

Ku-ring-gai Council launches Supreme Court Action to stonewall Hornsby merger

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Mayor Cheryl Szatow says Ku-ring-gai Council should stand alone.

A DEFIANT Ku-ring-gai Council will challenge the State Government in the Supreme Court next month in an attempt to stonewall the proposed amalgamation with Hornsby.

The *North Shore Times* understands that council is seeking an injunction on State Government-appointed delegate Garry West's final report, until documents purporting to justify the merger are released in full.

The KPMG report, prepared at a cost of \$400,000, has been used to support the Baird Government's amalgamation agenda. The government claims that mergers will save the state \$2 billion over the next 20 years.

To date, the government has maintained the report's analysis is "entirely contained within documents that are publicly available".

Repeated attempts by councils and individuals to gain access to the full report have been rejected by the Premier's office.



NSW Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Local Government Paul Toole. Picture: Stephen Cooper

On Tuesday, the council filed a summons with the Supreme Court against Mr West and the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet seeking the State Government's release of the report.

In doing so, it became the first NSW council to take the dispute over the report to the state's highest court.



Ku-ring-gai Mayor Cheryl Szatow outside an anti-amalgamation banner.

The council is also requesting an injunction on Mr West's final report on the merit of the proposed merger of Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby councils until the KPMG documents are handed over.

Mr West is due to hand down his report early April.



Protesters presenting a petition against council mergers at Paul Fletchers office. Picture: Kathy Cowley

The matter is due before the Supreme Court on April 5.

There is a chance the matter could be resolved before then if the council's appeal to the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal – lodged concurrently after the Premier's office refused the council's freedom of information request – is successful.

Meanwhile, Lane Cove Liberal councillor Scott Bennison is also pursuing the KPMG report.

Last month, Cr Bennison's Freedom of Information request was rejected by the Premier's office. His subsequent appeal to NCAT will be heard on April 26.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/north-shore/kuringgai-council-launches-supreme-court-action-to-stonewall-hornsby-merger/news-story/eed7505662b335a15aa2a938231d01ec>