

*Tuesday 14 February 2017*

## **RYDE MAYOR DISAPPOINTED WITH STATE GOVERNMENT DECISION**

City of Ryde Mayor Bill Pickering has expressed his disappointment with the announcement by Premier Gladys Berejiklian that her Government will proceed with forced mergers for metropolitan Sydney.

Mayor Bill Pickering said the decision meant the amalgamation of Ryde, Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Councils was still on the agenda pending current legal challenges and despite community opposition.

“We’re back to square one. The new Premier gave us a glimmer of hope recently when she stated she would be open to public concerns about forced amalgamations, but now it appears that the only change that will occur will be with country and regional councils.

“A forced amalgamation will initially mean an Administrator will be put in charge of a merged entity and the community will lose their voice through their democratically elected representatives,” Mayor Pickering said.

“There is a better solution. I urge Ms Berejiklian and her peers to look more closely at the Joint Regional Authority (JRA) model as a way of improving the three councils’ operations. This allows our local councils to remain independent and provide regional cooperation.”

The Joint Organisation Model was first recommended by the Independent Local Government Review Panel and unanimously recommended by the NSW Legislative Council 2015 Inquiry into Local Government as a “co-operative and consensus model for local council reform in Metropolitan Sydney.”

The Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Council's Directions Hearing for their appeal is listed for Wednesday 22 February 2017.

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