

# MAYORAL MINUTES

## WARRINGAH COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2013



Rik Hart  
General Manager

(2013/5)



Warringah Council



**Mayoral Minutes for an Ordinary Meeting of Council  
to be held on Tuesday 23 April 2013  
at the Civic Centre, Dee Why  
Commencing at 6:00pm**

**5.0 MAYORAL MINUTES**

5.1	Mayoral Minute No 8/2013 - Amalgamations .....	1
5.2	Mayoral Minute No 9/2013 - NSW Planning White Paper .....	3
5.3	Mayoral Minute No 10/2013 - Proposal for Council to Join Planned Northern Beaches University Steering Committee .....	5



<b>ITEM 5.1</b>	<b>MAYORAL MINUTE NO 8/2013 - AMALGAMATIONS</b>
<b>TRIM FILE REF</b>	<b>2013/084060</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>NIL</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

Warringah Council is in the strongest position it has been in for decades. We are financially stable and have a large and increasing approval rating from the community. We have just been named by the NSW Treasury Corporation as one of only three councils that will be financially sustainable as at 2016.

This achievement has been made thanks to the hard work of Councillors, staff and the community and while Council has maintained infrastructure and the delivery of services for the community.

We are rightly proud but also mindful that so much more needs to be done. Local governments across the State and around the world are in trouble. The model does not work and most of us recognise that reform is needed.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my strong belief that local government is in need of change and I welcome the current review into Local Government Reform. The roles of State and Local Governments need to be clearly defined before any models for change can be considered.

While I have publicly stated that I believe that forced amalgamations are not acceptable, I will add that I am not opposed to amalgamations per se. However, any amalgamation or model to be recommended by the review must be in the best interests of its local community and certainly not forced.

I can see anecdotal evidence that one bureaucracy across several Council areas would create significant savings and reduce duplication. There is no reason why each area could not keep their local and unique identities - as demonstrated within the New Zealand models of local government.

Given Warringah has worked incredibly hard over the last four years to deliver the sound position we are in today, I certainly do not wish to see a model forced onto this Council which would negate our efforts thus far, delivering lesser results or higher costs for our community.

This is undoubtedly clear recognition of the efforts of this Council and its staff and our strong and responsible approach to managing the business of Council ultimately benefitting all of our residents and ratepayers.

At a recent SHOROC meeting, it was resolved that each Council including Warringah endorse the position - *To agree, to a policy that SHOROC member councils continue to collaborate regionally on policy and operational issues as an alternative to forced amalgamations.*

I think we should go one step further and propose that staff engage an independent third party to investigate and report back to Council on the pros and cons of new models, clearly outlining the potential benefits and possible negative impacts that such a model would present for Warringah. We owe it to our residents and ratepayers - and I believe to our neighbouring councils - to present the facts so an informed decision about any reforms can be made in the future.

Both State and Local Government need serious reform and this requires a detailed, informed discussion with our community. If done correctly and in proper consultation with our residents and ratepayers, a reshaped local council could retain a strong local voice, while also achieving better strategic decisions in areas such as lagoon management, infrastructure planning and road maintenance. There could be many direct benefits for local residents, ranging from coordinated, consistent policies on tree removal and boat parking to the provision of a single beach parking sticker for the entire region. A strong, large Council would provide consistency and stability and could fill a decision making void which would stop decisions and costs being shifted between State and Local Governments.

It is certainly incumbent on us as Councillors to represent the residents and ratepayers effectively. We need to demonstrate clearly that we are looking at the best value for their rates, keeping our debts low, maintaining our infrastructure, delivering new infrastructure, providing better services but overall, continuing to drive efficient and effective systems and create a culture of excellence and improvement for the community.

I understand funding is available under existing operating budgets to undertake this work.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- A. Notes that Warringah is one of only 3 Councils in this State judged independently by the NSW Treasury Corporation to be in a strong and sustainable position beyond 2016
- B. Notes that Our Community Satisfaction ratings and internal staff surveys continue to trend upward and are seen as a benchmark for other Councils
- C. Notes that Council has delivered 4 continuous years of genuine surplus budgets whilst reducing its backlog of infrastructure and building new and key infrastructure for the next generations
- D. Is committed to reform and not opposed to Amalgamations where it is demonstrated to be in the best interests of its community
- E. Agrees that SHOROC member councils continue to collaborate regionally on policy and operational issues as an alternative to forced amalgamations.
- F. Propose that staff prepare a report via an independent third party that examines reform models for councils that highlights both the benefits and negative impacts for current and any proposed neighbouring residents and
  - a. Agrees to look at an expanded Region of Councils as part of a draft report
  - b. Report back to Council with the findings of the investigation within 3 months of the Local Government Reform "Future Directions" Paper being published.
  - c. Funds to be allocated from existing operational budgets
- G. Applies to the State Government for funding of this report



**Michael Regan**  
**MAYOR**

<b>ITEM 5.2</b>	<b>MAYORAL MINUTE NO 9/2013 - NSW PLANNING WHITE PAPER</b>
<b>TRIM FILE REF</b>	<b>2013/112792</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>NIL</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

The NSW Department of Planning released the White Paper which essentially redefines a planning system that has been in place for over 30 years in this State.

The White Paper follows on from feedback received on the State Government's Green Paper which was released last year. The State Government are now seeking further comments from all stakeholders including the public prior to the legislation being drafted and put to Parliament later in the year.

The White Paper is a very comprehensive document which outlines hugely significant changes to the current planning system and will have a major impact on the business of council, businesses and the general public in relation to planning and development matters in the future.

The State Government is responsible for informing all stakeholders on the changes proposed and I understand there may be workshops being arranged similar to those held to discuss the Green Paper. While I believe staff are currently reviewing the implications for Warringah as a local government organisation, I believe it is also vital that we provide the local community an opportunity to hear our interpretation of the changes and to gain their input prior to Council submitting its formal submission which I understand is due by the end of June 2013.

This is a significant piece of legislation which the Minister for Planning has stated looks at a number of key elements including community participation. So given this is a key element, I believe it is vital to inform our residents at our own community forums of our understanding of the changes so they are in a better position to make their own informed submissions.

Finally, I think it is important that we re-enforce the extension (already sought by staff) to the deadline for submissions. As I said, this is a comprehensive document and extremely complex and requires very close consideration by our staff in terms of the changes required to our business practices and structures. I would imagine many stakeholders will also be seeking an extension.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- A. Holds a community workshop on the NSW Planning White Paper and proposed legislation in June 2013, in order to inform our local community about the NSW planning reforms.
  - B. Formally requests the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to extend the consultation period to allow Councils and all stakeholders adequate time to consider the legislation and consult with their local communities.
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**Michael Regan**  
**MAYOR**





<b>ITEM 5.3</b>	<b>MAYORAL MINUTE NO 10/2013 - PROPOSAL FOR COUNCIL TO JOIN PLANNED NORTHERN BEACHES UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE</b>
<b>TRIM FILE REF</b>	<b>2013/111262</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>1 Letter From Pittwater Business Limited</b>

**BACKGROUND**

Resulting from the previous Council Meeting's Mayoral Minute No. 7/2013 - Accommodation Opportunity For Schools Within The Proposed Community Hub Precinct, representatives from Pittwater Business Limited have approached Warringah Council to determine the feasibility and appetite for a world-class university campus to be based within Warringah Council, potentially at the proposed Dee Why Community Hub site.

While having been first envisaged in 2005, this concept is still in it's formation stage, but a position paper has been widely circulated through levels of state government. To progress this concept development into a feasible opportunity, Pittwater Business Limited is now forming a Steering Committee and has requested that Council be represented, specifically:

- The Mayor
- A senior council officer from the relevant area

The concept of a Northern Beaches University based within the Community Hub in Dee Why is an attractive proposition that would likely drive the revitalisation of Dee Why, bring a range of businesses and most importantly create a tertiary education option for the Northern Beaches Community. As such I believe that Council should support this endeavour.

I have been advised by staff that this motion can be carried out within current operational budget.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council support the:

- A. Progression of the Northern Beaches University concept
  - B. Proposal for the Mayor and a suitable senior council officer, to be nominated by the General Manager, to be part of the Steering Committee
- 



**Michael Regan**  
**MAYOR**





**His Worship Cr Michael Regan**  
Mayor of Warringah  
Civic Centre  
725 Pittwater Rd  
Dee Why NSW 2099

Dear Mr Mayor,

**AN INITIATIVE OF PITTWATER BUSINESS LIMITED – A UNIVERSITY FOR THE NORTHERN BEACHES**

Thank you for taking the time to meet Mr Andrew Blunden and me on 16 April at the Civic Centre to discuss the concept of a university campus on the Northern Beaches.

The concept of a world-class university campus on the peninsula gained its initial momentum during a strategic planning workshop held with directors of Pittwater Business Limited and Pittwater Council representatives in 2010. This grew out of the original aims of Pittwater Business Limited as envisaged by Andrew in 2005, in particular his vision of establishing a higher education campus in the region.

Pittwater Business Limited board established a steering committee comprising Andrew and myself because of our interests in education. We wrote a position paper and this has been circulated to Mr Rob Stokes MP, The Hon Mike Baird MP, The Hon Bronwyn Bishop MP, the NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education, Ms Gabrielle Upton MP, Pittwater Council and Warringah Council. We have also been greatly assisted by the Regional Economic Development Coordinator at Warringah and Pittwater Councils, Mr Paul William-Smith. Pittwater Council has also included a section on the university concept in its current Economic Development Plan.

We have now reached a critical point in our concept development and the opportunity to nominate a centrally located site for potential university facilities would be a major step forward. The Dee Why Town Centre Draft Masterplan provides such an opportunity for us to explore in collaboration with Warringah Council.

**We welcome your proposal that Warringah Council be represented on the University for the Northern Beaches Steering Committee. We would be pleased if Mr Campbell Pfeiffer, Group Manager Building, Property and Spatial Information, as well as Your Worship both be formally nominated by the Council.**

Our next important milestone is to attract an international university to consider the opportunity. A nominated and preferred location, such as Dee Why Town Centre will definitely assist this next stage. Our success in

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Ph 1300 786 126  
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Supported by:  
 **PITTWATER  
COUNCIL**

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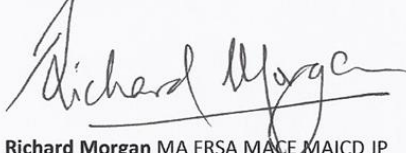
attracting a global university partner will provide the region with valuable and highly visible foreign investment. Innovation is needed throughout Australia to keep our communities competitive and aligning the Town Centre development with an international university puts Warringah and the Northern Beaches on the world stage.

We believe that this is a long-term project with huge educational and economic benefits for our community. It also meets a number of sustainability goals, viz:

- the potential adaptive re-use of existing buildings,
- a de-centralised business model achieving a "live local – work local" ethic,
- encourages youth to stay at home in our region and contribute to future economic growth, employment generation and long term business innovation,
- removes pressure from our choked transport corridors,
- is attractive to youth living outside the community to come here to study, and
- addresses an emerging demographic need for local tertiary education places now and particularly in eight years when the youth population 'bubble' reaches the end of their secondary schooling.

Thank you for your enthusiastic support for the concept. Andrew and I look forward to your contribution to our future deliberations as a member of our steering committee and the development of the concept for a university campus on the Northern Beaches.

Yours sincerely,



**Richard Morgan** MA FRSA MACE MAICD JP

Chairman

A University for the Northern Beaches Steering Committee

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19 April 2013

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