



Hunters Hill Council commences legal action against the NSW Government

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hunter's Hill Council has a long and proud history of representing the views of its residents. Council has fought off several amalgamation attempts in the past with the full support of the local community, and will continue to represent the interests of its community.

Following a request from Hunters Hill Council to the NSW Minister for Local Government and the Minister's appointed Delegate to be provided with an opportunity to make a fully informed submission, which included the opportunity to review a copy of the Delegate's Report and financial modelling referred to by the NSW Government in its case for reform, in relation to the proposed merger Hunter's Hill, Ryde and Lane Cove Councils, a request that has been formally refused, Hunters Hill Council has today commenced legal action against the Minister, the Hon. Paul Toole, and the Delegate, Dr Robert Lang. The detailed financial analysis by KPMG (KPMG Report), which was commissioned by the NSW Government last year as a means of reinforcing its case for forced council mergers across NSW has been withheld from councils and the public.

Hunter's Hill Council has also been formally advised by the NSW Government that the Delegate's Report has been completed and forwarded to the Boundaries Commission for review and comment. Hunter's Hill Mayor, Cllr Richard Quinn, said 'It is with regret that Council has now had to take legal action to ensure that a transparent democratic process be undertaken in accordance with legal requirements and Council be afforded the opportunity to make an informed submission on it. All we ask is that the details and reports underlying the NSW Government's council merger agenda be disclosed, and that the process be lawful, transparent and fair. The refusal by the NSW Government to allow access to and scrutiny of these key reports, together with a flawed consultation process that did not include a poll, has totally undermined the community's expectations of procedural fairness and confidence in the democratic process.'

Cllr Quinn goes on to say "If the Minister for Local Government continues to pursue these undemocratic forced mergers based on secret reports that will not be made public, it proves that this Government is just not listening to local communities, who want and should have a direct say in how they are governed."

Hunter’s Hill Council, Ryde City Council and Lane Cove Council have responded to the NSW Government local government reform agenda by proposing a Joint Regional Authority (JRA) model that will provide increased service delivery to residents at a reduced cost whilst still maintaining existing local government boundaries and local representation. This model has been strongly endorsed by the multi-partisan 2015 NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into Local Government.

“Our JRA model delivers the savings and efficiencies the Government is seeking without a loss of local identity and grassroots representation”, Clr Quinn said.

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