

## **PITTWATER**

**LYNNE CZINNER ON BEHALF OF 'PROTECT PITTWATER'  
MEDIA CONFERENCE 25 OCT 2018**

### **Pittwater Calls for Answer on Demerger Proposal After Five Month Delay**

The Pittwater community is calling for an answer to its council demerger proposal more than five months after it was submitted to the government following the official process.

Protect Pittwater Association president Bob Grace said the group submitted a proposal to NSW Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton in May calling for the demerger of Pittwater from the Northern Beaches Council.

The proposal followed the provisions of the Local Government Act but was accompanied by nearly 3,500 signatures – 10 times the number required under the act, Mr Grace said.

Since then, Protect Pittwater has telephoned the minister's office numerous times and three weeks ago wrote to her asking for an urgent response – to no avail.

"NSW Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton has had a proposal for Pittwater to demerge from Northern Beaches Council for longer than five months now," Mr Grace said.

"And despite repeated telephone requests asking her to inform us of the outcome of our proposal she has not had the courtesy to reply.

"It's now three weeks since we wrote to her asking for an urgent response.

"She has still not replied – apart from a routine acknowledgement of our letter.

"It's a disgrace but above all shows a lack of manners and respect for the community."

Protect Pittwater also wrote to NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian in May asking her to act on a motion passed at a community forum earlier that month that read:

"This meeting condemns the forced amalgamation of the viable and successful Pittwater Council and demands an immediate and binding referendum of the former Pittwater Local Government Area on its demerger."

Mr Grace said that apart from an acknowledgement of receipt, the Premier has not responded to this letter either.

"The Premier and Local Government Minister should remember that in a Pittwater Council survey eighty-nine per cent of Pittwater residents indicated that they did not want our council to be amalgamated," Mr Grace said.

“Why is the government still not listening to us and following its own processes?

“Is it incompetence or an attempt to make the issue disappear?”

This week the Local Government Association passed a motion at its annual conference to support all communities that want to demerge and ensure amalgamations can only occur with support of local residents.

“We now have the support of all councils in NSW on this issue and so make yet another appeal to Ms Upton to follow the prescribed processes and respond to our request for a demerger,” Mr Grace said.

## **TUMBARUMBA**

### **JACQUIE TUCK (SOCC) ON BEHALF OF ‘SAVE TUMBARUMBA SHIRE’ MEDIA CONFERENCE 25 OCT 2018**

Without stop, Tumbarumba has lobbied actively since before they were merged with Tumut in 2016.

They came to Sydney’s North Shore By-election to demonstrate their support for those councils like Tumbarumba’s that have been forcibly merged without any reference to their local communities, robbing them of their independence and a voice in their local council affairs. They have demonstrated at Parliament House, at Wagga, Albury, Murray and state-wide, their orange shirts are synonymous with bush activism.

They say - what gives the Government the right to merge their council judged as the second most financially fit of all NSW councils after Sydney?

There are letters sent to Premier Berejiklian and Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton that have gone unanswered, all sent separately and hand delivered over months of government inaction.

Their 2,000 Shire residents are now submerged in a Snowy Valleys Council, where their council is 120 kilometres round trip away over often snow-covered roads in winter and risky to high speed road accidents in summer so that Tumba people can conduct personal vital council business.

Just days ago, Minister Upton walked away from close dialogue with forty activists at Albury demonstrating at the Local Government NSW annual conference, where over 800 delegates pledged solidarity and to lobby for changes to the Local Government Act to ensure council mergers never happen again without local referendums.

Delegates fully supported demands for demergers with referendums by Tumbarumba, Pittwater, Gundagai and Guyra and all NSW forcibly merged councils that want to demerge.

This is fully supported by thousands of residents whose local affairs are now governed by councillors who know little of many former council areas and often live far away.

Local communities like Tumbarumba and Pittwater that want to demerge, deserve to do so.

Tumba has shown it is financially fit and manages its affairs with local community interests foremost.

The message for the NSW Government is, read Tumba's letters, meet with them again, and give them an answer on whether you will demerge them before the election, or be prepared for a bush wave of protests in March next year.

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