

Newport Residents Association

*Speaking Against the current drafted motion C8 'NSW State Government Fit for the Future Local Government Reforms'.*

Firstly let me state that the NRA is against Amalgamation so we agree with Item 1 and 2 of the recommendation, however we have deep reservations about most of the remainder.

We note that the Fit for the Future papers issued by the State Government certainly implies that councils of our size should be considering merging so they strongly suggest we start negotiating or they threaten to make us merge anyway. However if we are certain of our grounds that we are a financially successful council, why enter into these discussions, we just restate our position with all the back-up work we have already done and be prepared to fight for our position.

Item 3 says that the Mayor & General Manager will be participating in discussions with 'Other Councils' as a requirement of the program. I don't believe it is a requirement but concede it is a strong recommendation. Also which councils are being referred to in this item?

Item 4 goes on about negotiating at Shoroc later this month to appoint a facilitator to assist discussions amongst neighbouring councils – what discussions and negotiations? We should not be entering into discussions and negotiations if we don't believe we should be merging? Also remember Shoroc includes Mosman and Mosman is not one of the councils that is being considered to amalgamate with Pittwater.

Whilst Items 5 (a) & (b) are consistent with Item 2, why again are we even entering into these discussions?

Item 5(c) talks about identifying options for boundary changes, again Why?

Item 7 says that The GM will prepare and implement a community engagement process from October 2014 – we note that this process has already occurred where we have established that we want to remain a single council so I'm not sure what the process is going to entail except to reinforce the recent decisions, unless it's to inform us of amalgamation options we have said we are against?

We note that under item 8 that you are proposing council set up a meeting with the Hon. Rob Stokes, which we agree with, but could we suggest that this be an open meeting with the community with full community input.

We also note the financial carrot that is available of app \$13.5m if we merged with Manly & Warringah (giving us just over 307,000 residents), however we also note and agree with councils comment that this money would be all used in any amalgamation. The other carrots that are suggested sound more like Motherhood statements to us and we would question their real worth.

We strongly believe if we commence down this road of discussions & negotiations etc. then we start on the slippery slope to amalgamation – so we say, DON'T start.

Remember council does not have a Mandate from its Residents to enter into negotiations re amalgamation.

Finally, may I compliment the Mayor on her article 'Mayor on a Soapbox' in this months' Pittwater Life magazine - a great fighting commentary in preparation for war! and I believe supports the concerns we have summarised just now.

13<sup>th</sup> October 2014