

# Council to write to NSW Premier in support of voluntary amalgamation with Dungog Shire Council

*Publish Date 28/02/2017*

**At its meeting tonight, Port Stephens councillors supported a Mayoral Minute which will see Council write to the NSW Government in support of a voluntary amalgamation with Dungog Shire Council.**

The decision comes in the immediate wake of the publication of the report by delegate Peter Peppin supporting the merger proposal between Port Stephens and Dungog Shire Councils.

Speaking after the meeting, Mayor Bruce MacKenzie said the decision to propose a voluntary merger was the morally correct decision.

"We fought to merge with Dungog last year and I stand by that proposal today", he said.

"The advantages for both Dungog and Port Stephens are as clear as day.

"A merge of our two councils will future-proof Port Stephens, by increasing us in scale and capacity; it is a popular decision with residents, and brings together like-minded communities", Mayor MacKenzie said.

95.3% of Port Stephens residents supported a merge with Dungog over Newcastle and 21.6% of all Dungog residents signed a petition in favour of a merge. 77.5% of people polled by the Dungog Chronicle were also in favour.

Mayor MacKenzie said the two communities were a natural fit.

"This will be a link between rural and coastal communities with similar outlooks, values and ways of life", he said.

"Importantly, this is a great insurance policy for the future of Port Stephens and help ensure we will be left to stand alone for generations to come.

"Hopefully the councillors and community of Dungog will see sense and support our resolution", Mayor MacKenzie said.

**The Council will write to NSW Premier, The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP, the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP and the Mayor of Dungog Shire Council advising Port Stephens Council is prepared to enter into a voluntary amalgamation with Dungog Shire Council.**

**It will also ask the Premier and the Minister for Local Government for financial contribution toward infrastructure backlog, amalgamation costs and removal of the rate freeze moratorium period, in order to assist the voluntary amalgamation.**