



MEDIA RELEASE 11 Aug 2018

## STATE GOVT BLOCKS RELEASE OF SECRET DOCUMENTS

Communities right across NSW are still waiting to see the “secret” KPMG papers, containing data and information used by the State Government to wrongfully force council amalgamations, says Save Our Councils Coalition (SOCC) President Brian Halstead.

Commenting on last week’s (8 August 2018) Walker GIPA case that failed to gain access to documents detailing analysis and impacts of forced council mergers, SOCC says that it is outrageous that the Government is still continuing to hide behind a claim of Cabinet-in-confidence.

“It is extraordinary that a document that is referenced as support for the amalgamation proposals is not available for the community to review. Access to the KPMG documents has been hidden by the State Government since they began the merger process in late 2015, despite strong opposition from local and state-wide communities. All major political parties except the Liberal/National Coalition demand that these documents be released now,” Halstead says.

“We can only guess as to what was said in the KPMG Report that was so contentious and embarrassing that the Government continues to block its release. Let’s not forget the Baird/Berejiklian Coalition Government used taxpayer’s money to employ KPMG to do the work and now they won’t let amalgamated communities see what the report contains,” Halstead added.

“Given that the forced amalgamations were based upon a deliberate lie of supposed financial benefits, it comes as no surprise that they have not in fact materialised. The Government now has no alternative but to allow those communities who want their councils back to do so by way of a referendum,” SOCC spokesman Phil Jenkyn says.

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