



Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.

TRRA at Dungog Council extraordinary meeting 1 May 2017

'We wouldn't wish our Council on our worst enemies – let alone our friends here in Dungog.'

Speaking Notes Re: Proposal for merger with Port Stephens Council

Thank you for the opportunity to address this meeting in Public Access.

TRRA represents the ratepayers and residents on the Tomaree Peninsula....
(We had 200+ at a recent meeting on planning for Nelson Bay CBD)

We think it important that you, as the elected representatives here in Dungog, and the Dungog community, hears all shades of opinion, not just the biased misinformation being fed to you by Port Stephens Council.

Our position has consistently been that PSC should stand alone and go to elections as planned in September (already a year later than it should have been because of the State Government's bungled forced amalgamations)

It is important to note that the people of Port Stephens have never been asked for their views on a merger with Dungog as a separate exercise. In its campaign to avoid a merger with Newcastle, PSC did manage to get some in the community to express a preference for a union with Dungog rather than one with Newcastle, but that is not the same as the current proposal.

Any merger proposal should in our view be put to a plebiscite of all voters in both LGAs. We cannot see any urgency - while it would be good to settle the matter, any detailed proposal needs far more scrutiny and public discussion.

We frankly do not believe some of the assertions about financial implications or the state of the finances of PSC (we make no comment on the state of Dungog Council's finances). PSC's finances have been made deliberately obscure in recent years – e.g. inadequate reporting of legal expense and potential liabilities, and performance of Council owned holiday parks.

We wouldn't wish our Council on our worst enemies – let alone our friends here in Dungog.

It is up to voters of Port Stephens to sort out our own mess in the forthcoming elections before any further merger discussion. Don't be rushed or swayed by false information!

Nigel Waters 0407 230 342 planning@trra.com.au 5



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