

Protect Pittwater Association

Dear Pittwater Resident -

May 12 will be the fifth anniversary of the amalgamation of Pittwater Council into the Northern Beaches Local Government Area. This was carried out against the wishes of 89 per cent of residents, as was shown in a council survey shortly before the merger.

To mark the occasion, we invite you to join Protect Pittwater at a rally at Narrabeen lagoon to launch our new petition calling for the de-amalgamation of Pittwater from Northern Beaches Council.

Date: May 12, 2020

Time: 7am - 9am

Where: Northern end of the Narrabeen bridge, Pittwater Road, North Narrabeen

What to bring: We'll have banners to share but you might like to make your own.

Many of us in Pittwater were appalled by the 2016 amalgamation, in which our local council of nine was replaced by a Northern Beaches-wide body of 15. Our three Pittwater councillors on this new mega council can be outvoted on any issue affecting the Peninsula.

As a result, community members set up Protect Pittwater in 2017 with the aim of securing a demerger either through legal action or by creating a Proposal – or petition - under the Local Government Act. Legal advice indicated that the proclamation of the new council made it unlikely court action would succeed and a first petition submitted to the state government in 2018 was knocked back on the grounds that it did not have enough signatures.

However, we believe increasing numbers of residents are becoming disillusioned with the NBC and **we are determined to continue the fight** - even though it means we have to start a new petition. The government now says that we will need 10 per cent of the electors from across the Northern Beaches to sign – meaning close to 18,500 signatures.

If you support the call to demerge and re-establish our own local government in Pittwater, please sign our petition. **Copies will be available at the rally and you'll be able to find it to print out from May 12 on Facebook – in the Protect Pittwater group or on the Splittwater page.** We will let everyone know at the launch and on facebook where to return petitions – and where else they can sign them.

Best regards,

Miranda Korzy
Protect Pittwater Association
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Why demerge Pittwater?

- Undemocratic dismissal of Pittwater Council against the wishes of 89 per cent of Pittwater residents
 - as shown in a survey by the former council
- Amalgamation and creation of Northern Beaches Council without a vote by the community
 - and separation of Pittwater residents into different wards
- Lack of self-determination for Pittwater residents
 - only three out of 15 councillors come from Pittwater, and they can be outvoted on any decision affecting our ward
- NBC in top 10 worst performing councils
 - LSI Consulting, October 2020, states NBC's accumulated losses were more than \$103m since the merger. An analysis by Save Our Councils Coalition found a shortfall of \$7.4m on the government's proposed Operating Results before capital grants for 2018-19. This was even before Covid
- Pittwater business rate rises expected of around 24 per cent
- Partial responsibility for Manly car park debt and building Collaroy seawall
- Pittwater budget approach different to NBC's
 - we borrowed money under low interest rates to invest in community facilities to be paid off over time
- Unnecessary spending
 - eg council logo, garbage bins, too much cement
- Lack of spending on essential maintenance
 - eg potholes in roads, uneven footpaths
- Loss of environmental focus at local level which was at the core of Pittwater Council:
 - eg concrete being laid in parks and sensitive environmental zones; loss of trees; weed infestation in suburban streets, parks and bushland reserves
- Lack of planning for sea level rise
- Council-wide planning for Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Environment Plan rather than ward by ward to highlight special features of each area
 - as Pittwater MP and Planning Minister Rob Stokes had indicated would be possible
- Council area and population too large
 - councillors making decisions about sites and issues in wards they aren't familiar with; too big to represent discrete communities with vast differences in needs for housing, transport, environment, community facilities and culture from end to end
- Dysfunctional council
 - 2021 extraordinary meeting walkout; disrespectful behaviour in meetings and on social media
- Lack of transparency
 - too many decisions made behind closed doors and infrequent meetings; staff making decisions and publishing them before council voting occurs
- Enormous agendas for council meetings
 - often totalling 2,000 pages including appendices – impossible for most councillors, especially those with fulltime jobs, to read in allotted timeframe
- Long meetings, late at night, voting by exception and in political blocks likely to contribute to poor decision making
- Distance to council meetings at Dee Why
- Parking fiasco
 - demerger promise of one parking sticker but Manly and Palm Beach have new restrictions anyway
- Lack of support from NBC on state issues relevant to Pittwater

- eg retaining Mona Vale Hospital; push back on state government housing targets; transport
- COVID lockdown revealed community cohesion and cooperation in Pittwater - not the “Northern Northern Beaches”!