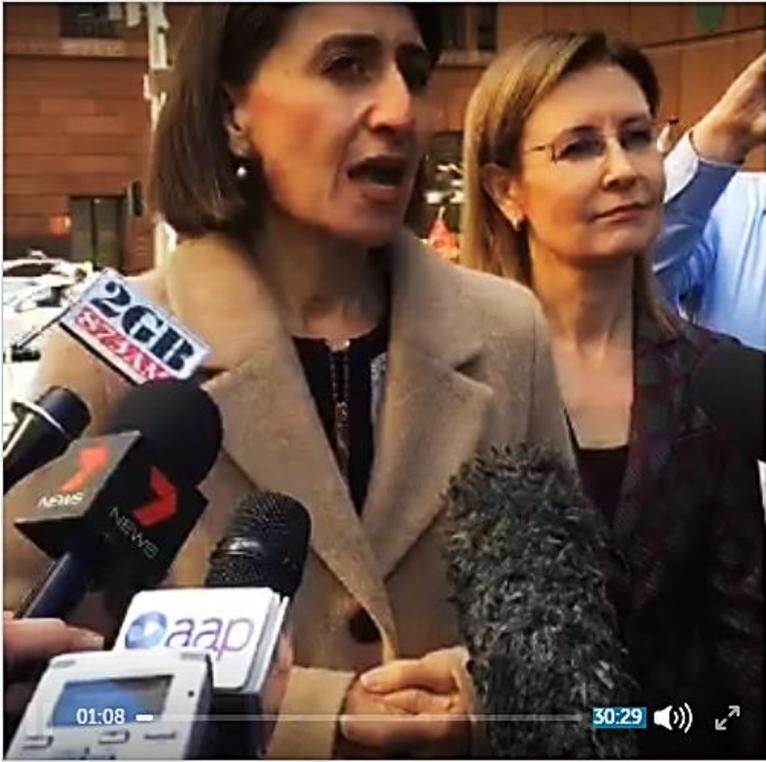


BEREJKLIAN MEDIA CONFERENCE 27 JULY 2017 – 7 NEWS VIDEO 30 MIN

NSW LOCAL COUNCIL MERGERS BEFORE THE COURT WON'T PROCEED

 **7 News Sydney** @7NewsSydney · Jul 26

The NSW government is abandoning its controversial council merger plan for more than a dozen Sydney councils.



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NSW local council mergers before court won't proceed. Premier @GladysB speaking in Sydney. #nswpol #7News
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<https://twitter.com/7NewsSydney/status/890876494724997124>

<https://www.pscp.tv/7NewsSydney/1ynKOVbVnWExR?t=284>

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<https://twitter.com/7NewsSydney/status/890876494724997124/video/1>

(30 minutes – allow time to load)

EXTRACTS FROM THE MEDIA CONFERENCE

“The five proposed mergers are not proceeding – fourteen councils (Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde – Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby – Woollahra, Waverley and Randwick – Strathfield, Burwood and Canada Bay – Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby) are going to the (local government) election as separate entities.”

“The court proceedings have not gone the way the government anticipated – they have taken longer.”

"I believe in the government's policy position (forced council amalgamations). There is no doubt the implementation could have been better."

"If I had my way, we would have seen those merger proposals move forward – that was my intention."

"We generally in our heart of hearts and I personally do say that in Sydney metropolitan areas communities are better off with large councils – that is our firm belief as a government – that was our philosophy moving into this process – but obviously the implementation hasn't been what it should have been."

"In our heart of hearts, we believe that proceeding with merged councils is absolutely the right thing to do in our greater Sydney metropolitan area."

"I believe very strongly that these mergers should have continued – that was the view of the government. Policy wise, it is absolutely the right thing to do – to have larger councils in the Sydney metropolitan area – no doubt about that."

"All councils that have done the right thing and supported the government's merger policy, they won't be impacted."

"Since February we have received legal advice that the High Court will hear the legal case of Woollahra. I moved to end the uncertainty – I need the community to go forward with confidence on September 9 (local government elections)."

"As a collective government, we need to bear responsibility for the implementation. Is the policy the right one – yes. Did we get the implementation wrong – absolutely."

"If I had my way, I would have proceeded with the mergers, but unfortunately the court processes have taken much longer than we estimated."

"Perhaps we should have listened earlier on in the process."

"I knew in my heart of hearts it was the right decision (forced mergers)."

"Should we have had a different approach to what is sound government policy – absolutely."

"If you redo the process it would take years – what we want to end is uncertainty."

"I want to say beyond this point of course the government will not be moving down to any forced mergers into the future, but there is no reason why councils may not want to volunteer amalgamations in the future, and that is a matter for them."

"Could we have done the process better – absolutely."

"We should have done the process differently. Today we draw the line in the sand."

"The policy is sound – we could have done better on implementation."