

Demerger group rallies

Fresh from delivering their council demerger proposal to the NSW Government last month, resident activist group Protect Pittwater Association (PP) is now focused on gathering information they say will prove the failings of the new Northern Beaches Council and strengthen their case for returning to the former Pittwater Council boundary.

Around 60 members – who protested outside State Parliament House wearing T-shirts with the message ‘Splittwater’ – lodged their case with the office of Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton, along with a petition inked with nearly 3000 signatures.

PP President Bob Grace, a former Pittwater councillor, said the group would take all legal means available to



‘NOT UP TO SCRATCH’: The ‘Splittwater’ crew, led by Bob Grace, protest at Parliament House.

have the State Government reinstate Pittwater Council.

“Last time it took 25 years, so we are ready for a long haul if necessary,” Mr Grace said.

“We are gathering information on the reduced services, poor response times, failure to follow proper processes and failure to return calls, emails and letters – this will show the Premier that the Council is a large, clumsy bureaucracy

unable to deliver the type of service we received under Pittwater Council.”

He said there were many examples of poor management that were hampering Council’s ability to deliver timely services and responses, including a poor performance by waste services contractors.

“Services are regularly late, sometimes days late, and the trucks are in such a rush they often spill waste on the road and drop the bins in such a way

that they partially block roads.”

He added the former Pittwater Council “went to considerable lengths” to monitor the condition of the roads and undertake repairs before problems developed.

“Now if you drive around you will see just how many roads are showing the telltale cracks which are the precursor to major road damage.

“Similarly, where Pittwater Council was very active in removing weeds and invasive

species, such as privet, the park lands are progressively deteriorating due to lack of care.”

Regarding complaints Council had dropped off its quality and frequency of ocean pool maintenance, Mr Grace said Council officers had said they didn't have enough staff any more in that area of Council.

“Further, Northern Beaches Council recently proposed a walkway into Narrabeen Lagoon but was blissfully unaware of the only remaining black swan habitat and failed to carry out the consultation necessary that would have identified this,” he said.

“As one ex-Pittwater Council Officer, who recently left Council for a job elsewhere said: ‘We used to be focused on outcomes, but now with such a large, clumsy bureaucracy with so many levels of management, we are now focused on process... and we don't do that well anyway.’

“Our questions is, how come we have three and a half State Members and two Federal Members - but only one supposedly local council?” - *Nigel Wall*

... And the Council's response

On customer service: General Manager Customer and Corporate Helen Lever said responsive customer service was a priority, with a Customer Service Charter involving the return of calls within two business days.

“Council is investing in customer services including a new customer service call centre at Mona Vale. If there are examples of failure to return calls, please pass them on for us to review.”

On road conditions: Acting General Manager Environment and Infrastructure Todd Dickinson said a proactive road asset monitoring program was in place to identify and correct issues as early as possible. “When we get requests, our maintenance crews now work out of three geographical depots which allows for quicker response times. Residents can report any issues with road condition and they will be assessed and addressed.”

On vegetation management: Mr Dickinson said Council has maintained the same level of service in regards to bushland maintenance and weed removal. “Bushland regeneration contracts have continued unchanged over the past two years.”

On aquatic/park maintenance: Mr Todd Dickinson said there had been no changes to the schedule, practises and methods of rockpool cleaning across the Northern Beaches following amalgamation. “We continue to carry out a high standard of aquatic maintenance across all beaches.”

On Narrabeen Lagoon: Mr Dickinson said the design and consideration of the proposed aquatic boardwalk was based on it being the most environmentally sensitive option to

address the poor and unsafe terrestrial route in this area. “Land-based solutions would have had irrevocably negative impacts on the riparian area,” he said. “The proposal has been identified as having no impact on black swan habitat.” - *NW*



Are you aged 80+, or living with a disability?

Evaluate your care options now to get the best out of life

Free home care consultation

Quality Care

Value Home Care Packages

Managed NDIS Plans

Dementia Services



Reach out (24/7) on

02 8052 3255

0430 130 227

HomeCareAssistance
NorthEastSydney.com.au