

Warringah Council

COMMON COMMUNITY OF INTEREST ON THE NORTHERN BEACHES

Appendix 2.4



FIT FOR THE FUTURE COMMON COMMUNITY OF INTEREST ON THE NORTHERN BEACHES

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OUR PLACE, OUR COMMUNITY

Reports and research have repeatedly shown that our region has a common community of interest. It has been recognised as early as 1977 when the Boundaries Commission recommended one council be formed on the northern beaches:

“The areas are comparable in all respects – physical, social, cultural, economic and administrative. The strong natural boundaries make it an ideal geographic unit for integrated planning, development, administration and community of interest”

Local Government Boundaries Commission report, 1977

Our community is now better integrated and connected since that time.

- Ringed by water and national parks the area is 254km², extending 30km from North Head to Barrenjoey Head and 14km west to Middle Harbour and Cowan Creek, hosting the four remaining coastal lagoons in Sydney.
- A population of 263,413 (ERP 2014) comprises villages along our coastline, foreshore communities and semi-rural areas, as well as low density suburbs and pockets of higher density units.
- A high self-containment for employment, economy and services, paired with constraints on travel in and out of the region.

With strong social and economic links there are significant benefits to unifying under one council.

THE INDEPENDENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW PANEL'S (ILGRP) FINDINGS

In its rationale for the Northern Beaches Council ([Northern Beaches Regional Grouping Options, ILGRP 2013](#)) the Panel recognised the region:

- has strong social and economic links and close functional interaction
- is a cohesive coastal unit, an ‘island’ in metropolitan Sydney that needs integrated planning
- cluster analysis shows strong interconnections - high population movements between the three existing LGAs, compared to little movement across to the north shore.

The Panel highlights how a single council for the region would have a stronger voice and partnership with Government; and better long term planning for our community in infrastructure, transport, housing, economic development, services and recreation.

NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCILS IN THE SAME CLUSTER – ILGRP PANEL RESEARCH

The ILGRP commissioned a report to identify the types of communities that have similar characteristics and are facing similar challenges ([NSW Local Government: Similarities and Differences, National Institute of Economic and Industry Research 2013](#))

It uses 'cluster factor' analysis and draws on a large amount of data to detect cohesive communities, as well as overlap across LGA boundaries for commuting, shopping and accommodation. Each attribute is mapped showing similarities and differences for every LGA in Sydney.

Manly, Pittwater and Warringah were grouped together in the same cluster, described as the 'High Wealth LGAs', one of seven clusters in Sydney.

High Wealth LGAs have the characteristics of:

- high household wealth and incomes
- high labour force participation and low unemployment
- highly educated workforce
- globally connected with high rate of overseas travel
- moderately multicultural.

The northern beaches councils have been placed in the 'High Wealth LGAs' cluster due to the overall socio-economic similarities across some 20 attributes, including:

- Recent population growth
- Projected population growth
- Age structure
- Household structure
- Birthplace
- Religion
- Language
- Knowledge economy
- Education
- Labour market indicators
- Household incomes
- Household wealth
- Dwellings
- Rate base
- Transport
- Commuter interaction
- Relationships between LGA communities:
 - Services
 - Jobs
 - Commuting
 - Migration.

Our region is also shown to have strong commuter interaction and a high proportion of local jobs, as expected, given the restricted transport links to the rest of Sydney.

BUSINESS CASE FOR MERGERS – SGS REPORT 2013

To develop an understanding of functional regions, the SGS report examined the relationship between centres, major employment areas and their potential catchment areas. It found a common community of interest across the northern beaches based on strong connections within the three LGAs for:

- journey to work
- journey to education
- household travel
- journey by car and public transport.

There are strong patterns of containment within the region, reinforcing the separation from the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai area, yet strong employment connections with Sydney/North Sydney CBD.

SGS also assessed merger options to determine a preferred option, using financial and non-financial factors. Notably:

- Communities of interest and local identity are preserved when merging the three councils into one Northern Beaches Council
- Local representation was given the highest importance weighting and could be improved in a merged council with strong community governance eg. local boards
- A single Northern Beaches Council was determined as the preferred option, with a weighted score significantly higher than the status quo, as it improves or sustains each quality
- The only other option with a high score was a merger of four (including Mosman) but is inconsistent with the Panel’s recommendation for all the councils involved.

Multi Criteria analysis of financial and non-financial factors	Importance Weighting 1-3	Weighted scores	
		Northern Beaches Council	Status Quo
Local representation	3	7.5	9
Communities of interest and local identity	2	6	6
Strategic capacity	2	5	2
Service provision	2	4	4
Asset and infrastructure provision	2	4	2
Financial capacity	2	4	2
Potential efficiency savings	2	5	2
Weighted score:		35.5	27

Local Government Structural Change – Options Analysis. SGS Economics & Planning 2013

BUSINESS CASE FOR MERGERS – KPMG REPORT 2015

The option for the Northern Beaches Council highlights:

Common Community of Interest

- higher rate of post-school qualifications relative to Greater Sydney
- relatively high median incomes
- ageing population with high growth of 65+ age bracket
- high median house prices.

Diversity

KPMG said the new council would need to cater for some differences in expectations and needs for service levels based on

- variation in median house prices and
- population density.

While there is some diversity within and between any LGA, a unified council would cater for local differences using local staff expertise and strong community governance and engagement.

The report acknowledges a Northern Beaches Council as the best option for:

- Northern Beaches Hospital Precinct – mixed use development, transport and employment potential for the region
- high labour force participation and low unemployment
- better environmental stewardship - harmonising environmental planning and strategies, especially coast and catchments
- more powerful and influential advocate for the interests of the region.

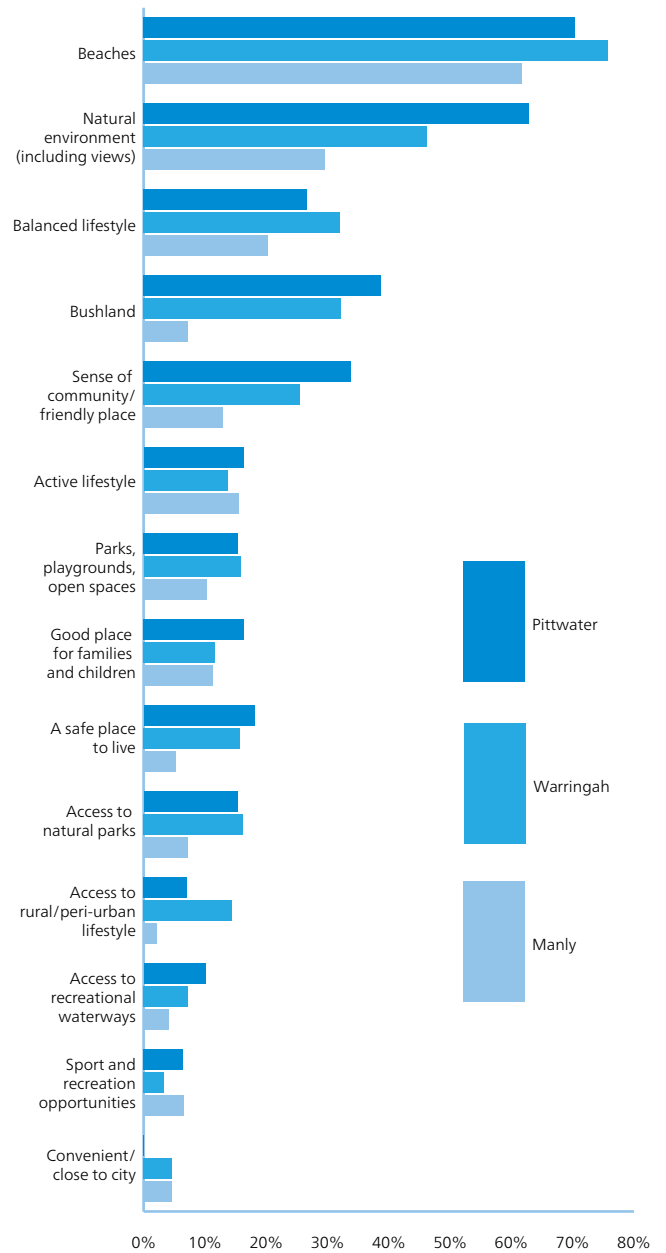
[Independent review of structural options for Manly Council and Pittwater Council. KPMG 2015](#)





COMMON VALUES AND NEEDS – REGIONAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A representative telephone survey in 2014 of 400 residents from each LGA across the northern beaches found a strong commonality of what people valued most about living in the region.



Jetty Research, 2015

COMMON VALUES AND NEEDS – REGIONAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION CONTINUED

When asked what they valued most about living in their own area, most people gave the same answer as for the region, with 57% acknowledging that their LGA is the same as the region.

The common values across the northern beaches were confirmed in an online survey in 2015 of residents, visitors and property owners of the northern beaches.

Values, in order are:

Top rated values – 2014 Survey

- Beaches
- Natural environment
- Balanced lifestyle
- Bushland
- Sense of community/ friendly
- Active lifestyle
- Parks, playgrounds, open space

Top rated values – 2015 Survey

- Beaches
- Good place for family and children
- Safe place to live
- Natural environment
- Sense of community/ friendly place
- Balanced lifestyle
- Parks, playgrounds, open space

Diversity – 2014 Survey

The differences between the LGAs highlighted the more local features which a new council would support and retain

- Manly's more cosmopolitan café lifestyle and access to the city.
- Pittwater's quieter lifestyle and access to Pittwater Bay.

Warringah Council Community Consultation Report, 2015

Community values are common across the three existing LGAs. Each council has recognised this through community vision statements, in their Community Strategic Plans:

“A vibrant, caring community, thriving in a unique beach and bush environment, supporting a balance of lifestyle, business and recreation.”

Warringah Council community vision

“Where natural environment and heritage sustain and complement a vibrant cosmopolitan and community lifestyle.”

Manly Council community vision

“To be a vibrant sustainable community of connected villages inspired by bush, beach and water.”

Pittwater Council community vision





This document has been produced by Warringah Council