

Baird rides roughshod over our community

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HUNTERS HILL HAPPENINGS ***with Mayor RICHARD QUINN***



Last Thursday 12 May, the Baird Government announced the first round of forced Council mergers, contrary to its previously stated policy of no forced amalgamations.

Nineteen new councils were formed in NSW in place of 42 former councils and there is in-principle support for a further nine new councils including the Hunters Hill / Ryde / Lane Cove forced merger, subject to pending decisions of the courts.

The new merged councils will be governed by Baird Government-appointed administrators until September 2017.

To date, the Government has summarily dismissed 378 democratically elected councillors, in many cases contrary to the majority view of their local communities.

The great majority of these councillors have faithfully served their communities for years, re-elected because of their sense of genuine altruism and commitment to their local communities.

As the President of Local Government NSW Keith Rhodes said: "It's hard not to notice that the only councils to escape amalgamation fall into marginal Federal electorates.

It appears the Baird Government has made good its intent to ride roughshod over communities and duly elected representatives across our state."

The new Councils will now inevitably become dominated and controlled by the major political parties, providing fertile ground for the activities of professional political lobbyists as they seek to influence governments for commercial gain.

This is a very sad and sorry time for the integrity of democracy in this state.

Hunters Hill Council and many other Councils are continuing to pursue this matter through legal means, with a hearing date of May 30, 2016 set by the Land and Environment Court.

I will continue to update residents as more information becomes available.