



Pros and cons of amalgamation

A **CONTROVERSIAL** report released last week recommending Wyong and Gosford councils amalgamate has sparked plenty of debate.

The Association of Consulting Engineers Australia released the report last week discussing ways of overhauling planning, transport infrastructure and governance in NSW.

A key recommendation was to amalgamate the Central Coast councils and reduce 42 Sydney councils to 11.

Former Wyong Council general manager John Dawson supported the idea.



John Dawson.

“It’s no secret that I was a supporter of amalgamation long before I left the job as general manager of Wyong in 2003,” Mr Dawson said. “There are many things that could be done so more effectively when one council can speak with one voice.

“The benefits would far out-

weigh the disadvantages.”

Wyong Mayor Bob Graham disagreed and said amalgamation was not appropriate because Wyong was already one of the biggest councils in NSW.

“I’d have great concern about democracy on the coast if you had to represent everyone from Patonga to Gwandalan in one organisation – it’s just not necessary.

“Amalgamation might work for inner Sydney councils but I still reject the idea outright that bigger always equals better.”

A spokeswoman for Premier

Nathan Rees.

Nathan Rees, the Central Coast Minister, said the Government had a policy of not forcing amalgamations anywhere in the State.

Mr Rees said if there were issues that Wyong and Gosford councils could work together on for the benefit of the broader community that should be encouraged.