you support the continuation of the Inner West Council? - Option 1 or Do you support the de-amalgamation of the Inner West Council, so as to restore the former Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils? - Option 2</p>
33	<p>Just wanted to give some feedback on the way this question is presented. The report target audience is not the one who needs to answer the question. The summary, does not include the most relevant information for the community to make the decision. Also the critical impact is buried under a lot of complex wording, numbers and tables, instead of one clear summary of the impact and potential increase in cost per household per quarter vs presume benefits. Please be fair, not everyone has the time to read and the expertise to be informed from such long and complicated reports.</p>
34	<p>No. Please see above comments</p>
35	<p>"An outcome of allocating the de-amalgamation costs and benefits is that all three councils have a significant operating funding shortfall, making them unsustainable longer-term." This fact should be included in the question posed to residents, along with the requirement for a rate increase.</p>

No.	Comment
36	The Question assumes that everyone has read the report or the summary and in its current form resident may believe that deamalgamation will be cost neutral. From my reading of the full report there will be an additional cost for each residence i.e. rates will increase and some gains that have been achieved in the last few years will not be realised.
37	No - I'm sure deamalgamation is beneficial but I think the horse has left the gate now, we are one - we are InnerWest.
38	Yes please de amalgamate them
39	It might be appropriate to do the deamalgamation in stages. If there's shared services that span each council area then it might be good to keep those unchanged for a few years or indefinitely if it is cost effective.
40	Nope, it is well phrased, and easy for me to understand and to answer.
41	The question is fine and clear enough. But I really do hope that the Council tries to present the case for and against in an even and unbiased manner.
42	The form of the question is fine and I would vote for it.
43	That's clear... but I'm not sure if it addresses the feeling of disenfranchisement at a very local level. Ie... all or nothing without any shades of grey.. I don't have a solution that would better nuance the question
44	Yes. I support deamalgamation. I do not want my council area to be so big. I feel that Ashfield gets a rough deal. Also I dislike all the changes that the Greens have made. Bring back Christmas and less of the Aboriginal place names. The first is relevant to many and disliked by few, the second is not something that many in this area can relate to, nor want to.

No.	Comment
45	<p>Yes, I strongly support de-amalgamation! I want the lean, approachable, efficient and effective smaller Council who is familiar with the issues and community of the area and is able to manage change in the manner relevant to the particular council's electorate, issues and it's specific needs</p>
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't have a strong view For or Against de-amalgamation, but I am concerned that this question is being put to people with limited information available. The report has been helpful, but it is not particularly digestible and it has clear limitations. There is significant capacity for confusion and misunderstanding – with hugely significant consequences. There is also significant room for misinformation. Much like the UK poll on Brexit, it is a complex and vexed question to put to the people. Much like Brexit, the costs are uncertain and the benefits are vague. And much like Brexit, the question is being asked without any clear idea of what model of post-merger is being proposed. It is not as simple as 'Should we deamalgamate – yes or no?'. Many people that voted to leave the EU, have since expressed significant regret given the level of misinformation and uncertainty around precisely which form of Brexit would be adopted – Hard Brexit, Soft Brexit or somewhere in between. It was a complete disaster on all sides. And the IWC seems to be heading down the same path. • With that in mind, my main objective is for the Poll Question to be as neutral and clear as possible to the average rate payer. • The reference to the history of amalgamation in the Poll Question (i.e. when and why amalgamation happened) is not relevant to the Poll Question. It may lead to perceptions of bias in the question. • The Poll Question should simply recognise the current status quo (i.e. the Inner West is the current LGA) and ask the question as to whether or not there should be a change (i.e. to 3 LGAs). • Referencing the history of State Government amalgamations in the question is slightly loaded. There have been many boundary changes and amalgamations in Sydney's history – whether or not the most recent amalgamation is relevant is really an argument to be made by the For and Against advocates. Referencing it in the

No.	Comment
	<p>question itself is problematic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent history of amalgamation is heavily associated with those on the 'For' side. They rely on emotive arguments around the forced nature of amalgamations and a sense of nostalgia for previous councils. I am not critical of those arguments – many are valid – but these are value judgments which should not form part of the fundamental Poll Question. • The use of the term 'restore' in the Poll Question is misleading, as it creates an impression that the previous councils can be reconstituted. They cannot. Three new local government areas would need to be created again, with consultation on boundaries and newly elected councils. It is a fiction to suggest that it is possible to simply 'restore' them. As above, it means the Poll Question is more loaded than it needs to be and open to allegations of bias. It should be neutral. • The poll question does not adequately recognise that the Inner West Council will cease to exist and will be eliminated. This should be made very clear so that people understand the significance of the vote. There will be a significant number of people who are not familiar with de-amalgamation or what it means. There is a risk that people will conflate concepts of LGAs with Wards and Council (i.e. a layperson may simply assume that de-amalgamation relates to restoring 3 wards, rather than eliminating all of the IWC) • The poll question uses the terms 'local government area' and 'council' interchangeably. These are different concepts. Care should be taken to be very clear about what is changing here. • Using the phrase 'Do you support' in the question, gives eminence to the proposition of deamalgamation. It should be more neutral than that, and simply use 'should' instead. • In order to address all of these points, I would suggest something as follows which is neutral, factual as to the status quo and simple: "Should the Inner West council be abolished and replaced with 3 separate councils of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?"
47	<p>I do not support the area being de-amalgamated. Council should create a plan to realise the benefits of amalgamation as they are truly greater to all rate payers as a direct result of the economies of</p>

No.	Comment
	scale. This is the preferred approach rather than a de-amalgamation of areas.
48	I was unclear then and still am now why they were merged in the first place? It seemed to be working well when it was Marrickville council and I'd prefer it that way but not at an expense to my family.
49	How are voters supposed to make a decision with no info? Need to provide a summary of the report alongside the question.
50	Why do we have to ask this question at all? This seems a complete exercise in futility. What triggered this poll and can't we just focus on improving services by asking people what they want to see improved?
51	No I do not support
52	Yes I support de amalgamation. I have seen no benefit from the amalgamation in fact I see the community is worse off
53	This is a waste of time and resources. Don't do it.
54	The question seems straight forward and reasonable
55	Good, straight-forward question. More importantly, it was *democratically* agreed to by the majority of councillors at the June 29 meeting. Also importantly, it was also *already agreed to* by the NSW Office of Local Government and the NSW Electoral Commission.
56	Yes.
57	Yes I do. I feel that the large Inner West council is unresponsive to local issues. The real challenge will be if the 3 councils can work together to lessen the impact of West Connex and The Metro projects for the greater good of the entire area. I feel that the large Inner West council has, as the NSW Liberal government wishes

No.	Comment
	(orders?) them to do, completely ignore the giant blight of these projects on the local area.
58	Inner west council has basically become the old Leichhardt council, one of the worst councils in Sydney! No direction and basically a communist run LGA!
59	Neutral. Could be seen as broadly democratic but a lot of people would be obliged to make a decision without any information of the pro's and con's. It could also be politicised at the election rather than seeing the cold hard facts.
60	I strongly support the de-amalgamation of the Inner West to restore the original 3 councils: Ashfield, Leichards & Marrickville.
61	No comment
62	Yes
63	No I do not support this proposal.
64	The question comes across as bias, in favour of de-amalgamation. The question does not include any information at all that is required to make an educated answer. The main is the extraordinary one-off and ongoing costs of de-amalgamation, including significant increases to our rates to cover the ongoing cost of de-amalgamation! Why is this question even being asked? What has prompted this question to be asked?
65	No
66	No. This is a waste of money.
67	It seems fine to me.
68	Add a sentence or two outlining the summary of the report indicating the cost of such activity. If you know there is no benefit then tell people.

No.	Comment
69	I do not support de-amalgamation. The Inner West Council should stay as is.
70	No. Absolutely not. Is this proposal being foisted on the Inner West by the same fiscal masterminds who gave us a \$14 million Ashfield leisure centre for \$45 million and have the temerity to still charge local ratepayers (whose money was & will be used to pay it off) premium rates the equivalent of swanky private gyms? You have 1 job, focus on that instead. However, if it's all too hard, take your leave (as apparently several general managers have in the past few years) and let someone else do it.
71	yes
72	This question sounds good.
73	Yes, however please add one word to clarify that restored LGAs would be separate. Suggestion is to include "so as to restore the former SEPARATE local government areas..."
74	Yes
75	The question has double negatives and should in fact be rephrased as "Do you support the continuation of the Inner West council with the combined areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?"
76	Yes. The amalgamated Council is riddled with political ideology not the best interests of residents and the environment. The Mayor has evaded and not been competent as a professional independent Manager.
77	I think ratepayers should be made aware of the one off and ongoing cost involved prior to voting on this proposal.
78	The cost of rates has gone up, why? my partner lives in Dulwich hill and his were cheaper than mine and I am over 65, how does this work? We can't afford de-amalgamation, I am totally against it.

No.	Comment
79	Yes, please.
80	This was forced upon us all - no one individual council wanted it. Is there no redress for costs from the State Government who issued this order originally and caused all the problems?
81	yes I agree it should be de-amalgamated. The current 200000 residents are not getting their \$ worth nor a genuine "say" in the needs of their community.
82	no, what's the point of going back? i don't see any benefit and only additional costs. i like that the inner west council amalgamation has created a single like-minded community across the entire inner west of sydney. the original 3 councils are very well aligned socio-economically as well as culturally and so i feel that they belong together.
83	Yes. The local governments need to be seperate because all the issues within each area CANNOT be dealt with if they are all under one LGA and alot of what needs to be done which hasn't is prove this doesn't work. Liberals only want to do this to give people less opportunity to bring more Labor people into power so they can push to gain greater control of more area.
84	Yes I support the question
85	Please keep this question as is in its current form. It's concise and easy to understand.
86	Yes
87	Yes, I very strongly support de-amalgamation. This way, we can have more authentic local representation, and reduced resident costs. Amalgamation has clearly proven to be far more costly and cumbersome to operate than 3 smaller councils.

No.	Comment
88	<p>As a resident of Marrickville for 34 years I support the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville.</p> <p>The majority of my neighbours support this. Basic Council services such as garbage collection, dumped cars, damaged roads and the numbers of rangers working in Marrickville have significantly deteriorated since amalgamation. Compliance with DAs is basically non-existent now. Developers can now employ their own certifiers for DA and construction compliance.</p> <p>More importantly de-amalgamation has already been democratically agreed to by the majority of councillors; then agreed to by the NSW Electoral Commission and the NSW Office of Local Government. We demand de-amalgamation of Inner West Council</p>
89	The question is good, straightforward.
90	No - see earlier reasons
91	Yes I do.
92	Yes, this will provide more tailored services and allow the smaller councils to better manage the financial impacts of what are diverse populations.
93	That is a good question, except that it does not reflect the amalgamation was forced and did not ask constituents to decide
94	Yes
95	The question as to whether the DE-ALGAMATION question is perfectly clear is it is. We support DE-ALMAGATION OF Marrickville, Ashfield and Leichardt Councils.
96	I support the wording of this question. I would like to be asked the question at the next election.

No.	Comment
97	Yes I am fine with the wording of this question, I would like to be asked this question at the polls
98	I support the restoration of the three original councils, and find the question posed to be entirely proper. We have see during the pandemic how lumping all communities into a mega-council is both discriminatory and disenfranchising of communities.
99	I support de-amalgamation and the restoration of the previous format of Leichhardt open council
100	I support the poll question.
101	I think this is a good and well worded question.
102	YES. Sooner the better.
103	I support the question.
104	Yes
105	This question is clear.
106	Please add "forcibly"
107	Yes. I was in the previously Marrickville Council area. It was far superior to the Inner West Council. LOCAL Government should serve local people and provide services appropriate to that area. IWC has been cobbled together disparate areas, issues and needs -- simply not working.
108	Overall the question is fine but I think for the sake of simplicity and clarity the wording in the second paragraph should be amended so that 'local government area' is replaced with 'council' eg "Do you support the Inner West Council being de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former councils of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?"
109	Yes I support the de-amalgamation. The amalgamation was a mistake that was pushed on us by the state government. I want to go back to the small local council that Marrickville was,

No.	Comment
	even though we'll have to bear the costs of the errors made by the state government.

Feedback received via Email – 24

No.	Email content
1	<p>1. Would you like to provide feedback on the De-amalgamation Cost Benefit Report?</p> <p>The Morrison Low report contains several problems.</p> <p>It is written from the framework of accepting the NSW government's pro-amalgamation policy. It is therefore partisan.</p> <p>It mostly argues why the Inner West Council (IWC) must stay amalgamated. It does not investigate how the de-merged councils could work, including which services could remain shared.</p> <p>At its May 24 meeting the IW councillors agreed an independent assessor would be asked to look at a range of issues related to de-amalgamation, not just the costs. The report includes cost estimates, but does not say how they were arrived at.</p> <p>The Morrison Low report states that the community is "largely satisfied with the performance of Inner West Council and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils" based on a general "satisfaction" survey done in June.</p> <p>It provides no reference to any concerns about the forced merger in 2016, opposition to the rate hikes or that the majority of councillors were unhappy with it.</p> <p>The ML report estimates the IWC merger would have cost \$24.3 million and states – without providing a source – that the net costs – one off and then ongoing – for any proposed de-amalgamation would be higher.</p> <p>It says the cost to de-amalgamate would be \$26.2 million and ongoing costs would be around \$22.1 million.</p> <p>While there would certainly be a financial cost to de-amalgamate, it could be far less than that for amalgamation in the first place – depending on how the de-amalgamation takes place.</p> <p>The NSW government handed out just \$10 million to merge the three councils, falling well short of what was needed.</p> <p>The report does not once mention a decline in services, less face-to-face assistance, or the rise in rates.</p>

No.	Email content
	<p>It assumes the three councils will be returned to their previous financial positions, and lists a number of potential financial and non-financial risks including: transition structure; transitional costs; efficiencies generated by Inner West Council; establishing a fully functioning new organisational structure; and a lowering of morale among staff.</p> <p>Again, no data is given for these assumptions.</p> <p>The cost of three sets of councillors compared to one combined one may well be less, depending on whether wages are being spent on councillors, middle managers or general managers.</p> <p>The ML report states: "The risks from a three council de-amalgamation of Inner West Council may be lower considering that Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils were operating successfully before the merger." Further, it states: "The relatively similar community of interest profiles suggest the risks in separating the communities are lower than they might otherwise be."</p> <p>It notes that amendments to the Local Government Act set out a pathway for councils to de-amalgamate, within 10 years of the merger, and that the NSW government is liable to pay for this.</p> <p>Ambiguously, it states that the greatest risk to any de-merger would be political.</p> <p>The ML report ended with a "potential benefits" section.</p> <p>Improved representation was one.</p> <p>Each Inner West Councillor currently represents a little over 14,000 people. The ML report said: "Under a de-amalgamated model this number would be between approximately 4,000 and 8,000 depending on the council and final number of elected members.</p> <p>Another benefit, it noted, would be for a de-amalgamated council to "reset", including its IT services, "moving ICT into the cloud rather than setting up new infrastructure".</p> <p>Another benefit was "further efficiencies", although that could also be read as further sell-offs and staff cuts.</p> <p>The report also identified an improved ability to work with community groups as a benefit.</p> <p>The bigger the YES vote to de-amalgamate, the greater likelihood the next council has of pressuring the NSW government pay the full costs.</p> <p>2. Would you like to provide feedback on the question to be asked at the election on 4 December which is</p> <p>"In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils were amalgamated into one local government area by the State Government. Do you support the Inner West local government area being de-</p>

No.	Email content
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No.	Email content
4	<p>Below is my submission to this feedback opportunity. I am fully in favour of a return to the former LGA council areas of local governance. I do not believe that the new huge merged Inner West Council fulfils its role as the most local level of government, because it is too large and unwieldy, there is too much burden of work on councillors, there are too many differences in area geodemographics, for it to be truly fully functional local representation. There have been no cost benefits, quite the contrary (though the true extant of the costs for the amalgamation are unknown due to the Administration direction not to record or collate all those costs.) For clarity I am utilising the below prepared form as my personal individual opinion on this matter.</p> <p>1. Would you like to provide feedback on the De-amalgamation Cost Benefit Report?</p> <p>The Morrison Low report contains several problems.</p> <p>It is written from the framework of accepting the NSW government's pro-amalgamation policy. It is therefore partisan.</p> <p>It mostly argues why the Inner West Council (IWC) must stay amalgamated. It does not investigate how the de-merged councils could work, including which services could remain shared.</p> <p>At its May 24 meeting the IW councillors agreed an independent assessor would be asked to look at a range of issues related to de-amalgamation, not just the costs. The report includes cost estimates, but does not say how they were arrived at.</p> <p>The Morrison Low report states that the community is "largely satisfied with the performance of Inner West Council and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils" based on a general "satisfaction" survey done in June.</p> <p>It provides no reference to any concerns about the forced merger in 2016, opposition to the rate hikes or that the majority of councillors were unhappy with it.</p> <p>The ML report estimates the IWC merger would have cost \$24.3 million and states – without providing a source – that the net costs – one off and then ongoing – for any proposed de-amalgamation would be higher.</p> <p>It says the cost to de-amalgamate would be \$26.2 million and ongoing costs would be around \$22.1 million.</p> <p>While there would certainly be a financial cost to de-amalgamate, it could be far less than that for amalgamation in the first place – depending on how the de-amalgamation takes place.</p> <p>The NSW government handed out just \$10 million to merge the three councils, falling well short of what was needed.</p>

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5	<p>Please find my submission in regard to the proposal to de-amalgamate the Inner West Council. I am strongly in support of the de-amalgamation, because I believe the merged IWC is too large and impersonal now, and that as the closest and most accessible level of government for the community, it needs to be smaller and more local for true representation. Currently the wards are too large with only 3 ward councillors - eg compare the current IWC and Wards to the former Marrickville LGA - previously we had 12 councillors to represent the entire former Marrickville LGA and 3 councillors for each ward. There are too few benefits, and too many lost benefits, to justify the merger. The differences between IWC areas such as Marrickville compared to Ashfield, are too vast in so many different ways to be governed homogeneously by one council. Ongoing, I wish to go back to smaller council areas with true local hands on representation. Below is a prepared feedback message that fully expresses my own personal opinion and concerns - please accept this as an individual submission:</p> <p>1. Would you like to provide feedback on the De-amalgamation Cost Benefit Report?</p> <p>The Morrison Low report contains several problems.</p> <p>It is written from the framework of accepting the NSW government's pro-amalgamation policy. It is therefore partisan.</p> <p>It mostly argues why the Inner West Council (IWC) must stay amalgamated. It does not investigate how the de-merged councils could work, including which services could remain shared.</p> <p>At its May 24 meeting the IW councillors agreed an independent assessor would be asked to look at a range of issues related to de-amalgamation, not just the costs. The report includes cost estimates, but does not say how they were arrived at.</p> <p>The Morrison Low report states that the community is "largely satisfied with the performance of Inner West Council and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils" based on a general "satisfaction" survey done in June.</p>

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18	<p>I and my wife both want IWC to be DE- AMALGAMATED and the Councils return to Leichardt, Ashfield and Marrickville Councils independent of one another at the very first opportunity. Thank you</p>

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19	<p>1. Would you like to provide feedback on the De-amalgamation Cost Benefit Report?</p> <p>Yes. The report is biased, as it accepts the Government's position that councils should have been amalgamated. I believe the residents of the Inner West Council should have been given a say in whether to amalgamate in the first place. As they were not and we were subjected to forced amalgamation, the cost benefit report has perpetuated this stance.</p> <p>Even if residents voted for de-amalgamation, some services would remain amalgamated, to provide savings for residents due to less duplication.</p> <p>The report states that most people in the community are satisfied with the performance of the council, which in my case is not an accurate reflection. There have been significant decreases in services provided, and an anticipated rates increase due to rate harmonisation. Efficiencies that were anticipated did not eventuate, so under continued amalgamation the effect will be we are paying more for less.</p> <p>There is insufficient information in the report to show how the figures it contains were calculated, therefore questioning its legitimacy.</p> <p>2. Would you like to provide feedback on the question to be asked at the election on 4 December which is "In May 2016, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils were amalgamated into one local government area by the State Government. Do you support the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?"?</p>

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	<p>The question is clear and well worded. It is also the question agreed upon by the majority of local councillors, therefore it should remain as is.</p>
20	<p>I write to let you know I am very much in favour of the de-amalgamation of the Inner West Council (IWC). Since the merger of a number of electorates into the IWC, I feel the residents of Marrickville are not represented by many of the Councillors who live in other suburbs. Whilst I understand they are there to represent those constituents, those Councillors do not recognise the needs and difficulties faced by residents in other suburbs. Also, The Morrison Low report contains several problems which is written from the framework of accepting the NSW government's pro-amalgamation policy and, to my mind, biased in favour of the NSW Government rather than the needs of residents in disparate suburbs. It mostly argues why the IWC must stay amalgamated and does not investigate how the de-merged councils would work, including which services could remain shared. At its meeting on May 24 Inner West councillors agreed an independent assessor would be asked to look at a range of issues related to de-amalgamation, not just the costs. The report includes cost estimates, but does not say how they were arrived at. The Morrison Low report states that the community is "largely satisfied with the performance of the IWC and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils" based on a general "satisfaction" survey done in June. It provides no reference to any concerns about the forced merger in 2016, opposition to the rate hikes or that the majority of councillors were unhappy with it. The report estimates the IWC merger would have cost \$24.3 million and states — without providing a source — that the</p>

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	<p>to "Transition" to . The Northern Beaches Council has a number of Projects including trying to convert people away from using a use a car to travel.</p> <p>The Inner West Greenway at a Regional Scale was Defective in its Core Design and so in 2021 it is without a Viable Bio-diversity Corridor, but the Light Rail is well patronised.</p> <p>There is a new Skate Park in the Annandale area visible from the Light Rail The Lichhardt Council wanted to have a Skate Park in Callan Park and it was rejected .</p> <p>There is concern about the Exhaust Stacks in the WEST CONNEX PROJECT, and it should be investigated thoroughly.</p> <p>There is international talk about changing to electric cars and perhaps it will happen but unless it does there is a RISK to HEALTH from Exhasust stacks.</p> <p>The Stacks are near a proposed Sports Ground for Cricket and Possibly Socccer.</p> <p>The FUNDING for a NETWORK of SAFE BIKE PATHS may encourage more to ride bikes.</p> <p>I have observed a number of local residents and Kids riding bikes along the footpath and some in the car lanes.</p> <p>There may be Problems in Some other amagamated Councils like Cumberland Council that claimed it had a 7 million IT Cost to fund, so some "Social projects were reduced"</p> <p>The Cumberland Council has some " issues to solve" as it was a former inductrial area, and so its "Green Habitat areas" are "missing".</p> <p>The future of the impact of the proposed RAIL LINE from Marrickville to Canterbury may be easier to deal with by the amalgimated Council and Less solved by a small Local Govt ?</p> <p>The future of Parramatta Road deserves attention ?</p> <p>Perhaps it is better solved at a larger regional Scale ?</p>

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	<p>So perhaps I am supportive of the New Mayor Ms Portious. So maybe she remain in an amalgimated council ?</p> <p>I DO NOT THINK that all the details have been discussed ?</p> <p>The provision of Sports Fields is an issue for some people. I walked around Ashfield recently from the Rail Station to near Parramatta Road. It was different to Balmain.</p> <p>In Conclusion I do not understand the Details of why the proposed de-merger should happen. The has been a Proposed</p>
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24	<p>Working directly with several councils all over Sydney I can attest to the disruption and inefficiencies that the amalgamations have caused for development and planning sectors.</p> <p>This is especially true for inner west council and many of the incentives that Marrickville council was moving forward with, including their zero waste program have been put on the back burner since the amalgamations.</p> <p>Having read The Morrison Low report, it contains several problems.</p> <p>It is written from the framework of accepting the NSW government's pro-amalgamation policy. It is therefore partisan.</p> <p>It mostly argues why the Inner West Council (IWC) must stay amalgamated. It does not investigate how the de-merged councils could work, including which services could remain shared.</p> <p>At its May 24 meeting the IW councillors agreed an independent assessor would be asked to look at a range of issues related to de-amalgamation, not just the costs. The report includes cost estimates, but does not say how they were arrived at.</p> <p>The Morrison Low report states that the community is "largely satisfied with the performance of Inner West Council and more satisfied when compared to other metropolitan councils" based on a general "satisfaction" survey done in June. I wonder if people who deal with councils not only live in them would agree.</p>

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