

An email newsletter from Kate Washington MP

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Council Merger Update

15 January 2016

Dear friends,

Happy New Year to you all!

Next week, the Washington Post will return in its full glory. In the meantime, it's timely to consider the ensuing chaos that's being imposed on us by the NSW government, with the proposed merger of Port Stephens Council and Newcastle City Council. As if we don't already have enough chaos caused by natural elements!

If you'd like to know more about the merger, full details of the proposal, delegates and public meetings can be found on this website:

<https://www.councilboundaryreview.nsw.gov.au/proposals/newcastle-city-and-port-stephens-councils/>

You will see that two public inquiries are to be held in Newcastle with only one in Port Stephens, during work hours. I have today requested an additional meeting be held in Port Stephens, outside of work hours.

I encourage you to read the proposal, the relative comparisons are interesting. However, I can see little that would be of benefit to ratepayers of Port Stephens. Instead, the potential is that we will be worse off under a merged entity.

I am very keen to hear from Port Stephens residents about this issue. I have created a survey that I will be sharing with residents. You can complete this short survey here: www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCVCFQF

I encourage you to participate in the process that's been established, by making a formal submission, attending a public inquiry or both. Please note that submissions to the Delegate close on 28 February 2016.

If you intend to make a submission, for it to be effective, I suggest that you focus on the following factors (which are set out in section 263(3) of the Local Government Act):

- the financial advantages or disadvantages of the proposal to the residents and ratepayers of the areas concerned;
- the community of interest and geographic cohesion in the existing areas and in any proposed new area;

- the existing historical and traditional values in the existing areas and the impact of change on them;
- the attitude of the residents and ratepayers of the areas concerned;
- the requirements of the area concerned in relation to elected representation for residents and ratepayers at the local level, the desirable and appropriate relationship between elected representatives and ratepayers and residents and such other matters as considered relevant in relation to the past and future patterns of elected representation for that area;
- the impact of the proposal on the ability of the council to provide adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities;
- the impact of the proposal on the employment of the staff by the council;
- the impact of the proposal on any rural communities in the resulting area;
- the desirability (or otherwise) of dividing the resulting area or areas into wards
- the need to ensure that the opinions of each of the diverse communities of the resulting area or areas are effectively represented; and
- any other factors relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government in the existing and proposed new areas.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this issue, please contact my office on 4987 4455 or by return email.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Washington MP
Member for Port Stephens

Contact Details:

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Send me a letter at PO Box 82, Raymond Terrace, NSW 2324

Drop into the Electorate Office at 82 Port Stephens St, Raymond Terrace

Call the office on 4987 4455

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