

## **Council Resolution Item**

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Action is required from the Council Meeting on **13 November 2012** as per the Resolution outlined below.

**MM/9  
Representation**

**Mayoral Minute: Independence, Wards and Locality**

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**Mayoral Minute: Independence, Wards and Locality  
Representation**

**MAYOR:**

**Mayor Peter Abelson**

**MOSPLAN REF:**

**01.01.04**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Mayoral Minute be noted.

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**Motion** White/Bendall

That the Mayoral Minute be noted.

**CARRIED**

For: Abelson, Bendall, Corrigan, Moline, Sherlock, White

Against: Menzies

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### **MAYORAL MINUTE**

In this Mayoral Minute I briefly address three related issues, namely the independence of our community, wards and our organisation of local representation.

First, our independence. This is under greater threat than at any previous time. The State Government has set up an Independent Local Government Review Panel under Professor Graham Samson to review the structure of local government. In his speech on 30 October to the Local Government Association, Professor Samson asserted that "no change is not an option". Although Professor Samson talked about an evidence base for any changes, the tenor of the speech and the make-up of the four-person Panel, none of whom has been elected to office, suggest a prior position towards large council outcomes. I believe that there is little evidence that larger government units achieve cost savings, while there is evidence that smaller governmental units provide higher service levels. Paradoxically Professor Samson recognised that smaller areas provide better services but stated that this creates inequity between areas and that therefore the smaller areas must be made larger (instead of the larger ones becoming smaller).

Separately, under its review of the land use planning system, the Government is aiming to set up sub-regional groups of councils with strategic and detailed planning powers under the review of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

We have set up a Committee for the Independence of Mosman under Councillor Peter White. We will actively work to retain our independence and we will keep you informed of State Government moves and our actions. But we are facing an uphill battle against entrenched biases in favour of larger government units.

Turning to Wards, I and the majority on Council were, and remain, strongly opposed to the abolition of Wards by the previous Council last year without a referendum and despite clear community opposition. Indeed, Mosman was the only council to request the Minister of Local Government to abolish Wards without a referendum.

Clearly if the State Government is committed to larger government units, it is likely to resist demands to restore Wards. Nevertheless, unless we would be plainly wasting time, we plan to consult on our community's view on Wards in the coming year. If the community does want Wards restored we will make appropriate representations to the Minister and take any other actions that may be required to restore Wards. In any case, the evidence that people want small area representation would complement our arguments for independence.

Finally a brief word on the way we are organising our responses to community issues. Given the volume of requests that come to me, five Councillors have agreed to work with me as a team and to be the first point of contact for various areas.

The areas will be broadly as follows: reflecting their residential location, Councillor Peter White will be the first contact for Beauty Point up to Ourimbah Road; Councillor Carolyn Corrrigan for Ourimbah Road to Belmont Road; Councillor Tom Sherlock for the northern part of Balmoral and Bradleys Head Road round to Raglan Street; Councillor Roy Bendall for central Balmoral; and Councillor Libby Moline for Raglan Street to Bradleys Head Road. I will be the first point of call for Belmont Road to Raglan Street.

I should stress that this is a flexible administrative arrangement. Councillors are free to take an interest in any issue. And on difficult issues I expect to be brought in. I am pleased to say that this system is already working well and I am very grateful to my colleagues on Council for agreeing to work in a selfless and cooperative manner to provide the best service that we can to our community.