



THE PADDINGTON SOCIETY Inc.
For Community and Heritage
Est 1964

27 February 2016.

Council Boundary Review Submission

GPO box 5341 Sydney NSW 2001

The Paddington Society (TPS) fully supports Woollahra Municipal Council in its opposition to the proposed forced amalgamation.

The Paddington Society does not support any forced amalgamations.

Prior to the last state election the Government promised that it would not force amalgamation of Councils. We expect the Government to honour this commitment.

We do not support forced amalgamation or the process that was established to investigate the case for or against amalgamation for the following reasons:

- We understand that the IPART report was based on predetermined Terms of Reference and IPART did not and apparently could not challenge the Terms of Reference.
- The Terms of Reference were set to ensure that Councils fail the various tests to establish capacity and competency.
- There is no evidence that larger councils are more efficient or cost effective than smaller councils.

The Paddington Society makes its submission based on the following areas of concern;

1. Heritage
2. Wards
3. Paddington united in one Council area
4. Local Community Boards

1.0 Heritage

The Paddington Society is a voluntary organisation of residents. It was founded in 1964 in direct response to the attempts made to demolish and redevelop areas of Paddington in a manner not in keeping with its architectural heritage. It is this architectural heritage that the Society works very diligently to preserve.

More particularly, we work to achieve the retention of the historic fabric of Paddington, the parts of buildings that are visible from the streets, places and lanes that form the public domain.

We are also concerned with the impact of any new infill development that may detract from the cohesive historic character of the area.

As a result Paddington is one of the most significant intact 19th Century Victorian suburbs in the world. It is protected as a Conservation Area and is subject to Heritage Controls by both the City of Sydney and Woollahra Councils.

To maintain the integrity of the suburb the Society seeks to ensure development compliance with the respective controls administered by both Councils.

We believe that Paddington's unique heritage values must continue to be protected.

We are advised that the proposed merger of councils will result in simplified development controls and regulations for residents and businesses.

In our view this will result in the dilution of the Woollahra Council's Paddington Development Control Plan (DCP) and place the built form of Paddington at risk.

The Paddington of today largely exists because this DCP is enforced by Woollahra Council, with consultation and communication with TPS and the Paddington Community.

There is no evidence that Paddington's heritage will be better represented and served by the forced merger proposal, rather the converse.

- We do not see how the very different needs and opinions of the Paddington community can be effectively represented within the very large geographic area proposed for the merger.
- The 'super' Council would not have familiarity with the Paddington local area. We therefore have major concerns about the future administration of the Woollahra Paddington DCP .
- TPS is very concerned that the decision making process would be further removed from the community.
- There is no assurance that the proposed forced merger will create a council better able to serve the Paddington Community. For example, would heritage protection be enhanced?
- The proposed merger is expected to result in simplified council controls and regulations for residents and businesses in Woollahra, This is likely to result in the dilution of the Woollahra Paddington DCP and place the built form of Paddington at risk.
- TPS would like Paddington to enjoy at least the same Heritage protection currently afforded by the Woollahra DCP.

2.0 Wards

The Paddington Society has found the system of Ward Councillors to be a very useful model enabling ready access to Council members. This has allowed 'local' councillors to better understand the needs of ratepayers who have chosen to live and preserve the heritage area of Paddington

The Paddington ward is represented by 3 Councillors. Under the proposed forced merger, the current Woollahra Council Local Government Area may only have 2 or 3 Councillors in total to represent its constituents.

Even on a reduced representational basis, the TPS supports precinct representation in any future model.

3.0 United Paddington

Paddington straddles the boundary between Woollahra (WMC) and Sydney (CoS) Councils along Oxford Street and hence is located in part within the area of both councils. A major objective of TPS for some time has been a Paddington with a uniform set of planning controls.

Paddington is an inner city suburb. TPS believes that all of Paddington should be located within the City of Sydney, if a merger of Councils is to proceed. Paddington's 19th century architecture and pattern of development around the spine of Oxford Street forms a coherent village and is a seamless, inextricable part of the inner area of the City of Sydney.

TPS strongly opposes the inclusion of Paddington as part of the 'super' council as it has no community of interest with the proposed merged area historically or architecturally.

As mentioned above, Paddington has a much more in common with Darlinghurst, Surry Hills and Glebe rather than Dover Heights, Bondi, Randwick and Maroubra.

4.0 Local Community Boards

The Samson Report tried to address the potential loss of local identity and access by the community to elected members of merged councils by advocating the creation of "Local Community Boards" (Community Boards).

The Community Boards were intended to include representation by community elected ratepayers and councillors and have a role in recommending policies appropriate to a specific local area. The recommendations were intended to carry strong weight in Council deliberations and decisions affecting a local area.

TPS is aware that Auckland City Council has 21 'local boards' elected by the community. These operate very successfully to influence and reflect local aspirations.

TPS sees the role of Community Boards to be consistent with its Charter to protect the built form, public domain and improve the amenity of Paddington.

We regret that the Community Board concept has not been included in the current 'Fit for the Future' initiative. If the merger of Councils is to proceed, TPS submits that a Community Board concept similar to that included in the Samson Report would assist in reducing the potential loss of local identity and influence in the much larger merged Councils.

Summary

The Paddington Society opposes the forced amalgamation of Woollahra with Waverley and Randwick Councils.

TPS believes that this merger will not serve the conservation of the significant heritage of Paddington

If the forced merger is to proceed, despite the overwhelming community opposition, TPS opposes the inclusion of Paddington in the 'super' council as there is no community of interest historically or architecturally with the proposed 'super' council and believes that all of Paddington should be included in the City of Sydney.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W M', is placed over a light grey rectangular background.

**Will Mrongovius
President
The Paddington Society**