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# Lane Cove & Bushland Conservation Society Inc

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The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian MLA  
Premier of NSW  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney 2000

January 23 2017

Dear Premier

**Re: The forced merger of Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Ryde Councils.**

We congratulate you on becoming Premier of New South Wales. This gives you the opportunity to reverse some of the poor policy decisions made by your predecessor, in particular, the decisions to forcibly amalgamate a number of councils in New South Wales. Our particular concern is with the merger of Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Ryde Councils.

The Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society has opposed the amalgamation of these councils from the beginning. We have made submissions to ILGRP, IPART and the Boundary Commission.

You know that the proposed amalgamation is not wanted by the residents of these municipalities as shown by surveys conducted by the Councils in the absence of any plebiscite carried out by the State Government.

You know that no quantitative evidence was used to establish that councils have sufficient “scale and capacity”. At the Local Government Conference on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2016, Mr. Baird revealed that the “ideal” number of 150,000 people in the new forced merger of Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Ryde was plucked out of the air -being midway between Blacktown Council (300,000 people) and Hunters Hill Council (15,000 people), showing that the process was arbitrary.

You know that Lane Cove Council is financially very healthy and has been so for at least 10 years.

You know that there is a substantial body of evidence showing that there is no correlation between size and efficiency and that a number of studies have shown that mergers in Australia and New Zealand have increased costs to ratepayers.

We note in the press that the National Party leader and Deputy Premier vowed to; “put an end to local government mergers in the bush”. The arguments supporting this would apply equally to metropolitan councils.

We ask you to reverse this deeply unpopular policy with its spurious claims of efficiency.

Yours faithfully

*Graham E Holland*

Graham Holland, Vice President LCBCS, on behalf of the committee.