

Item 11.2

Our Ref: KL/AS: 1175.1/14 (46570)

23 February 2016

The Hon Paul Toole MP
Minister for Local Government
Level 33 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Toole

I write regarding the proposal to merge Far North Coast Weeds, Richmond River County Council and Rous Water under section 383 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. This proposal seeks to dissolve Far North Coast Weeds and Richmond River County Council and to amend the constitution of Rous Water to incorporate the functions of those former Counties.

While Far North Coast Weeds maintains its support for the integration of the three Counties, Council wishes to express its concerns regarding the accommodation of noxious weeds within the merged entity. Council recognises that the proposal will rationalise and consolidate the three separate administration and governance frameworks into one. However, it is important that the significant effort and resources that have been invested in securing the identity, strength and purpose of Far North Coast Weeds is recognised and appropriately catered for at a senior management level under the organisation structure of the merged entity and reporting directly to the General Manager.

Having had a long association with Far North Coast Weeds and now as Chairperson of the County I understand the rationale for integrating the three Counties. Nevertheless, any such integration should not come at the expense of, nor jeopardise or diminish the existing noxious weeds functions of Far North Coast Weeds. As you assess the proposal currently before you I urge you to consider and implement mechanisms to ensure that in the organisation structure of any future entity the noxious weeds functions of Far North Coast Weeds are preserved. It is imperative that the interests of the County are appropriately protected, including a compulsory service level agreement with Kyogle and Tweed councils.

Should you require any additional information or wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me directly by telephone on mobile 0410 562 758 or email at: robynh@ballina.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully



Cr Robyn Hordern
Chairperson

cc Mr David Rolls, Office of Local Government