

**TITLE:** MM/10 Mayoral Minute: Mayoral letter to Minister for Local Government (MM)

**MAYOR:** Cr Peter Abelson

**MOSPLAN REF:** Leadership and Engagement (Strategy Two)

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorse the Mayor's letter to the Minister for Local Government and that in the event a response is not received within the next 48 hours the Mayor is requested to send a follow up letter.

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## **MAYORAL MINUTE**

As Council is aware, the Office of Local Government (OLG) has placed a large advertisement in the Mosman Daily as well as in major newspapers and on television, which regrettably denigrates the services provided by local councils without providing any evidence.

Headed "It's time to get councils working better for local communities", the advertisement noted that there are nearly twice as many councils in NSW as in Victoria and Queensland and stated that "this system is not working as well as it should be and that it is time to sort it out so councils can invest in better services and facilities for your local community".

The reference to the number of councils is seriously misleading as it makes no allowance for differences in population size, functions or geographical area. In any case the OLG has not at any time provided any evidence that councils provide better service in Victoria or Queensland than in NSW.

On Monday 31 August I sent the Minister for Local Government Mr Paul Toole an email and hard copy letter requesting:

"Could you please provide me (our community) with say four or five major examples and supporting evidence of poor services in metropolitan Sydney under our current system which have to be "sorted out"?"

Given the importance and urgency of the issues, I should be grateful if you could provide a substantive response within a week (a timeframe that I always try to meet in correspondence in our local community).

If we could identify the problems (and steer clear of rhetoric) we could have a mature, constructive and respectful debate about how to resolve them. Regrettably this debate is not currently happening.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly."

Since my letter, the Government has continued to put out these advertisements without any detail or justification (for example in the Sun Herald on Sunday 6 September 2015). But I regret to report that as of 5.00pm 8 September, I have not received a response to my question from the Minister.

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I hope that the Minister will respond and if he does do so by Thursday 10 September I will circulate the response to Councillors. If I do not receive any response by this time I will write a follow up request to the Minister.



