

Council votes for Hunters Hill Day but chickens out on Independence event!

BY OUR CIVIC ROUNDSMAN

HUNTERS HILL Council will celebrate Hunters Hill Day each year on July 31 but councillors backed down from a Mayoral Minute to have the day called Independence Day

A Mayoral Minute had previously called on the council to consider an annual celebration of "the independence of Hunters Hill" but it took an emotive debate on Monday to endorse a watered down motion for the day to be a celebration of what makes Hunters Hill unique and to recognise past triumphs that include the Battle To Save Kelly's Bush and the Save Hunters Hill High School campaign.

Mayor Mark Bennett has consistently stressed the day should be a celebration of independence (from a takeover by larger councils) particularly the City of Ryde.

"If we lost this fight against a forced merger the councillors who would make decisions about Hunters Hill would not live in Hunters Hill," he said.

Councillor Elizabeth Krassoi (Ind) and Deputy Mayor Ben Collins (Lib) opposed any celebration on July 31 which they said would be politically divisive.

"I feel this date is divisive and from what I hear it is all about us and them and I don't think we need any more us and them," she said.

"I do not think celebrating this day will bring our community together in any way whatsoever."

Community speeches in favour of the day were made by former Cllr Peter Astridge, Greg Griffiths and Phillip Hart with the lone community speaker against being Russell Young.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality spokesman and former Councillor Phil Jenkyn OAM spoke about the significance of the July 31 date.

"Premier Gladys Berejiklian had only given an intention not to merge councils (fighting in court) and we've all heard governments making good intentions," he said.

"But what happened on July 31 was incredible, the court gave a judgement and the judgement was a total victory for Hunters Hill and a total loss for the government."

Deputy Mayor Collins accused Mr Jenkyn of approaching councillors and the community to "coach" them to support his view.

"If you want to have Independence Day, as ri-

diculous as that is, you do not have a right to do that and alienate a third of the community," the Deputy Mayor said.

"This is divisive, always will be divisive and not only will it divide this council chamber it will divide the community."

Councillor Ross Williams disagreed.

"I do not see (the victory) as divisive but as a defining event because no other battle in Hunters Hill was about the demise of this community."

Local resident Phillip Hart agreed the July 31 date is politically divisive and he is glad it is!

"The objectors feel the day is a poke in the eye for those who supported forced amalgamations and honestly, I don't mind if it is a poke in the eye for

our local (Liberal) politicians," he said.

Councillor Krassoi believes that the Moocooboola Festival is the proper event to celebrate Hunters Hill but former Cllr Astridge argues that Moocooboola has never been political, while Cllr Justine McLaughlin said that Moocooboola is bigger than Hunters Hill.

"Moocooboola is a victim of its own success and this year we had more than 20,000 people attend it, which is actually bigger than the population of Hunters Hill."

The Weekly Times - which led the community fight against a forced merger - will celebrate Independence Day on July 31, each year! - Editor.

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A VERY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Councillor Jordan Lane

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WISHING YOU THE VERY BEST FOR THE

HOLIDAY SEASON

Reaffirming my commitment in the New Year to
Social justice, Ecological sustainability,
Peace and non-violence, and Grassroots democracy.

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