



ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

To be held at 5pm on

Tuesday 17 May 2016

Council Chambers

11 Manning Street, KIAMA NSW 2533

Members

His Worship the Mayor

Councillor B Petschler

Councillor W Steel

Deputy Mayor

Councillor M Honey

Councillor G McClure

Councillor N Reilly

Councillor K Rice

Councillor D Seage

Councillor A Sloan

Councillor M Way

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16 ADDENDUM TO REPORTS

16.1 Merger with Shoalhaven City to not Proceed

Attachments

- 1 Letter from Minister

Enclosures

Nil

RECOMMENDED

That Council:

1. Note the Minister's advice that the proposed merger with Shoalhaven City will not proceed.
2. Extend its deep appreciation to the community for its opposition to the proposal and authorise a suitable function for the Keep Kiama Council Local Committee and the volunteers for their support.

REPORT

I refer to my previous mayoral minute that has now been superseded by the advice from the Minister for Local Government (Hon Paul Toole MP) that the proposed merger of Kiama Municipality and Shoalhaven City Council will not proceed (See attached letter of confirmation).

This Ministerial advice comes as a great relief. The proposal for this merger was apparently a very late entry into the "mix" of the proposed mergers announced on 16 December 2015 and had not been raised at any time during the reform process running since 2008. The proposal came as a complete surprise. It was not supported by either Kiama or Shoalhaven Councils and was also not supported by either of the Shoalhaven or Kiama communities (particularly and most spectacularly by the latter).

Eventually and objectively, it was also recommended for rejection by the delegate (Mr G Wright) who was appointed by the State government to investigate the proposal. That recommendation for rejection was accepted by the Boundaries Commission in its review of the delegate's determination as reported to the Minister. It is my understanding that the delegate's rejection of this proposal was one of only two such recommendations for rejection made by delegates involved in all of the merger proposals.

The proposal lacked substance, provided no financial benefits to either area and did not provide any evidence of an appropriate community of interest between the two Councils. The delegate's report makes for interesting reading and can be accessed on the 'stronger councils' website.

Mayoral Minute

16.1 Merger with Shoalhaven City to not Proceed (cont)

Coupled with the relief for this outcome is dismay at the time, effort and cost that Council and the community have been forced to expend to defend the position that this proposal was wrong in so many respects.

To the Councillors I say thank you for the support given to opposing the proposal, particularly at the time of the special public Council meeting held in the Pavilion in January and thereafter in informing and assisting the community action. The work of Councillors in assisting the Keep Kiama Council Local Committee (KKCL) was also noteworthy. I am aware of the special help provided by some Councillors on a number of occasions and I thank them for it.

I also commend the Council staff for their support, much of it given in their own time, at meal and work breaks as well as after hours. The General Manager (Mr Michael Forsyth), who prepared the Council's vital submission to the delegate, is worthy of special note and I have firsthand knowledge of the many hours he put into that work outside of normal hours. The support given to the Council's position by the other directors, Mr Phil Costello, Mr Gino Belsito and Ms Clare Rogers and staff was most commendable and the work of Mr Kerry McMurray and staff in dealing with the Poll of Electors is highly appreciated. I also include a commendation to Ms Narelle Mousdale and other Executive Assistants for their assistance across the period of investigation.

Council also received support from our State parliamentarian, Mr Gareth Ward, MP, and I extend Council's appreciation for that support which was vindicated by the recommendation of the delegate. I believe Mr Ward has worked assiduously to ensure the state government was aware of the Council's and the community's position on the proposal and I thank him for his efforts. Our Federal parliamentarian (Mrs Ann Sudmalis, MHR) also supported the two Councils remaining autonomous and is to be commended.

However, it was the reaction of the great majority of the municipality's residents that was most outstanding. From the very first, the community was aware of the loss of democracy that the proposal would bring. Our residents responded in a way that I have never seen in over 50 years of involvement in local government. The initial response led quickly to the spontaneous formation of the KKCL Committee, a representative group of volunteers from all over the municipality. KKCL organised the giant public meeting at the Pavilion, the community concert, the ongoing publicity for opposition to the proposal, support for residents in preparing submissions, information to the community, the rally in Sydney, the big NO on Black Beach and the volunteer residents who manned information booths at shopping centres and the NO booths during the recent poll of residents.

The KKCL Committee meetings planned these initiatives and provided the media liaison throughout the process. The group coordinated the smooth running of the many events and organised the many helpers needed to support them. I extend Council's appreciation to all of the KKCL members and the many volunteers who assisted them over the past 5 months. Our special thanks must go to this group

There were many other individuals, groups and organisations that rallied and worked tirelessly to oppose the proposal. Council's appreciation for their efforts must be recorded. I hope to be able to convey Council's thanks to these community groups and individuals personally in the near future.

Mayoral Minute

16.1 Merger with Shoalhaven City to not Proceed (cont)

Of course, without the immense support of the great majority of our community, all the efforts of the KKCL group would have been much diminished. With the IRIS survey indicating 92% of residents opposed the proposed merger and the subsequent poll indicating an even higher 95.6% in opposition, there is little doubt that the impact of that level of local democracy was noted in Macquarie Street.

Like all councillors, I was astounded and humbled by the more than 100 verbal submissions made to the delegate during the investigation of the proposal; all of the ones I heard being opposed to the government's plan. These were part of over 2,000 submissions (verbal and written) made on the issue, a resounding response from an outraged community. On behalf of council I extend appreciation to our community for the way it responded. It was a revelation and one that made us all very proud.

Council has shown in the preparation of its 2016/17 budget that it meets all the criteria required for the "Fit for the Future" reform process now, two years before it is required to do so. Council's residents have shown their strong desire to keep Kiama Council autonomous and independent into the future. This Council, despite media commentary to the contrary, is not a small local government body and has shown itself to have the scale and capacity (endorsed by the state government) to plan confidently for its future. I am sure that Kiama Municipality can continue to provide the quality services our community wants and that it will continue to provide those services into the future as it has done since 1859.

Item 16.1



The Hon Paul Toole MP
Minister for Local Government

12 May 2016

FAO: Mayor – Please distribute immediately to all councillors

Dear Councillor

Today marks a new era for local government in NSW as I have announced my intention to create 19 new councils, including seven metropolitan and 12 regional and rural councils. I have also indicated my in principle support to create a further nine new councils, however my decision will be guided by the courts. This announcement follows consultation with the community and the local government sector.

After carefully considering the results of the council boundary review process, I have determined that your council will remain unchanged.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your commitment to serving your community and for your input into the process to reform local government in this State.

For more information on today's announcement, please visit www.strongercouncils.nsw.gov.au or contact 02 8574 7000.

Yours sincerely

Paul Toole MP
Minister