



**GWYDIR**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

17 July 2014

Mr Adam Marshall, MP  
Suite 1 Ground Floor  
175 Rusden Street  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dear Adam

**Gwydir Shire Council – Community Support**

The Gwydir Shire Council is in receipt of (646) signed letters in support of the Council's position to remain independent and (967) petition signatures from the Gwydir Shire community in opposition to any forced merger with Moree Plains Shire Council.

Following the receipt of a letter by Council dated 27<sup>th</sup> April from the Minister for Local Government, it was perceived that Council was under possible threat of a forced merger with Moree Plains Shire.

The paragraph of concern reads:

*"I trust that you are exploring the Panel's recommendation of potentially merging with Moree Plains Council, or an alternative broadly consistent with that option, to ensure your council meets the threshold criteria of scale and capacity. Support is still available through the Office of Local Government's One Stop Shop to assist you in this process".*

Gwydir Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting held 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 resolved:

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION  
MINUTE 118/15**

FURTHER, that Council make representations to the Leader of the National Party The Hon. Troy Grant MP seeking support for Gwydir Shire to remain a stand-alone Council. (Ref: 119/15)

FURTHER, that Council contact Moree Plains Shire Council and arrange a combined meeting to discuss the independent review panel's recommendations. (Ref: 120/15)

FURTHER, that a round of Community Meetings be organised to discuss the potential forced amalgamation with Moree Plains Shire Council and the resulting impacts along with a media campaign leading up to the meetings. There will be no general business included on the agenda. (Ref: 121/15)

(Moved Cr Smith, seconded Cr Egan)

*From the Desk of the Mayor*

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL ABN 11 636 419 850

Locked Bag 5, Bingara NSW 2404 EMAIL [mail@gwydir.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@gwydir.nsw.gov.au) WEBSITES [www.gwydircountry.com](http://www.gwydircountry.com) or [www.gwydirlocal-e.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydirlocal-e.nsw.gov.au)

BINGARA OFFICE 33 Maitland Street, Bingara NSW 2404 TELEPHONE 02 6724 2000 FACSIMILE 02 6724 1771

WARRIALDA OFFICE 54 Hope Street, Warialda NSW 2402 TELEPHONE 02 6729 3000 FACSIMILE 02 6729 1400

WINNER OF THE A R BLUETT MEMORIAL AWARD > WINNER OF THE NSW TRAINING INITIATIVE AWARD

A joint Council meeting between Gwydir Shire Council and Moree Plains Shire Council was held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May in Moree to discuss the letter from the Minister and the current process being followed by the State Government. The meeting outcome resolved that neither Gwydir Shire Council nor Moree Plains Shire Council supports any forced merger.

Moree Plains Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015 resolved:

15/05/39 Resolved (Humphries/Price):

THAT Council:

1. Confirm its commitment to move forward with a Council Improvement Proposal (Template 2) under the Fit for the Future Local Government Reform.
2. Reaffirms its commitment to an active membership in the pilot Namoi Joint Organisation as its preferred option outlined by the Independent Local Government Review Panel and reaffirming Moree Plains Shire Council's position as having sufficient strategic capacity to be a stand-alone Council rather than amalgamating.
3. Acknowledge a long history of association with our neighbouring shires evidenced in such programs as the Australian Rural Roads Group, Weight of Loads program, the Road Safety Program, Waste Contract and participation in the Border Regional Organisation of Councils.
4. Continue to work on identified opportunities for collaboration with Gwydir Shire Council.

Gwydir Shire Council resolved to hold a round of community meetings to deliver this information as well as the current State Government's 'fit for the future' process, and one of the outcomes of these meetings was a groundswell of community support for the Council's position to remain independent and the opposition of any forced merger with Moree Plains Shire Council.

The community has shown its support in the form of letters and a signed petition addressed to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Paul Toole expressing concern for the future of the Gwydir Shire Council under the current review process being conducted by the Office of Local Government (OLG) and The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

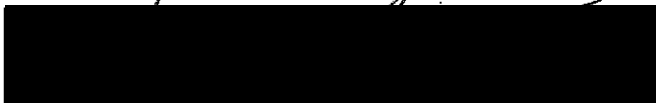
The petition's message reads:

*The undersigned petitioners bring to the attention of the Minister for Local Government that:*

***The residents of Gwydir Shire do not support any merger with Moree Plains Shire Council or any other Council.***

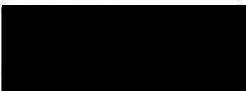
The original signed letters and petition signatures are enclosed. Further, a copy of a submission from *Bingara and District Vision 20/20* on behalf of the community is also enclosed. A copy of all documents has also been forwarded the Minister for Local Government as well as IPART.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Cr John Coulton  
Mayor

cc: The Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Paul Toole  
The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)

Date:  .....

The Minister for Local Government

The Hon. Paul Toole

C/- Mr Adam Marshall MP

Dear Minister

I am writing to express my concern regarding the future of my Council, Gwydir Shire, under the current review process being conducted by your Office of Local Government (OLG) and The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

Gwydir Shire was formed in 2004 after amalgamation of Yallaroi (Warialda) and Bingara Shires at a cost in excess of \$3M and at the time this created its own level of concern within this community.

Our Council is this area's largest employer and contributes substantially to our local economy. The loss of the Council will, in time, no doubt lead to less circulating cash within our towns and the broader local community. Obviously this has the potential to severely impact on the viability of both Warialda and Bingara as the level of circulating cash using a multiplier of only 4 represents \$100,852,000.

Additionally, my Council provides a range of services that are not provided by any adjoining council. These include such things as preschools, one being a travelling preschool for the more remote areas, toy libraries in each larger urban centre, an Aged Care facility, which has only recently been expanded, support for two Mens' Sheds, and continuing generous support for community events. Council also provides housing rental for low income earners and aged citizens and financial assistance for new home buyers. Given our aging population the Council's commitment to the aged is particularly important. Wherever it has been able, our Council has endeavoured to maintain services that other levels of government have withdrawn over the years. Council owns two medical centres, ensuring residents have access to doctors. When required, the Council also provides community transport options for residents to visit other centres as we do not have access to any reliable public transport.

Gwydir Shire is a genuine rural shire and our residents like the relaxed and friendly approach that the shire projects and encourages. We know our Councillors and the staff and they always make themselves available, and are just as much a part of the community as all residents.

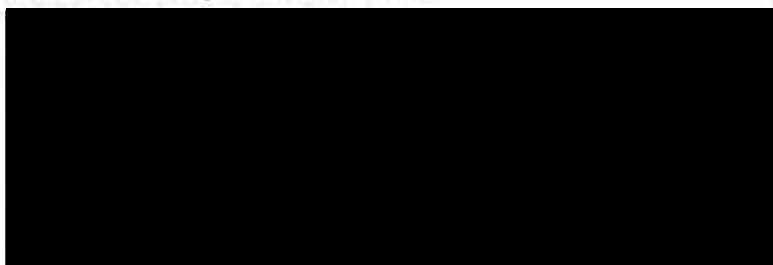
Unless you can guarantee the continuing viability of our towns and the services that we currently receive please leave my council alone.

Yours faithfully

Signature:

Name:

Address:



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Sender: Name: -----

Address: -----

To: Hon Paul Toole MP  
Minister for Local Government  
Level 17 NE  
52 Martin Place, Sydney, NSW 2000

Mr Adam Marshall MP  
Suite 1 Ground Floor  
175 Rusden Street  
Armidale NSW 2350

Dear Sirs

I / We the undersigned oppose any proposal to amalgamate the Gwydir shire with any other shire on the following grounds;

it will undermine all the communities, townships and economies of the shire – previous amalgamations (2004) in nearby towns like Barraba and Manilla have lost resources and services.

it will simply move most admin jobs from town (Our council is our largest employer in the shire) and centralise them in Moree.

the proposal ignores the important contribution of local government in stabilising the regional economy (particularly important in offsetting the instability of agricultural income).

No evidence has been provided that previous amalgamations have saved the state government any money.

An amalgamation with Moree would

create a shire centre between 80 & 120 km. from most residents.

Gwydir Shire roads and bridges will not disappear if we are amalgamated they will simply become the responsibility of an administration that is further removed from this important asset.

alienate residents who have little community of interest with, or cause to visit a western shire that has a different social structure, agriculture and economy.

**We understand the need for all shires to “tighten their belt” in the current environment by cutting costs and increasing revenue. However a one size fits all financial analysis cannot be used for geographically large shires like Gwydir and small shires like Woollahra Council as we have vastly different revenue and infrastructure bases and different service requirements.**

Yours faithfully,

NAME.....DATE.....

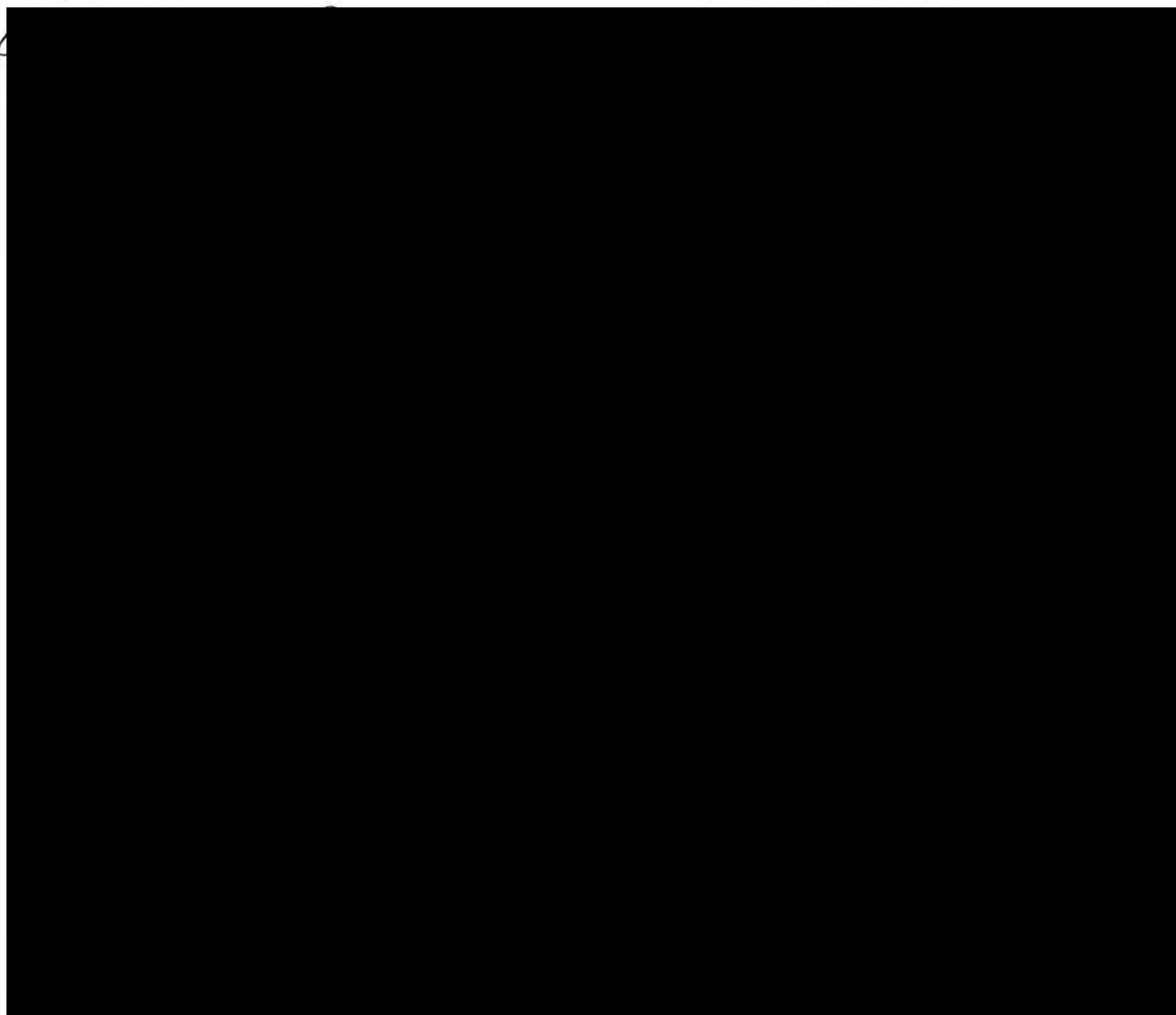
**GRAVESEND  
RESIDENTS  
AGAINST  
AMALGAMATION**

**WE SAY NO TO AMALGAMATION!**

**WE THE UNDERSIGNED BELIEVE THAT AMALGAMATION OF  
GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL WITH AN ADJOINING SHIRE IS NOT IN THE  
BEST INTEREST OF OUR RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS AND IS NOT  
THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGES FACING LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT.**

**NAME**

**SIGNATURE**





**PETITION: THE RESIDENTS OF GWYDIR SHIRE DO NOT SUPPORT ANY MERGER WITH  
MOREE PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL OR ANY OTHER COUNCIL**

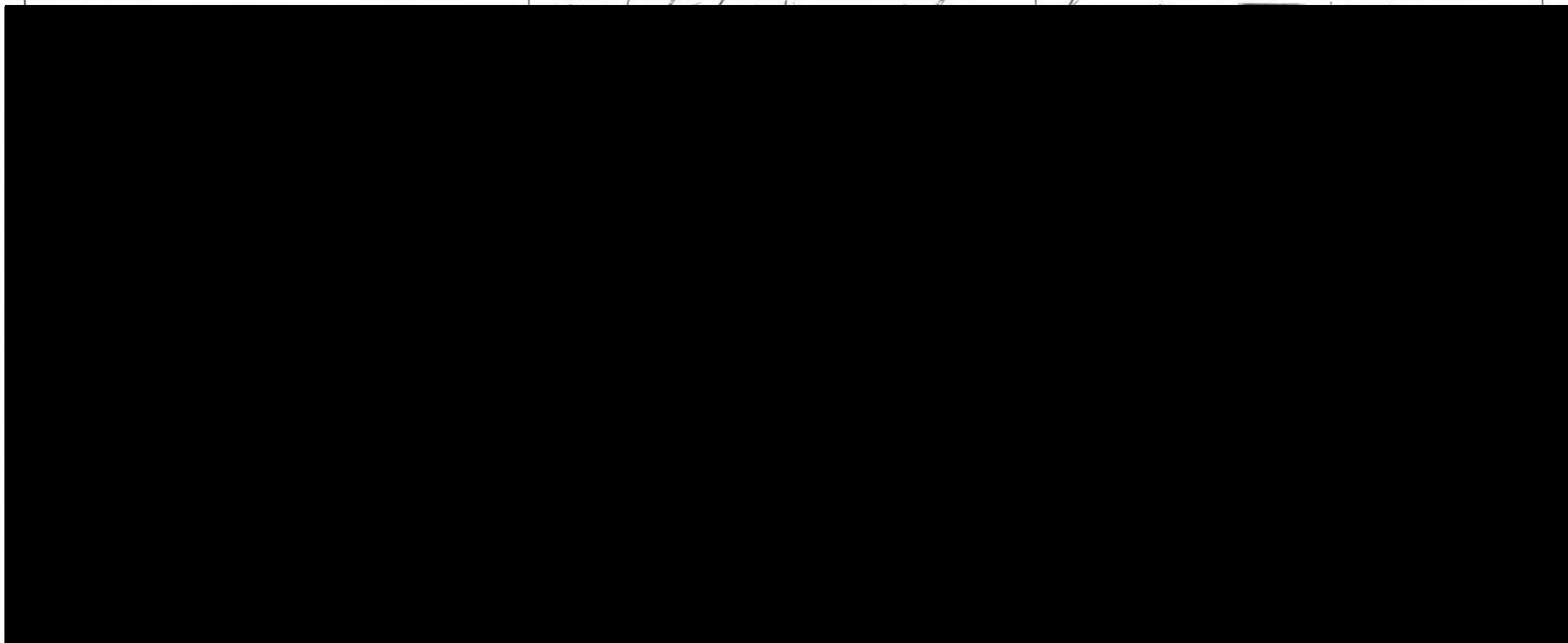
TO THE HON. PAUL TOOLE, MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The undersigned petitioners bring to the attention of the Minister for Local Government that:

- The residents of Gwydir Shire do not support any merger with Moree Plains Shire Council or any other Council

Provide Details here (required):

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE



When completed please send to: The Hon Paul Toole MP, Minister for Local Government, Level 17 52 Martin Place, SYDNEY NSW 2000



## **WE SAY NO TO AMALGAMATION!**

**We, the undersigned , believe that amalgamation of Gwydir Shire Council with an adjoining Shire is not in the interests of our citizens and ratepayers, and is not the solution to the challenges facing local government.**

**NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

**I AGREE TO MY NAME BEING  
USED IN PETITIONS AND  
ADVERTISEMENTS**

