

*Tabled by Rosemary Mackenzie
during public forum
10 August 2015.*

I make this submission as a resident of Kensington.

It may be of interest that I have been the volunteer secretary of the Kensington & W Kingsford precinct, a residential advisory group of a total of 10 Randwick council precincts.

*Clerk:
John Miller.*

Kensington & West Kingsford Precinct is the largest and most vibrant of Randwick City Council's ("RCC") residential precincts. It is well-attended by local residents.

- A The KWKP and Joint Precincts of Randwick have consistently **REJECTED** amalgamation of Randwick City Council with any other council or into a global city council as indicated by the **resolutions** below.

KWKP meeting 17 June 2013

Resolution 1

UNANIMOUS: KWKP is against any amalgamations of local councils; residents wished to retain their voice on their local council, Randwick LGA, and prefer to bring their concerns to the attention of their local elected representative. The state government's argument of "improved efficiencies" has not been demonstrated in either the Sansom Report (Prof G Sansom) or by amalgamations of interstate councils, for example Victoria. On the contrary, Victorian amalgamations have demonstrated a significant loss of services to ratepayers.

KWKP meeting 18 May 2015

Resolution 2 - UNANIMOUS

- (a) That Randwick City Council engage expert Independent Consultants to prepare a Council Improvement proposal (T2) to satisfy the IPART assessment criteria as a stand-alone Council in compliance with the **UNANIMOUS** council resolution of 23 September 2014, that **Randwick City council is unambiguously OPPOSED to amalgamation with any council**; residents note that Woollahra council has such a finalised Report from GRANT THORNTON on its website and
- (b) That Randwick City Council engage the Independent consultants **WITHOUT DELAY** to present its position in support of the above council resolution of 23 Sep 2014 and
- (c) That Randwick City Council **must** provide the T2 Council Improvement proposal to all Randwick Councillors and to residents and precincts **PRIOR** to consideration of any merger proposals

Ordinary Council 23 September 2015 - **Motion Pursuant to Notice No. NM103/14**

In light of the recent Department of Local Government study rating Randwick Council as financially strong and the subsequent media reports indicating the Mayor of Randwick (Daily Telegraph 11 September 2014) was supporting amalgamations and had been in talks with the Mayors of Waverley and Woollahra Councils (SMH 11 September 2014, that:

1. this Council unambiguously state it is opposed to the amalgamation of Randwick City Council;
2. the Councillors affirm that they are opposed to amalgamation of Randwick Council now and after the Council Election of 16 September 2016.
3. the Council write to the State Members for Maroubra, Heffron and Coogee and seek an assurance that there be no forced amalgamations of local government after the 2016 Local Government Election.
4. the Council immediately notify residents, ratepayers, businesses, community groups, sporting clubs, surf lifesaving clubs and council staff that this Council does not support the amalgamation of Randwick Council.
5. Council fund a public awareness campaign opposing any amalgamation of Randwick Council.

Resolution 3 - UNANIMOUS

The KWKP Precinct re-affirms that Randwick City council must stand alone, and is opposed to amalgamation with any other council or councils and maintains this is the community's clearly expressed preference and the precinct approves the Secretary submitting its position at the council meeting on 26 May and approves the secretary making written submission to IPART.

Joint Precincts Randwick LGA - 17 January 2015

Attending: Residents and Precinct representatives from across Randwick City Council (RCC) area.

We residents of Randwick City declare:

- 1 We are opposed to the amalgamation of Randwick City Council with any other council.
- 2 We are opposed to any change to the Randwick City Council boundaries.
- 3 We support the unanimous RCC resolution (NM 103/14, 23 September 2014) and call on Council to fund a public awareness campaign opposing amalgamations.

- 4 We support the retention of local Precinct Committees as an essential method of community consultation, as recommended by the ICAC report into Randwick City Council 1995.

OBJECTIONS TO RCC'S Fit for the Future(FFTF) Information pack

- 5 We do not accept the validity of the figures in the Randwick FFTF Information pack, nor do we accept its assertions.
- 6 We request the references and e-copies of full source documents for all figures, claims and surveys quoted in RCC's FFTF brochure.
- 7 We request a full copy of the Cost Benefits Analysis, referenced at the bottom of pages 5 to 11.
- 8 We consider that RCC's "Randwick City Future" brochure and strategy is an **attack on democracy** because the brochure appears to be designed to confuse and manipulate the community into supporting the NSW government "global city" amalgamations agenda for high-rise development by coaxing residents to choose amalgamation with Councils with higher real estate values without informing them of the hidden disadvantages.
- 9 We **reject the assertion that "population size" is the only criterion for deciding the boundaries of a council**; other factors are important determinants.
- 10 We are concerned that the FFTF information pack has never been reported to, and voted on, by full council as required by MM 92/14 resolution of full council 25 Nov 2015, paragraph 3, extracted below)

"3. Outcomes of the working party's due diligence be reported back to Council;"

- 11 We consider that a "**plebiscite**" (as forecast in the Mayor Seng's covering letter 29 Dec 2014) is an inferior method of gauging community opinion because it is subject to manipulation by vested interests.
- 12 We demand a **statutory referendum**, under the Local Government Act 1993, to be conducted by the State Electoral Office in a free and fair manner, posing a simple question for ratepayers and residents:

Do you support Randwick City Council amalgamating with other councils?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- 13 We seek full disclosure of all costs associated with the campaign to persuade residents to support amalgamation including the drafting, printing and mail-out of the Fit for the Future brochure to all residents and ratepayers.

B Forced merger – contrary to NSW Government's policy

RCC failure to hold PLEBISCITE

- 1 Randwick council has failed to hold a Plebiscite of residents in relation to its mergers despite resolving to do so (Mayoral Minute) 25 November & Ordinary council meeting 09 December 2014.

Contrary to (1) the Mayor's claims and (2) claims in RCC merger resolution of 26 May 2015 that **the electoral roll was not available**, the State Electoral Office's advice is that: (email to La Perouse Precinct 27 May 2015)

"We did offer Randwick Council (as a concession) the ability to conduct a mail-based poll by having them send poll material to a secure mail house and the NSWEC would then provide the roll to that mail house, only for the purpose of conducting that poll. Naturally any cost incurred by the NSWEC in providing such a service would be passed onto the council.

For this to occur the General Manager of Council would need to make a formal request to the Electoral Commissioner."

Yet on 14 May 2015, the Randwick Mayor claimed on ABC Radio 702, that there was a **"roadblock"** to holding the plebiscite. See **MEDIA RELEASE** extracted below:

<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/about-council/news/news-items/2015/may/council-amalgamation-plebiscite-hits-roadblock>

Council amalgamation plebiscite hits roadblock Published Date 14/05/2015

A Randwick Council plan to hold a public plebiscite on the issue of council amalgamations has hit a roadblock with the NSW Electoral Commission refusing to release the electoral roll.

Randwick City Council was planning to hold the plebiscite or 'poll' this month as part of its community consultation program in response to the State Government's Fit for the Future amalgamation plan.

Randwick Mayor Ted Seng said that without an electoral roll, Council would not be able to conduct a poll of enrolled voters.

"Council has resolved on a number of occasions since December 2012 to undertake a plebiscite of voters on the important issue of Council mergers.

"Council staff have been investigating the running of a plebiscite since late 2014 and were told by the Electoral Commission recently that Council's planned poll doesn't meet the purposes under which the Commission can release the roll of voters."

Council plebiscites or polls are non-binding and non-compulsory but provide an opportunity for interested voters to express their view.

"While I'm disappointed that we're now unlikely to be able to run a plebiscite, I'm confident that our community has had the opportunity to provide feedback on Council amalgamations through our extensive community engagement program. More than 8,000 residents and ratepayers have so far taken part through a reply-paid survey, online survey, telephone surveys, focus groups and pop-up information stalls at local parks, beaches and shopping centres," Mayor Seng said.

Randwick Councillors will reconsider the issue of holding a plebiscite on Council mergers at a Council Meeting on 26 May 2015.

I allege that the Randwick / Waverley merger is a **FORCED MERGER** contrary to NSW government's policy, contrary to ALP policy and contrary to Greens policy, for these reasons:

- 2 The RCC merger resolution of 26 May 2015 clearly acknowledges that *the "City community has broadly indicated that they would prefer Council to remain as a stand-alone entity, rather than merge with other Councils"*.
- 3 More than half the residents of Randwick LGA have been deprived of the opportunity to vote on Randwick's proposed merger with Waverley.
- 4 A RCC WORKING PARTY of "like minded councilors" lacked decision making powers, but nevertheless drafted and approved the mailout (December 2014) of 65000 community surveys to Randwick residents, 50 000 ratepayers and 15 000 non-residents. The population recorded at Randwick is currently 142 310 people¹.
- 5 Randwick's community survey is best characterized as "push polling". The survey was mailed out WITHOUT the approval of FULL COUNCIL
- 6 Less than 6500 or 10% of surveys were returned to Council.
- 7 Council resolved UNANIMOUSLY to support a STANDALONE council on 23 September 2014. The community's position was clearly reflected by a MICROMEX survey in 2013 where 71% of residents polled supported a STANDALONE council.
- 8 By 25 November 2014, Council's position went under rapid change. Residents view Council's changed position as a result of political pressure from Macquarie street. Mayoral Minute RCC resolved to set up a "like-minded councilor working party":

25 November 2014 – Ordinary meeting -MM92/14 Mayoral Minute - Fit for the Future (F2004/06554) 359/14 RESOLUTION: (Mayor, Cr T Seng) that:

1. Council establishes a **working party** consisting of the Mayor, a representative of the ALP Councillors, a representative of the Greens Councillors, a representative of the Independent Councillors, and the General Manager, to undertake the necessary due diligence to enable Council to respond in accordance with the 'Fit for the Future' templates, due June 2015;

2. Council advises the United Services Union that it is supportive of the Union's objective of ensuring the protection of Council employees' conditions and the request

for the establishment of a peak committee of representatives from Council's management and the relevant Unions to consult on the development of Council's response to the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' policy;

3. outcomes of the working party's due diligence be reported back to Council; and

4. Council consults with the local community by way of a plebiscite or other means to determine our community's view on amalgamations.

- 9 When conducting a PROBITY - AUDIT of the returned surveys, at page 9 of its METHODOLOGY – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT council's submission asserts:

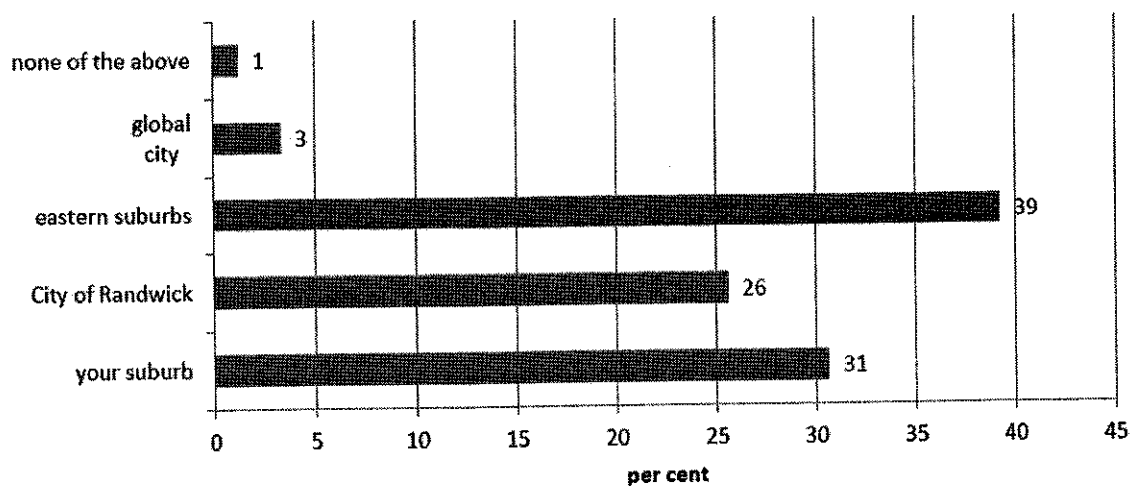
"After the survey data had been entered into the survey database, Audit selected 10 random data entries made by each of the four data entry staff (40 in total) and reviewed each against the protocols and checks outlined in the Audit advice, with the following results:

Audit was unable to check the number of data entries on the database against the number of surveys received as the hard copy surveys had not been counted on receipt.

- 10 The SURVEY results clearly indicated an unambiguous result when the AMALGAMATION question was posed CLEARLY. A majority of Randwick residents support a STANDALONE Randwick council.

- 11 Question 6 of the SURVEY posed the question –

Q6 – which of the following do you most strongly associate with?



Council's interpretation is that the highest number 39% preferred an Eastern Suburbs council. However, there is NO SUBURBAN COUNCIL.

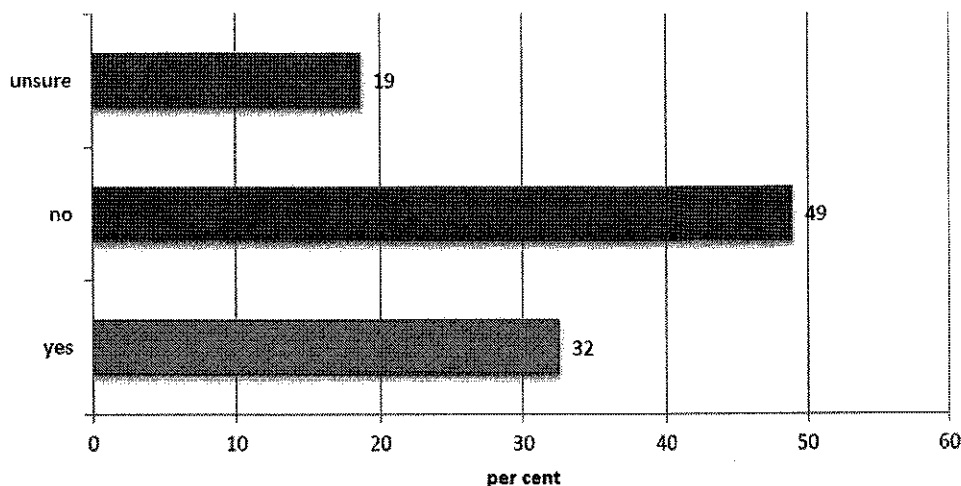
IF the result for "your suburb" is consolidated with "City of Randwick" a better interpretation is that $26 + 31\% =$ a clear majority of 57% preferred NO CHANGE.

12 The response to Survey Q7 – **Should Randwick City Council be amalgamated?** could not have been clearer.

49% said NO; 32% said YES and 19% were UNSURE

Randwick council has interpreted this result INCORRECTLY as 51% support change or are UNSURE.

[See: Randwick City Futures community survey results analysis report]



	Count	%
yes	2038	32
no	3069	49
unsure	1169	19
	6276	100

COMMENT

A majority of respondents feel Council should not be amalgamated.

Almost 1 in 5 respondents are unsure. This could be partly to do with the open-ended nature of this question in that the type and scope of amalgamation is not defined.

Throughout this survey, the data consistently shows that 49% of people support Council standing alone while the remaining 51% either propose some sort of change or are unsure.

I think the community's voice will be lost in a super council. Randwick is sustainable and does not need to amalgamate.
– Maroubra resident

Once amalgamated, I fear that my area's needs may not be taken seriously.
– Matraville resident

Randwick council & the suburb of Maroubra could get 'lost' in the amalgamation - I feel it's too many councils to amalgamate.
– Maroubra resident

There is a definite need to amalgamate, as a suburb Randwick will not lose its identity. There should not be funds allocated to fighting the merger by ratepayers, as this is not a political battle and the money should be used for services that are required. Not to save councillors a spot on a committee.
– Randwick resident

Please amalgamate - local councils are a joke & wasteful.
– Maroubra resident

13 Questions 8, 9, and 10 were coercive and must be ruled out of any statistically valid result. Any person who attempted to complete the survey online could not exit unless these push-polling questions were completed. The data arising from these questions compiled by Council and the results are a misinterpretation.

14 RCC has failed to submit a T2 standalone proposal to IPART consistent with the outcome of the community SURVEY. Instead RCC has submitted a T1 merger proposal with Waverley council, supported by 8 individuals out of 142 310 – being a bare majority of Randwick councillors.

- 15 Amalgamations were never canvassed at the recent NSW election. Amalgamations was not canvassed at the last Randwick council election in 2012.
- 16 A Randwick councillor has claimed on 14 May 2015 ABC RADIO 7am news bulletin that the Randwick Waverley merger was brought about by “a GUN TO OUR HEAD”.

Councillor Matson, “We *MUST RECOGNISE WE HAVE A GUN TO OUR HEAD* – Any council who puts in a submission to *STANDALONE* will be *NOT FIT FOR THE FUTURE*, massive super councils will prevail across Sydney”.

Councillor Matson was part of the “working group of four like-minded councillors” driving the FFTF process.

- 17 Another councilor has claimed “a high probability that our council may be sacked” in the local paper Southern Courier (Your say 19 May 2015).

No ignoring mergers

SINCE being elected to Randwick Council in 2012, I have come to realise that there are some circumstances which are beyond the control of the council and its elected representatives. This includes council amalgamations. IPART have made it quite clear that the option of “standing alone” isn’t an option. Our only option is to submit a Fit For The Future proposal by June 30 to ensure Randwick has some control in determining its destiny, so that as a community we will be heard. If we sit back and refuse to lodge a proposal, Randwick will be deemed “unfit”. There is also a high probability that our council may be sacked while the transitional period towards a forced amalgamation takes place. This could mean our residents would have no representation during the transitional period, depriving them of a democratic voice. As much as I may be opposed to the forced amalgamation of Randwick Council, we need to ensure that the best possible outcome will be achieved.

HARRY STAVRINOS, Liberal councillor

- 18 Randwick’s proposal to amalgamate with Waverley is a recently adopted position, after Woollahra firmly rejected amalgamation. This Randwick Waverley amalgamation was NEVER clearly spelt out to residents.

Randwick taking on Waverley’s debt

- 19 Randwick is debt free.

- 20 Waverley Council has been in debt in 2013/14 (DLG statistics Operating Performance Ratio); it's 2014/15 debt free position is due to a one-off sale of a council depot.

Waverley Council is far advanced in plans to purchase land and build grand new council offices at Bondi Junction, at \$60M cost to ratepayers; this type of development project is bound to suffer costs blowout. Currently, this grand plan of Waverley Mayor Betts is not fully funded.

Loss of services and loss of staff

- 21 Residents understand that loss of staff means loss of services for local residents and / or delay in services.

Randwick has claimed that there will be no staff losses; such a claim lacks transparency and thus lacks accountability and integrity

Scale and capacity – RCC's error –IPART requirements

- 22 Randwick Council erroneously states in its MERGER RESOLUTION of 26 May 2015 that "it cannot meet the requirement for standing alone" – this is a failure to update its submission in accordance with revised IPART requirements of 06 June - METHODOLOGY

"(c)Randwick City Council acknowledges that based on the proposed IPART methodology for assessing Fit For The Future submissions it cannot meet the requirement for standing alone which is to demonstrate superior scale and capacity when compared to the Independent Local Government Review Panel's recommendation of the merger of Randwick City with City of Sydney, Woollahra, Waverley and Botany Bay (Global City)"

Residents were unclear whether the Scale & Capacity criteria were one or two.

Randwick council has adequate SCALE, currently 142 310 and expected to grow to 174 000 by 2031 (Department of Planning demography statistics - projected growth). However, this number is more than likely to be drastically increased, when at this week's (July 2015) ordinary council meeting, two Liberal councilors and one Independent were calling for a review of Randwick's LEP to **permit URBAN ACTIVATION**, when the Minister and Department of Planning have put the UAP strategy **ON HOLD**.

Randwick council has demonstrated CAPACITY. Randwick has "partnered" with the NSW government, UNSW and Randwick Hospitals in the South East Light rail

The argument of CAPACITY has been raised in relation to hiring staff with additional skills is merely a job description issue.

The IPART METHODOLOGY (April 2015) at page 23 makes clear that the government's AGENDA is to coerce HIGH RISE DEVELOPMENT.

The NSW government repeatedly quotes the need for more “**affordable housing**” as a marketing excuse.

Yet, the NSW government’s JRPP panel has failed to make any provision for affordable housing on the giant **INGLIS NEWMARKET** stable site (Barker street, Randwick opposite the Randwick Hospitals and adjacent to UNSW) when approving an approximate yield of 700 dwellings, 5 days after the STATE ELECTION 28 March 2015. Quite specifically, this approval had been **HELD OVER** until after the state election.

Cost shifting – NSW and Federal governments to Councils

- 23 Residents fear that amalgamations will result in federal and state governments, **COST-SHIFTING** financial liabilities, for example for public works, roads, sewerage, and the like to merged councils – see page 23 IPART METHODOLOGY April 2015
- 24 The question must arise – there is nothing to prevent the NSW government imposing “Budget Levies” with a stroke of the pen, as the former Victorian Premier did in the 1990’s. His budget levy was imposed on all including aged pensioners, for a period of 3 years.

Rate Increases

- 25 Rates increases: A “streamlined process” is available to amalgamated councils submitting increased **rates** applications. RCC has claimed in all its FFTF Information booklets, mailed to residents, a **COSTS BENEFIT ANALYSIS** that there will be **NO RATES INCREASE**. Yet, Randwick has routinely sought rate variations from IPART and Randwick residents pay **HIGHER** rates than Waverley. Randwick recoups the highest business rates - \$12.8 million in 2103/4, Waverley \$11million. Randwick’s IPART **MERGER** submission proposes construction of light rail from Randwick to Bondi Junction and Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach.
- 26 The NSW government –**AMALGAMATIONS** agenda is slanted towards developers. There is no clearer evidence of this than, the repeated spruiking of property developers, Urban Taskforce pronouncements as an addendum to every announcement of Local government Minister Toole.¹

C The need for a **BINDING REFERENDUM** – Let the people decide

24 Referendum mandatory – keep the “local community” in local government

¹ 7 June 2015, smh, *Five largest councils at bottom of class*, Chris Johnson, chief executive of the Urban Taskforce, says “reform is essential but rather than amalgamations the answer could be shared service centres or joint organisations such as one contemplated by Ryde, Hunters Hill and Lane Cove councils”.
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/five-largest-councils-found-to-be-bottom-of-the-class-on-key-ratio-20150706-gi6102.html>

At the outset, Kensington residents maintain that there must be **No council amalgamations except by prior referenda of ratepayers**. The amalgamations are bound to result in:

- Reduced representation
- Loss of local voice and loss of local identity
- Loss of local amenity – due to the NSW government’s development agenda
- Increased rates, charges and levies such as parking fees
- Longer service times and job losses of council staff
- Reduction of services

All of the above will seriously impact the community.

25 Instead council’s amalgamation resolution of 26 May says this at paragraph (l):

Randwick City Council acknowledges that due to:

- The timing of the receipt of the proposed assessment methodology from IPART; and
- NSW Electoral Commission’s refusal to provide Council with copies of the electoral roll;
- Council is no longer able to conduct a plebiscite of its residents as previously intended. As such, in accordance with the views of individual Councillors, Council requests the government permit a binding referendum.....

Enclosure – Merger Resolution of 26 May below

26 May 2015 Amalgamations RESOLUTION: (Nash/Smith) that:

- a) Randwick City Council believes that it is Fit for the Future as evidenced by the following :
- Council is financially strong, meeting all the Fit for the Future financial, asset and efficiency benchmarks now and into the future with the exception of the debt service ratio benchmark due to Council's debt free position;
 - Council has quality political and managerial leadership, with a proven track record of engagement, sound decision making and delivering for the community whilst being a capable partner for State and Federal agencies;
 - The Randwick City community has broadly indicated that they would prefer Council to remain as a stand-alone entity, rather than merge with other Councils;
- b) Randwick City Council acknowledges that based on the proposed IPART methodology for assessing Fit For The Future submissions it cannot meet the requirement for standing alone which is to demonstrate superior scale and capacity when compared to the Independent Local Government Review Panel's recommendation of the merger of Randwick City with City of Sydney, Woollahra, Waverley and Botany Bay (Global City);
- c) Randwick City Council and its community is strongly opposed to the Global City merger proposal and Council understands that the Global City merger proposal is the default position if it does not make an alternate merger submission that is broadly consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Local Government Review Panel;
- d) That Council submits a Council Merger Proposal (Template 1), in accordance with the Fit for the Future guidance material, proposing a merger of Randwick City with Waverley and Botany Bay Councils;
- e) That Council writes to its proposed merger partners:
- advising of Council's resolution;
 - encouraging them to consider an identical resolution; and
 - offering to submit the Council Merger Proposal on behalf of the merger group;
- f) The Fit for the Future guidance material clearly states that a Council Merger Proposal must be endorsed by all Councils in the proposed group. Therefore, Council recognises the importance of establishing, as a base case, a merger of Randwick City with Waverley (subject to their agreement) for the following reasons:
- Botany Bay Council have publicly expressed opposition to any amalgamation proposal on numerous occasions whilst Waverley's position is similar to Randwick's in that they would prefer to stand alone and are strongly opposed and would be disadvantaged by being part of the Global City model and have therefore worked collaboratively with Council;
 - Randwick City and Waverley contain the two largest populations of the Eastern Suburbs Councils and can achieve an appropriate minimum population to demonstrate scale and capacity;

- Council's community consultation indicated a Randwick/Waverley merger as being the most favoured of the five alternate merger options to the Global City; Therefore, in the event that unanimous agreement cannot be obtained from the proposed merger partners, in accordance with the Fit for the Future guidance material, Council will submit a Council Merger Proposal (Template 1) proposing a merger of Randwick and Waverley (subject to their agreement) as a base case. This proposal may also include Botany Bay subject to agreement of the base case merger partners. This proposal would include, within the 'Scale and Capacity' section, Randwick City Council's position that a merger of Randwick City with Waverley and Botany Bay Councils is considered the optimal outcome;
- g) A pre-condition of any merger is that the merger partners agree to accept the enhanced employment protections of 5 years contained within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Randwick City Council and the Unions;
 - h) The General Manager be given delegated authority to sign the MOU with the Unions and finalise the Fit for the Future submission, based on the due diligence undertaken in the development of the Options Analysis documentation, and submit it prior to the 30 June 2015 deadline;
 - i) In the event of a merger, Randwick City Council's position is that the voting system should be proportional representation;
 - j) That the General Manager bring a report to the July 2015 Council meeting regarding items for the Local Transition Committee including; number of Councillors, ward structures, the preservation of the history of Randwick City, centre of Government, and membership of the Local Transition Committee;
 - k) Council write to the NSW Office of Local Government requesting that the membership of the proposed Local Transition Committee to be established to transition the merger partner Councils to the new amalgamated Council be changed from the Mayor, one other Councillor and the General Manager of each merger partner Council, to the Mayor, two other Councillors and the General Manager of each merger partner Council
 - l) Randwick City Council acknowledges that due to:
 - The timing of the receipt of the proposed assessment methodology from IPART; and
 - NSW Electoral Commission's refusal to provide Council with copies of the electoral roll;

Council is no longer able to conduct a plebiscite of its residents as previously intended. As such, in accordance with the views of individual Councillors, Council requests the government permit a binding referendum on this issue prior to any merger being implemented and to request the NSW Electoral Commission to release the electoral rolls to Randwick City, Botany Bay, Waverley, Woollahra and City of Sydney Councils to enable this to occur.

In addition, we intend to examine the proposal's consistency with the broader regional and state-wide objectives of the ILGRP's preferred option, including economic, transport, regional planning and equity objectives.³⁷ As an example, we will consider the following ILGRP objectives:

▼ For Metropolitan areas:

- create high capacity councils that can better represent and serve their local communities on metropolitan issues, and be true partners of State and federal agencies
- establish a more equitable pattern of local government across the metropolitan area, taking into account planned development
- underpin Sydney's status as a global city
- support implementation of the Metropolitan Strategy, especially the planning and development of major centres and the preparation and implementation of sub-regional Delivery Plans.³⁸

▼ For Regional or rural areas:

- ensure that local government in these areas remains in place and is 'fit for purpose' and can maintain community life and identity to the maximum possible extent
- where possible, create a regional centre with the necessary scale and capacity to anchor a Joint Organisation
- where possible, ensure that there are close functional inter-relationships (eg, 'overspill' development, commuter catchments, service provision) between a regional centre and adjoining council areas, and
- address 'councils at risk' in regional areas through amalgamations with adjoining areas.³⁹

³⁷ The ILGRP identified the need to reduce compliance costs to the community from dealing with a number of small councils and duplication of services, and for councils to become effective partners with the State. ILGRP, *Revitalising Local Government - Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel*, October 2013, p 72.

³⁸ ILGRP, *Revitalising Local Government - Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel*, October 2013, pp 98-99.

³⁹ ILGRP, *Revitalising Local Government - Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel*, October 2013, pp 85 and 92-93.

Ray Brownlee <Ray.Brownlee@randwick.nsw.gov.au>

Mon, Jun 1, 2015 at 11:00 AM

To: Kensington Voice <kensingtonvoice15@gmail.com>, Jeff Smith <Jeff.Smith@randwick.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: Ray Brownlee <Ray.Brownlee@randwick.nsw.gov.au>

Dear Ms Mackenzie

As a supporter of residents expressing their views regarding Council matters, I have held the position that I should not get involved in the public conversation as that is a matter for the Councillors. However, your email that you sent Councils Director Governance and Financial Services that I was copied into, requires me to enter this matter. As I am responsible for the wellbeing of the staff at Randwick Council and it is important to bring to your attention the facts around your concerns.

As advised at the extraordinary Council meeting on 30 May 2015, Dr Jayasooriah was the first person to contact Council requesting to make a submission to the Council meeting. Dr Jayasooriah, made this request in writing on Wednesday 27 May at 4:19pm and was acknowledged by Council's Precinct Coordinator at 8:14am Thursday 28 May 2015. It is my understanding that you contacted Council on the afternoon of Thursday 28 May 2014 to register to speak at the meeting. Clearly after the request to address Council came from Dr Jayasooriah.

Unfortunately, Dr Jayasooriah request to address Council was not forwarded to the section of the Council that manages the registration of the speakers. As such your request to speak was accepted. When Council became aware of the matter, the Mayor was advised, and the Mayor advised that he will be maintaining the Code of Meeting Practice and allowing only 1 speaker for and 1 speaker against. The Mayor also advised that the member of the community that requested to address Council first would be the person that could address Council and for Council staff to advise the residents that had already contacted Council to register to speak.

It is my understanding that the Director Governance & Financial Services Jeff Smith telephoned you on Friday 29 May 2015 and sent an email to you advising you of the Mayors decision. As you are aware the Mayor and the Council voted at the Council meeting on 30 May 2015 to allow only 1 speaker for and 1 speaker against, as per the Code of Meeting Practice.

In relation to the plebiscite, all Councillors were provided with the advice and correspondence from the Electoral Commission regarding the refusal to provide the

electoral rolls and the offer from the Electoral Commission to use a secure mailing house to send a reply paid question to the residents as an alternative to providing the electoral rolls. This was provided to the Councillors at the April Councillor briefing sessions and an email with the background and the correspondence from the Electoral Commission was sent to all Councillors on Thursday 28 May 2015.

The matter of the plebiscite was discussed by the Councillors at three separate Councillor briefing sessions, and these discussions included

- Council has already sent out a reply paid survey to the 65,000 residents and ratepayers, and has asked the question should Randwick Council be amalgamated,
- any survey Council undertakes is not binding on the government,
- Councillors needed more time to consider the Options Analysis reports as at that stage the Councillors were not in position to put any proposed merger arrangement, to the residents as this would require a formal resolution of the Council.

I have provided the above information for you to outline the events surrounding these two matters that you have raised.

In saying that it is extremely disappointing that you have question my integrity and the integrity of one of my staff, based on limited information and drawing inferences and assumptions. All Councillors were aware of the facts that I have outlined above, and as the representatives of the community, they make the best decisions they believe are in the interest of the community based on the information they have. I note, that you have as you are entitled to do, put your position to the Councillors on two occasions when you addressed Council and in many emails. This is just some of the information that Councillors take on board to consider when making a decision. It cannot be reasonably stated that you have not had the access or the opportunity to put your views on this matter.

In the future, it would be appreciated that if you have a concern regarding a Council staff member, that you inform me and not the staff member, and I will take the appropriate action if required. Should you not be satisfied with my dealing of the staff matter, you can of course refer that to the Mayor.

Finally, I consider your email to impugned my motives and integrity and I respectfully request the withdrawal of your email and an apology.

Regards

Ray Brownlee

General Manager