

SAVE TUMBARUMBA SHIRE INC

Save Tumbarumba Shire Inc (STS) calls on delegates to the NSW Local Government Annual Conference in Albury to condemn forced council mergers.

Forced council amalgamations inflicted on ratepayers across rural and regional NSW by the Liberal / National government have failed. Nowhere is this more visible than in the former Tumbarumba Shire, the recipient of the coveted A.R. Blewitt Memorial Award in 2013.

Despite calls by the Minister's delegate not to merge the council with Tumut unless the interests of Tumbarumba were taken into account, the ratepayers of Tumbarumba have been comprehensively dumped and ignored by Berejiklian's new council.

Projects that were on the books of Tumbarumba Shire prior to the merger two years ago are still not finished and with no funding and no defined completion date. The council has a continuing record of ignoring community feedback from areas outside Tumut, and there is a complete breakdown of trust between the communities.

The Snowy Valleys Council decision to proceed with a massive unfunded sports facility of no benefit to the southern half of the Shire is indicative of their disdain for the former Tumbarumba Shire residents. The project, by the council's own reckoning, is projected to inflict \$500,000 per year of debt onto the Shire. This is in addition to an extra \$120,000 a year loss on shire swimming pools. Where will the Council find well in excess of \$600,000 per year in cash for ideas that were opposed by the majority?

Rates in the former Tumbarumba Shire are projected to rise about 50% once the ban on rate rises is lifted. We have already been exposed to rises of more than 50% in more than 100 fees and charges. Development costs for new building lots are now well over \$10,000 despite previously having been zero across Tumbarumba Shire.

The picture is bleak: the Snowy Valleys Council is projecting massive deficits in each of the coming 9 years (before the sports facility and swimming pools costs are added!), a recipe for likely insolvency and collapse.

One year after their election, Gladys Berejiklian's new forcibly merged councils are in trouble across NSW. Few if any have demonstrated their financial viability. It's time for a reality check.

STS calls on Delegates to the NSW LGA Conference to condemn the Berejiklian government policy on forced amalgamations, and press for merged council areas to be given a free vote on whether they should be demerged, with all demerger costs to be borne by the government.

Save Tumbarumba Shire Inc (STS) is a non-aligned volunteer group that represents the substantial majority (93%) of Tumbarumba residents. Our community wants the restoration of the former Tumbarumba Shire Council by demerger of it from the Snowy Valleys Council (SVC).

STS is campaigning against the NSW State Government's forced merger of the Tumbarumba and Tumut Shire Councils, over which there continues to be deep and widespread community resentment. At issue is the loss of democratic rights and the right to manage local affairs with an effective locally elected council solely focused on delivering services and projects for Tumbarumba Shire.

The Save Tumbarumba Shire group will continue to campaign to have the NSW Government accept and act on its petition to demerge Tumbarumba Shire (as provided under the Local Government Act 1993). It will campaign for a change of government at the election in March 2019 as the option to demerge amalgamated councils is supported by, and committed to, by every political party other than the current Liberal National government.

STS is politically non-aligned save for the issue of forced council amalgamations on which it opposes the Liberal National parties that have forced the amalgamations and that do not support the demerger of those councils that have been merged.

Enquiries:

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