



Lynne Czinner (left), Bob Grace, Miranda Korzy, David Wenden and Pip Rey at North Mona Vale Headland Reserve. Picture: Adam Yip

Demerger group taking fight to State Parliament

Jim O'Rourke

THE next stage in the community push to reinstate Pittwater council moves to State Parliament with dozens of protesters in Splittwater T-shirts set to deliver a demerger proposal to the NSW Government.

Inspired by a front-page headline in the *Manly Daily* on May 2, the Protect Pittwater Association ordered the turquoise shirts in time for their bus journey into Macquarie St on Tuesday.

The proposal, initiated under the Local Government Act, calls for Pittwater council to be immediately reconstituted within its original boundaries.

Association president Bob Grace, a former Pittwater councillor, said supporters of the move to split from Northern Beaches Council wanted to hand the proposal, along with thousands of signatures, to

Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton.

Residents also want to present a statement to Premier Gladys Berejiklian, containing a motion passed at a community forum last week for her to demerge the councils.

Mr Grace said he expected about 50 people to travel to Parliament House in a hired "people's bus".

"Northern Beaches Council is a bureaucratic nightmare. It's not working and getting worse," he said.

"And Pittwater residents are now subsidising the problems of the old Manly and Warringah councils."

Mr Grace claimed the rates paid by residents in the former Pittwater council area now contributed to the new seawall at Collaroy; legal action over the Manly Oval carpark plan and more than \$300,000 for a payout to the former Northern Beaches Council CEO.

"The merger was meant to save us money but now Northern Beaches Council expects us to cop the rate rise — a 2.3 per cent increase on rates included in the 2018/19 budget — passed only with Mayor Michael Regan's casting vote," Mr Grace said.

"Pittwater must be demerged now before these disasters multiply.

"We will win."

Last week Cr Regan said Pittwater residents would benefit from the council merger with more spending on infrastructure in their area.

Mr Grace invited all Pittwater residents to join the rally outside Parliament House on Tuesday, from 1pm to 2pm.

Those wanting to travel on the bus should phone 0439 788 867 to book a seat and meet at Newport Beach carpark at 10.45am for an 11am departure.