



PROTECT PITTWATER

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PROTECT PITTWATER DISAPPOINTED BY LABOR'S LEGISLATION

Council demerger campaigners in Pittwater are bitterly disappointed by Labor government proposals revealed last week that will make it harder for smaller councils forcibly amalgamated to go their own way.

Protect Pittwater Association president Simon Dunn said amendments to the Local Government Act proposed by the NSW government will do nothing to restore democracy for minority councils such as Pittwater, amalgamated into the Northern Beaches Council in 2016.

Mr Dunn said Protect Pittwater wrote to Local Government Minister Ron Hoenig last September pointing out that the act was missing:

- (a) A mechanism for a former area to be reinstated without a resolution of the new amalgamated Council of which the former area has a minority of Councillors to support such a resolution;
- (b) an orderly procedure for assets and staff to be allocated when a former Council area was reinstated.

"The legislation introduced to Parliament this week by Minister Hoenig does nothing to address these two shortcomings and breaks the policy promise Labor took to the last two elections," Mr Dunn said.

"Instead, it perpetuates the endless deferring of decisions between the boundary commission and the minister, with neither being compelled to respect the strong desire of the former council residents to see their beloved Pittwater council reinstated.

"Protect Pittwater instead urges NSW Labor to amend their proposed legislation to provide for a plebiscite of residents of a former council area - which was already found to be financially viable - to be the only mechanism required to reinstate that former Council.

"The desire for a demerger remains strong in Pittwater, where a statistically reliable survey conducted by the former council before the mergers showed 89 per cent of residents had wanted to remain in our standalone council.

"With the proposed legislation, we would be trapped in a situation where the six councillors representing the former Pittwater, can be outvoted on any issue the other nine."