

Pittwater Council “Fit for the Future”

Dear Mayor, Councillors and General Manager,

We, the three larger North Ward community groups (Avalon Preservation Association, Clareville and Bilgola Plateau Residents' Association, and Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association) wish to ensure Pittwater Council takes a real leadership role in advocating our chosen “Fit for the Future” option (resolution C8.4) to all Pittwater Council residents.

Our reasoning is as follows:

Firstly

Pittwater Council has an **obligation** to state that it supports the status quo in all its documentation relating to “Fit for the Future”.

It needs to do this strongly and in the first line or paragraph of any documentation.

This is extremely important as it was **unanimously voted** for at Pittwater Council Meeting Tuesday 7 April 2015 (see C8.4 of the minutes):

*That having reviewed all current documentation included in the KPMG report, Council's position is as follows: “**Pittwater to maintain the status quo: that is to remain as we are without any boundary changes**”.*

We expect council to show leadership and to make its preferred position crystal clear in any information to residents. It is not anti-democratic for our elected council to take a lead.

Secondly

Pittwater Council needs to explain why it supports the status quo. e.g.:

- The status quo works. Pittwater Council is **strong, independent and local**.
- Our own history shows that being part of Warringah didn't work. We weren't strong, we weren't independent and local issues weren't met.
- Evidence from around Australia and around the world (e.g. QLD, WA, VIC and NZ) shows that merging councils to make them more than 150,000 residents doesn't work. Large councils:
 - * cost more than small councils,
 - * are more likely to be influenced by groups which haven't the residents best interests in mind, and
 - * are not flexible or small enough to cater quickly and easily with local issues.

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- Merging councils is an expensive, messy business. Putting into place new IT systems, work practices, office space and cultures is expensive, time consuming, soul destroying and non-productive.

MUCH more emphasis needs to be placed on our foundation and the non-financial reasons for remaining independent.

Thirdly

In any public meeting Pittwater Council needs to display leadership.

Therefore Pittwater Council, not KPMG, should present the information it has gathered on “Fit for the Future”, i.e. KPMG should be present only to answer detailed questions.

(Also can you please advise people asking questions at the public meeting to state where they are from, in order to gauge if they are from the Pittwater Council area.)

Finally and in Conclusion

The key message residents need to walk away with is:

Pittwater Council is fit for the future. It is strong, independent and local.

*We know a mega Northern Beaches Council can't be any of these; from history, evidence and financial logic. **“If it ain't broke don't try to wreck it. Pittwater Council advocates the status quo.”***

We need to see a strong, independent Pittwater Council which takes leadership on this issue by standing up for its local community.