

media release

Tuesday, 30 August 2016

Mayors disappointed by lack of response

Premier Mike Baird has failed to respond to a letter written by concerned mayors and councillors from seven local government areas around NSW facing forced amalgamation. The letter called for the Premier to consult with the seven councils and to suspend the amalgamation process for the time being.

Elected officials from Mosman, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai and Strathfield along with their regional counterparts from Cabonne, Oberon and Shellharbour councils, which represent local government areas with a total population of over a quarter of a million residents and ratepayers, sent an open letter to the Premier last Tuesday urging him to respond within a week.

The group requested that the Premier suspend the threat of forced amalgamations for all councils in NSW for the immediate future, meet the councils' representatives to hear their concerns first hand and agree to poll residents and ratepayers about amalgamation which would then only proceed with majority support.

Mosman Mayor Peter Abelson said the elected officials from metropolitan and regional communities had hoped to receive at least an acknowledgement of their concerns from the Premier.

"Unfortunately there has been minimal consultation over the past two years between the State Government and local councils and as the leader of the state we believe it's up to the Premier, not only his minister, to listen to the will of the people," Cr Abelson said.

"As convenor of the group, I'm expressing my disappointment on behalf of the attendees that we have not received a reply to this important letter raising concerns from democratically elected mayors and councillors representing a quarter of a million residents and ratepayers.

"Despite the Premier's lack of response we still wish to work together with the NSW Government to seek a cooperative outcome for the greater good of Sydney and the state.

"Mosman locals have long expressed their overwhelming support for independence and, like their counterparts in these other metro and regional areas, share concerns that the proposed forced amalgamations would result in adverse consequences for their communities."

The group plans to meet again soon to discuss its next steps.



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