



SAVE HUNTERS HILL MUNICIPALITY COALITION

A Coalition of community and precinct groups and residents determined to save the historic Municipality of Hunters Hill

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Ms Edith Hall AM
Chair,
NSW Boundaries Commission
Locked Bag 3020,
NOWRA NSW 2541,

Dear Chair,

Re: Ryde City Council Boundary Proposals relating to the Hunter's Hill Local Government Area.

The Save Hunter's Hill Municipality Coalition (Coalition) is a coalition of community and precinct groups and residents from within the Hunter's Hill Municipality. It was formed on 28th August 2003 as a result of community outrage arising from a submission made by Ryde City Council to the Minister for Local Government on or about 23rd August 2003 seeking to take over without consultation significant parts of the Hunter's Hill Local Government Area.

The Coalition has forwarded to the Minister for Local Government two letters, one dated 28 September 2003, the other dated 9th October 2003. The first enclosed an eight minute video summary of a Public Meeting held on 17th September 2003. The second letter enclosed the 65-minute video of the meeting.

The Coalition annexes copies of those two letters and the video, as part of this submission. Those letters deal with the formation of the Coalition, its activities, the Public Meeting and its unanimous resolution, and the many reasons why our community must keep its own Council with its existing historic boundaries. These reasons include heritage both built and natural, community of interest and the viability of the council.

The Coalition also encloses as part of this submission a letter sent to Ryde City Council dated 16th October 2003. This letter sets out why the Ryde City Council's proposal is fatally flawed. It seeks from Ryde City Council the withdrawal of its proposal.

The Coalition relies upon but does not repeat what it has already stated in these letters. However in light of the factors which the NSW Boundaries Commission has to consider pursuant to Legislation, we do make the following points:

- (a) There is no financial advantage in the Ryde City Council proposals. Hunter's Hill Council would lose 13% of its rate revenue in Proposal 1, and 50% in Proposal 2. This would result in the annihilation of Hunter's Hill Council – in effect a forced amalgamation. Residents transferred would see an increase in
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their rates approximating 30%. Hunter's Hill Council is efficient, consults with its community, is engaged with structural reform and cooperates effectively with surrounding Councils through NSROC.

- (b) Hunter's Hill is one of our earliest councils (1861). There is an incredible cohesion and sense of belonging that exists right across the Municipality and its suburbs. There are many reasons for this, the original boundaries, the fact that it is mainly surrounded by water, its long standing community, cultural and sporting groups, its local Gladesville shops and facilities, its history and heritage, and its people – their love of the area and its village atmosphere and their fight to retain its heritage.
- (c) The history and heritage of the Hunter's Hill Municipality, including the 19th century stone and timber houses, the conservation areas, the significant natural areas, the tight knit community – all contribute to its national significance. Its citizens rightly feel that they are but temporary custodians of this place. Their record over time is impressive. But for the community, this area's heritage would have been lost. Why would any one want to contemplate changing this? To be subsumed by Ryde City Council would not only place all this at serious risk, but given its record on heritage issues and relative lack of experience a rapid loss of heritage values would result.
- (d) The attitude of the residents and ratepayers of Hunter's Hill Municipality is clear. In the referendum held at the time of the 1999 Local Government Elections, a resounding 80% voted **No** to amalgamation. The largest public meeting ever held in the Hunter's Hill Town Hall on 17th September unanimously rejected the Ryde City Council's proposals. Recently every Citizen of the Year, and the present and every former Mayor, living in Hunter's Hill signed a petition rejecting the above proposals. The community wants to keep its own local government area with its existing boundaries.
- (e) The community values highly its ability to be able to readily access councillors, and to be involved on the many Council and community committees. This is important in an area that guards its and the nations heritage.
- (e1) The Ryde City Council proposal does not provide any evidence demonstrating improved facilities or services.

The history and heritage of Hunter's Hill is in our view an important and relevant consideration for the NSW Boundaries Commission. It provides a compelling reason for the retention of the existing boundaries. Please find enclosed a copy of the Hunter's Hill Trust Report dated 27th August 2003, which was sent to Hunter's Hill Council for inclusion in its submission to the Minister for Local Government.

The Ryde City Council proposal, so far as it affects Hunter's Hill Municipality, is with out substance for all the reasons set out above. The residents of Hunter's Hill are concerned and distressed by these proposals. They feel they have shown over time that they have a love for and an ability to govern their area and guard it not only for present inhabitants but also for future generations. We seek your support to ensure that this continues.

Relevant information is available on our web site www.savehuntershill.com

We seek to address our concerns to an appropriate Public Hearing of the NSW Boundaries Commission.

Yours faithfully,

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19th October 2003

