



Why we need to reinstate Pittwater and bring back local democracy

Anna Maria Monticelli, Secretary Protect Pittwater

- *Opportunity to make this speech at council meeting was denied without explanation from NBC.*
- *Print out below:*

What the Northern Beaches Council has never understood is that their role is to represent us, not shut us up. The council's "have your say" campaigns amount to little more than PR exercises. They disregard genuine community input, patronise residents, and fuel frustration and anger.

Local democracy only works when communities have a genuine voice. Pittwater's voice has been politically silenced since amalgamation.

We have **3** councillors in the Northern Beaches Council out of **15**.

When the vote is 12 against 3, Pittwater loses every time.

When the vote is 12 against 3, responsible development rules for Pittwater loses every time.

When the vote is 12 against 3, our environment loses every time.

When the vote is 12 against 3 a community's confidence in democracy loses every time.

Simply put - Pittwater always has a minority voice.

The 12–3 vote structure reinforces growing calls for de-amalgamation with many residents saying they no longer feel represented by the Northern Beaches Council.

What we have is not meaningful representation. It leaves people feeling side-lined in decisions that directly affect them. Pittwater council had **9 councillors all living in Pittwater**.

The Pittwater community is not seeking special treatment: what we are seeking is appropriate recognition that our area is ecologically and geographically unique and cannot be governed by the same metropolitan development controls as other parts of Sydney.

The current blanket approach to development which circumvent local environmental limits, threatens our environment, our lifestyle and our safety. In particular the danger of pushing more people into an already crowded and confined fire zone.

A recent report co-authored by the former NSW fire commissioner, Greg Mullins, warns that what happened in the 2025 Los Angeles fires, will happen here. The report's findings were a "wake up call", he said." "If you live in suburbia and think bushfires don't concern you, think again." Parts of Sydney, like the Northern Beaches, Penrith and the Blue Mountains, were a "ticking timebomb" he said, with massive fuel loads built-up after years of rain. "I know it'll scare people," he said. "But I hope they get past that and [say] we have to take action."

Pittwater is on a peninsula. It has one main road in and one road out with narrow winding streets already congested with all the current ongoing-development. It is inevitable congestion will only get worse, particularly when developers start targeting all our R2 and R3 zonings across Pittwater (which permits development consistent with residential zones right across Sydney.) Unfortunately NBC does not give proper consideration to the Pittwater Wards' different situation.

And If Pittwater is governed like the rest of Sydney, it will be developed like Sydney.

Developers will flock here because Pittwater is a place where they can maximise their profits.

Pittwater is environmentally unique and it must be protected and governed differently.

When the experts tell us terrible fires will happen here, we cannot blindly ignore them despite what politicians and urban planners say. Forcing more people into a high risk bush fire zone is a recipe for disaster.

If an expert such as Mr. Mullins is correct, one day soon, Pittwater will experience an inferno unprecedented in its history. Cars will be gridlocked on the Bends and on Barrenjoey Road. Lives will be lost and property destroyed. Fire trucks and emergency services will be immobilised in traffic.

We must stop overdevelopment that threatens public safety and start paying attention to the warning signs around us. The evidence is already here.

We need our voices heard:

- We need to fight the State government planning rules that endanger lives, property and our environment.
- We need to take control and leave the Northern Beaches Council, re-instate a Pittwater Council.
- We need ACTION NOW before it's too late.
- Protecting Pittwater with its own council **is not radical—it's responsible.**

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