

# Mosman's future *your say*

Mosman  
COUNCIL

## Message from the mayor



At the 2011 State election the now NSW Government pledged "No Forced Amalgamations", however amalgamations still appear to be on the agenda. In September 2014 the NSW Government announced that all Councils would be required to demonstrate by 30 June 2015 how they intend to operate in the future under its 'Fit for the Future' program.

This announcement followed the Final Report of the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) which in October 2013 recommended numerous mergers, in our case a mega merger with five other councils: North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunters Hill, Willoughby and two-thirds of Ryde.

Under the 'Fit for the Future' program, councils are expected to demonstrate scale (in the order of 250,000 persons or more), strategic capacity and financial sustainability.

It is not clear that scale is a sensible stand alone criterion. And strategic capacity is defined in terms of 10 amorphous and unquantifiable concepts such as "Knowledge, creativity and innovation" and "Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development".

The NSW Government has not produced any evidence that larger councils are more financially sustainable than smaller councils. One reason is that small councils can develop effective partnerships and outsourcing arrangements as Mosman has done extensively with the Northern Beaches

group of councils known as SHOROC and with other councils. Moreover, any merged council must guarantee ongoing staffing levels for a period of three years.

The Mosman community has long supported independence. In a referendum at the 2012 election, 81% of voters opposed the amalgamation of Mosman with any other area. Nonetheless, it is critical that Mosman Council, and in turn the NSW Government, be fully informed about current community views on possible amalgamations. This information will inform our response to the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' program.

At Council's meeting on 17 February 2015, Council confirmed its strong opposition to forced amalgamations. Notwithstanding, Council agreed that the community be asked to review four possible options: these are continued independence, a 'mega merger' of the six councils proposed by the ILGRP or a merger with either neighbouring council, North Sydney or Manly.

To gauge your views on these options, a reply-paid feedback card is included which allows you to indicate your level of support for each option and also provides the opportunity to comment further. You can also visit Council's website and complete the online version if you prefer.

Responses can be provided to Council until Thursday 2 April 2015. We will then collate and report on the responses received to the May 2015 Council Meeting.

What sort of future do you want for Mosman? Please take the time to let us know your thoughts.

## Publicmeeting

A Public Meeting on this issue of critical importance to Mosman's Future will be held at Mosman Civic Centre on Monday 9 March 2015, commencing at 7pm. Come along to learn more and share your views.

*Peter Abelson*

Peter Abelson  
Mayor of Mosman

# OPTION 1

Maintain Mosman's Independence along with extensive collaboration with other councils, especially with SHOROC



Mosman

# OPTION 2

Mosman Council 'mega merger' with North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunters Hill, Willoughby and part of Ryde Council



Hunters Hill  
Part of Ryde

Willoughby  
Lane Cove

North Sydney  
Mosman

## What does this mean?

- Mosman continues as a stand-alone local government area, with its own locally-elected Council and local service delivery.
- Mosman local government area remains at its current size of 8.7 km<sup>2</sup>
- Mosman Council engages extensively in cross-border collaboration with other councils, particularly with the northern beaches grouping of councils (SHOROC) and other local authorities in northern Sydney.
- Mosman Council does not merge with any other local government authority.

## Some factors to consider

- The 'identity' and history of Mosman would be preserved.
- Local political representation would be retained.
- A local civic centre and all related facilities would be retained.
- Current Council policies, priorities and service standards can be maintained.
- The successful collaborations and partnerships that Mosman Council has established with other local Councils could continue. This includes joint purchasing and service delivery arrangements that have already delivered significant cost savings. New opportunities would continue to be sought.
- Mosman has a financially viable Council. If IPART approves the current application for a small Special Rate Variation (a 5.6% real increase over 2014-15), Mosman Council will be able to demonstrate formally that it meets the financial ratios outlined in the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' program.
- Mosman Council would not be able to demonstrate that it meets the 'scale and capacity' that the NSW Government has indicated as appropriate for a local government organisation.

## What does this mean?

- The six councils would be merged into one organisation, with one elected Council and a centralised administration and service delivery.
- Mosman ceases to exist as a local government area, becoming part of a much larger local area. A merger of the six councils would result in an overall area of approximately 84.8 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The combined population of the new local government area would be over 295,000, which would be 10 times the population of Mosman. The ILGRP has estimated that this population will rise to 365,400 by 2031.
- The likely location for an amalgamated Council would be in a large centre such as North Sydney or Chatswood.

## Some factors to consider

- The 'scale and capacity' criteria put forward by the NSW Government and the ILGRP as being appropriate to local government could be met.
- The coordination of major regional planning and delivery of regional infrastructure projects may be easier and/or more efficient in one larger organisation.
- However, neither the ILGRP nor the NSW Government has provided a business case for this proposal.
- It is understood that this option is not supported by any of the six councils.
- Mosman's local identity could be lost or much diminished as part of such a large area.
- The Mosman community would have little say in the determinations of this mega council. The amalgamated area would be governed by one group of elected Councillors up to a maximum of 15 elected members with minimal Mosman representation.
- Services and service levels across local government areas differ, and could be expected to be moderated across an amalgamated area.
- Significant short-medium term disruptions to operations, along with significant cost, are likely as an amalgamated Council is established.
- All the benefits of independence would be lost.

# OPTION 3

Mosman Council merger with  
North Sydney Council



North Sydney Mosman

# OPTION 4

Mosman Council merger with  
Manly Council



Mosman Manly

## What does this mean?

- Mosman Council merges with North Sydney Council into one organisation, with one elected Council and centralised administration and service delivery.
- Mosman as a local government area ceases to exist, becoming part of a larger local area. A merger with North Sydney would result in an overall area of 19.2 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The combined population of the new local government area would be more than 99,000 compared with Mosman's population of 29,900.
- The location for an amalgamated Council would likely be North Sydney.

## Some factors to consider

- Mosman has not approached North Sydney for discussions and neither Council has indicated its support for this option.
- The merged Councils would be closer to the 'scale and capacity' criteria that the NSW Government has indicated as appropriate for a local government organisation, but would still not meet these criteria.
- Given the business rate base of North Sydney, a merger could produce minor reductions in rates for some Mosman ratepayers.
- No business case has been prepared for this proposal.
- Mosman is an effective member of the SHOROC regional group of councils and has many other council relationships. North Sydney is a member of a different regional organisation called NSROC.
- Many of the costs associated with loss of independence that would occur in a mega merger (Option 2) would also occur in a merger with North Sydney.

## What does this mean?

- Mosman Council merges with Manly Council into one organisation, with one elected Council and centralised administration and service delivery.
- Mosman as a local government area ceases to exist, becoming part of a larger local area. A merger with Manly would result in an overall area of 23.2 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The combined population of the new local government area would be more than 74,000 compared with Mosman's population of 29,900.
- The location for an amalgamated Council would need to be negotiated - e.g. either Mosman or Manly.

## Some factors to consider

- Mosman and Manly Councils have worked together for many years as members of SHOROC.
- Mosman has not approached Manly Council for discussions and neither Council has indicated its support for this option.
- The merged Councils would be closer to the 'scale and capacity' criteria that the NSW Government has indicated as appropriate for a local government organisation, but would still not meet these criteria.
- No business case has been prepared for this proposal.
- There do not seem to be any significant benefits of a merger with Manly.
- Many of the costs associated with loss of independence that would occur in a mega merger (Option 2) would also occur in a merger with Manly.





## Mosman COUNCIL

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### Find outmore

More information about the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' reform package, Council's previous action on local government reform over the last few years and the options outlined in this brochure can be found on Council's website – visit [mosman.nsw.gov.au](http://mosman.nsw.gov.au)

You can also learn more through:

#### **Public Exhibition**

Until Thursday 2 April 2015, during normal opening hours  
Mosman Civic Centre and Mosman Library

#### **Public Meeting**

Monday 9 March 2015, commencing at 7pm  
Mosman Civic Centre

### Give us your views

There are various ways you can tell us your views on the options presented in this brochure. You can do this in person at the **Public Meeting on 9 March** or you can choose one of the following:

1. Return the reply-paid feedback card included with this brochure.
2. Go to Mosman's website at [www.mosman.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mosman.nsw.gov.au) and visit the 'Mosman's Future – Your Say' page. Here you will be able to complete a survey in relation to the independence and merger options and/or leave other comments for Council's consideration.
3. Send a separate submission by regular post to Mosman Council, PO Box 211, SPIT JUNCTION NSW 2088.

All feedback must be received by **Thursday 2 April 2015**.