

MEDIA RELEASE: \$1M LEGAL COSTS NEED REVIEW AT WARRINGAH

Warringah Councillor Vincent De Luca has today expressed "serious concerns" over revelations that Warringah Council has spent \$954,000 on court cases and lost 69 per cent of them.

Cr De Luca, a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW stated "At a time when our Mayor and bureaucracy have removed resident parking stickers, cut community services and the need for spending on essential infrastructure continues to be ignored, I think this shocking revelation of nearly \$1m in losses needs urgent review" Cr De Luca stated.

"What concerns me most is that an Internal Legal Office was created within Council and two senior Solicitors were engaged, however it appears that hundreds of thousands of dollars of ratepayers' money has been spent on engaging numerous external Lawyers".

"The whole point of having internal Lawyers was to reduce costs for ratepayers and it seems this has not been the case. The success rate in Court with nearly 70 per cent of cases lost also raises why Council's General Manager has not been performance monitoring these matters" Cr De Luca said.

Cr De Luca has today asked the Council's General Manager to report on how much ratepayers money has been spent on External Solicitors, Barristers and Senior/Queens Counsel.

He has also asked for a full account on how many occasions Council's internal Lawyers actually appeared in Court and on the record on behalf of Council in the last year.

"I have said it before and I will say it again, before cutting community services and benefits for our community, Council really needs to look within.

If savings can be made by cutting some positions from our top heavy management regime and offices such as the Internal Ombudsmans Office and Internal Lawyers Office which appear not to be performing to the community's satisfaction and these savings redirected to essential community infrastructure and services then this should definitely be urgently explored" Cr De Luca concluded.

For more information please contact Cr Vincent De Luca on 0408 650 651