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DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES
Information Services Branch

Page 1 of 1

Council spends \$1m to keep its perks – and \$48,000 on booze

ALICIA WOOD
STATE POLITICAL REPORTER

A SYDNEY council is spending millions in ratepayer funds to protect its perks and fight off Premier Mike Baird's council amalgamation plan.

Documents released under freedom of information show Woollahra Council in Sydney's wealthy eastern suburbs has

already started a spending spree to fight off the state government's biggest shake-up of local government in 100 years.

The council has allocated more than \$1 million in ratepayer funds for lawyers, consultants and ad campaigns.

Woollahra has spent more than \$700,000 on lawyers alone, more than \$115,000 on consultants and more than \$270,000 on advertising, cam-

paigns and surveys designed to block council amalgamations.

In the documents, obtained by NSW Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer Matt Kean, it was revealed that since 2012 council has spent more than \$48,000 on alcohol and more than \$1.6 million on travel for councillors and staff.

Mr Kean said the costs proved councils need to be cleaned up: "Here we have an

example of politicians more interested in protecting their perks than delivering better services and infrastructure and lower rates."

A spokeswoman for the council defended the expenditure saying the cost of legal advice "will be far outweighed by the \$7 million to \$17 million in increased rates our residents will be left with if the amalgamation is pushed through."