

**Submission
No 158**

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr James Dolton

Date received: 7/07/2015

To the Committee Members

Re: Inquiry into local government in New South Wales

I am making a submission as a private citizen. In relation to your terms of reference, my submission relates to the City of Sydney and Woollahra Council and is directed in the main towards the following criteria:

1 (g) costs and benefits of amalgamations for local residents and businesses.

1 (k) The known and or likely costs and benefits of amalgamation for local communities.

History of Paddington Council

Firstly, it is worth placing on the record the history of the Paddington. The Municipality of Paddington was proclaimed in 1860. Paddington continued to be administered by its own Council until 1949. In 1949, in an earlier fit of amalgamations, Paddington Council was abolished and the suburb absorbed into the City of Sydney. It remained there until 1968 when it was decided to shrink the City of Sydney (probably for political reasons) and the village was split down Oxford Street. The southern part of Paddington remained in the City of Sydney, with the northern part transferring into the Municipality of Woollahra.

Observed costs to residents of Paddington from the current arrangements

Paddington is to this day an urban village divided from a municipal perspective. Half in the City of Sydney, and half in Woollahra Council. There are a number of drawbacks to this approach:

- Oxford Street – There is no single governing body for Oxford Street. This historic thoroughfare (established in 1803 as the main route to the South Head signal station, aka South Head Road) was once a golden mile for retail. However, today it struggles to compete with the sterile malls of Bondi Junction and has fallen on hard times, with vacant shops far too common. Whilst I have read about many initiatives to revitalise the strip in recent years, a common failing is that there is no single body that can co-ordinate this response to provide the strip with the renewal it needs. I believe that the City of Sydney, with its experience in urban areas, is much better placed to lead this renewal.
- Paddington Library – As was recently noted in correspondence to the Wentworth Courier, the suburb of Paddington is the poor cousin of the local library scene. In Double Bay, the Woollahra Council funded library opens Sunday from 10am to 4pm. In Surry Hills, the City of Sydney funded library is also open from 10am to 4pm. However Paddington Library, which in theory is funded by both Woollahra and City of Sydney, is closed on Sunday. Again, a single responsible party would likely lead to a better result.
- Historic Fabric – As one of the few mostly intact Victorian era suburbs in Sydney, Paddington is an historical gem that risks losing its unique charm under differing treatment to developmental controls. Again, a single responsible party would lead to a better result.

Proposal for consideration by the Inquiry

Regardless of the fate of Woollahra Council, and I would point out that as a ratepayer I am less than impressed by their self-serving campaign to retain their positions, my proposal is that the suburb of Paddington be re-united (at a minimum). In my mind, Paddington has more in common with the urban villages of Darlinghurst and Surry Hills than it does with the far eastern suburbs of Vaucluse and Bellevue Hill. The best fit for the suburb is within the City of Sydney.

Recommendation: The entirety of Paddington be governed by the City of Sydney. This can be achieved by simply transferring the northern part of Paddington from Woollahra Council back to the City of Sydney.

Thank you in advance for consideration of this submission.

Regards,

James Dolton

Paddington Resident / Current Woollahra Council ratepayer