

Referendum call after Pittwater demerger push

Community to rally outside Parliament on May 15

Jim O'Rourke

RESIDENTS pushing for Pittwater council to be reinstated have voted to call for a referendum to split from Northern Beaches Council.

More than 250 people who attended a community meeting on Thursday night voted unanimously to demand the State Government allow an immediate vote to demerge Pittwater.

They say they were forced to accept a merged council that has been labelled a "bureaucratic disaster".

The forum at Pittwater RSL, organised by the group Protect Pittwater, heard it would submit a proposal calling on the government to redefine council boundaries and reinstate Pittwater council under the NSW Local Government Act.

Group president Bob Grace, a former Pittwater councillor, said the submission and thousands of signatures would be delivered to Parliament House as part of a community rally set down for May 15.

"The people here really care and they want Pittwater



Bob Grace (left) and former Labor premier Barrie Unsworth at the meeting on Thursday night.



Manly Daily report of May 2.

back," Mr Grace said. "Northern Beaches Council has been a bureaucratic disaster. It's not working."

Former Labor premier and Pittwater resident Barrie Unsworth supported the demerger and urged residents to write to Premier Gladys Berejiklian, calling on her to step in and split the councils.

NSW Opposition local government spokesman Peter Primrose and Greens

spokesman David Shoebridge told the meeting they supported a referendum.

Northern Beaches Mayor Michael Regan said this week Pittwater would benefit from improved infrastructure because of the council merger.

"Significant savings are being made and the debts of former Pittwater and Manly are being paid off and we are seeing unprecedented investment in infrastructure north of Narrabeen Bridge," Cr Regan said.

Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton's spokesman said there were no plans to change boundaries.