



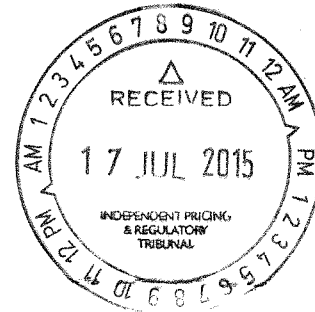
WOOLLAHRA HISTORY AND HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.  
ABN 17 597 074 575

C/o Woollahra Library,  
P.O. Box 61,  
DOUBLE BAY NSW1360.

whhs 15027

15 July 2015

Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal  
Local Government Division  
Review of Local Government Fit for Future Proposal  
P.O.Box K35  
HAYMARKET POST SHOP NSW 1240



Dear Tribunal,

**OBJECTION TO PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL WITH OTHER COUNCILS**

I am writing to you to express my objection to any merger of Woollahra Council with other Councils particularly on heritage grounds. I have been a member of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society since it was founded in 1985 and its President for the last 17 years. I had the honour to be awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours for "service to heritage preservation". My late wife June was also a former President of the Society and she was posthumously awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day Honours primarily for her work in the heritage field. I therefore believe that I have some qualification to speak on this subject.

The Municipality has an excellent Local History Centre. I know that other current Councils have similar Centres or Sections. Those Council areas also have some form of History and/or Heritage Society.

Based on my considerable experience and knowledge of the work of the Librarians in our Centre I am amazed at the extent of their knowledge of the Municipality, particularly relating to heritage and the content of the records for which they are responsible. I spend quite a lot of time in the Centre and have observed people coming in and asking quite obscure questions about a particular building or an event. The Librarians almost always are able to suggest where the needed information can be found or at least where else it might be found if the Centre does not hold it.

It is this detailed knowledge of the Municipality that I fear may well be lost or at least watered down if the Local History Centre has to be amalgamated with a Centre that has to cover a much larger area such as a "Global City" – indeed, the very name is a denial of anything local!

I also fear that Local History/Heritage Societies will disappear over time if amalgamations take place. My experience with the Woollahra History and Heritage Society leads me to believe that its membership would diminish dramatically if it had to cover a much larger area. Residents are particularly interested in the area in which they live. In this Municipality we have a large number of resident groups – Darling Point, Paddington, Queen Street and West Woollahra, Double Bay, Harbour View Park, Rose Bay, Vaucluse and Watsons Bay to name but many. In the absence of a Society like ours they would have to look after the heritage of their own areas but it is difficult to see how these groups would operate with a Centre that has to cover a much larger area not to mention Councillors who also are responsible for larger areas. I acknowledge that there are some excellent centralised establishments that deal with heritage – the NSW State/Mitchell Library, State Archives, the National Library and National Archives. But I doubt that they go down to the detail that a Local History Centre does or would even want to.

Then there is the matter of local representation of heritage matters in an amalgamated Council. I have no hesitation in saying that because of the operation of our History and Heritage Society over the years the knowledge of the Councillors of heritage matters has markedly increased and the whole performance of the Council in this respect has improved. A major factor has been that the Councillors are more connected with their electorates. With an amalgamated Council those representatives would have much less detailed knowledge of the areas on which to take their decisions in heritage matters.

The Woollahra Municipality has a remarkable heritage profile – harbourside parks, historic mansions, the Paddington terraces, the Watsons Bay fishermen's cottages, the Federation cottages in Woollahra and so on. I strongly oppose the amalgamation of Woollahra with other Council areas as I believe it would have a detrimental effect on this important heritage in the long run.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Poland OAM  
President

- cc. 1. The Hon. Paul Toole MP, Minister for Local Government  
2. The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP, Member for Vaucluse  
3. Councillor Toni Zeltzer, Mayor of Woollahra