

Tomerong Community Forum

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Date; 20th Feb 2016

Ref; **Proposed Shoalhaven/Kiama Council merger**

Facts;

1. If the merger is approved by Govt, the ministers proclamation will necessitate that all Councillors, General Manager and department Directors probably be made redundant by June 2016. The new Council will go into Caretaker mode for 9-12 months until the transformation is complete. An acting administrator/caretaker will be appointed by State Government.
2. The two General Managers maybe engaged as advisors to the administrator/caretaker during the set up merger process. [No infrastructure improvements to be undertaken in this period]
3. Shoalhaven Water is a 1.2 billion dollar asset to Shoalhaven Council and generates about 7 million dollars in revenue for Shoalhaven Council. This would be lost in its entirety if a merger was to be approved. [With a 4 year rate freeze and 7 million losses from revenue per year how will the new council financially survive on the 5 million State govt is giving for the merger?]
4. State Government has not mentioned this valuable asset in its proposal but it could be concluded that Shoalhaven Water be transferred to Sydney Water and the revenue [\$ 7M] deposited into State treasury. Or even sold off to private enterprise.
5. Kiama's rates are at present 45% higher than Shoalhaven so are they going to lower Kiama's rates to match ours?? We will see a substantial rate hike after the 4 year freeze on rates.
6. Approx \$400,000 of taxpayer money that State Govt used to investigate the merger, resulted in the consultants engaged [KPMG] using outdated figures and not the 2014/2015 figures which showed Shoalhaven Council having a saving of 6.5M
7. In October 2015 IPART[Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW Govt] concluded that Shoalhaven Council was "Fit for the Future" and could stand alone.
8. State Govt said there is savings to be made but the new council will have more roads, more parks, a bigger waste collection and State Govt wants to make savings by cutting staff?

[2]

9. No elected member of parliament, no councillor will have any say in the decision process: It will purely be down to the recommendation of Greg Wright to the Minister Paul Toole.

One man makes the decision for us.

Summary;

The real issue here is if you do not make your opinion heard either way it is quite possible that the State Govt could make the assumption of your silence as a vote in favour of the merger so please read the facts or go onto Council's website and State Govt website and make your opinion count either way.

Your submissions must reach Greg Wright before 28th Feb. [this coming Sunday]

Send letter to Greg Wright and C; C to Council by email and then post to;

Direct to the delegate Greg.Wright@dpc.nsw.gov.au
C; C to Council Council@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

**Mr Greg Wright
The Delegate,
Kiama- Shoalhaven Merger Proposal
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001**

paul.toole@parliament.nsw.gov.au [Minister for the council merger]

Regards

Peter Allison

Chairperson

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