



MEDIA ALERT – FOR 25 OCT 2018

**LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS NSW
FORCED TO MERGE DEMAND THEIR
COUNCILS BACK NOW!**

MEDIA EVENT: DEMERGE NOW! THURSDAY 25 OCT 18 at 1pm

PLACE: ‘Tree of Knowledge’ Domain behind Parliament House, Sydney.

Both Tumbarumba and Pittwater have lodged proposals signed by their communities with the NSW Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton seeking to get their councils back. Many other communities are considering doing the same with others waiting for a change of government next March.

There has been no meaningful response from the Minister to these proposals.

The recent Local Government Conference overwhelmingly supported a motion that communities whose councils were forced to merge in 2016 should get their councils back if that is their wish.

All political parties, except the Liberal/National Coalition, are of the view that the Government’s forced mergers policy and process was deeply flawed and must be overturned.

Local communities are frustrated and angry over this issue as has been demonstrated in recent by-elections.

SPEAKERS: Lynne Czinner ‘Protect Pittwater’, Phil Jenkyn ‘Save Our Councils Coalition’, Peter Primrose Labor Shadow Minister for Local Government, David Shoebridge Local Government spokesperson The Greens, Robert Borsak SF&F Party, Jacquie Tuck ‘Save Tumbarumba Shire’, Carolyn Corrigan ‘Save Our Councils Coalition’.

CONTACTS: Phil Jenkyn OAM Spokesman; Carolyn Corrigan; Lynne Czinner.



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LOCAL GOVT CONFERENCE SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO DEMERGE

In a major rebuff to the Berejiklian State Government's 2016 policy of forced council mergers, the annual conference of Local Government NSW has thrown its support behind local communities forced to merge who want their councils back.

In a show of strength following major political upheaval for the Liberal Party in the State Wagga by-election and the Federal Wentworth by-election, the Conference in Albury passed a binding resolution that "Gives solidarity with the people of Tumbarumba and Gundagai as they seek to demerge from their forcibly amalgamated councils and similarly supports any other communities that seek to demerge from a forcibly amalgamated council."

It also resolved to "lobby for a change to the Local Government Act to prevent the forced amalgamation of councils or significant boundary alteration without the support of a plebiscite."

With attendance at the Conference by leading members of Save Our Councils Coalition (SOCC) and a large number of demerger activists from Tumbarumba and Gundagai who were invited into the auditorium, the resolution was overwhelmingly passed by delegates who recognised this as an issue burning at the heart of many local communities.

"What this shows is that local communities that were forcibly merged throughout NSW recognise their strength in the lead up to the March 2019 State election. This conference resolution together with huge by-election swings against the Government in NSW seats where council mergers were widely condemned, shows local communities that demergers will be a critical issue in the 2019 election," says SOCC President Brian Halstead.

"We congratulate Local Government NSW and its delegates for their support on this issue, and the extraordinary level of political activism by the communities of Tumbarumba, Gundagai, Pittwater, Guyra and many others that continue to fight for their independence," Halstead said.

SOCC CONTACTS: Brian Halstead President; Phil Jenkyn Spokesman.