

Moocooboola to celebrate Hunters Hill's historic win for local democracy, says Mayor

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SUNDAY'S 2017 Moocooboola Festival in Boronia Park will be a huge celebration of Hunters Hill's victory to save the heritage municipality and its local democracy, Mayor Richard Quinn said on Monday.



Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn outside the Town Hall – *Hands Off Hunters Hill*

The Berejiklian Government last week backed down on the forced merger of Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde and on Monday the Court of Appeal upheld the council's case and awarded costs against the government.

Mayor Quinn said he encourages the hundreds of local residents who tied anti-merger coloured ribbons to their front gates to bring these ribbons along to the festival on Sunday.

"This weekend's Moocooboola Festival will now be a celebration of all that is Hunters Hill and will continue to be Hunters Hill, the past, present and future of our great municipality.

"This victory and this celebration will not be forgotten."

The Mayor says he also hopes this Moocooboola Festival will be a celebration of democracy that will give hope to people across New South Wales.

"In my speech at Moocooboola I'll call on the government to enshrine local democracy in legislation and hold plebiscites in those council areas denied a voice because they are now governed by one person, a government appointed administrator," he said.

"And this is a huge win for local democracy because the government lost the support of communities because they didn't give communities a voice."

Mayor Quinn said he was elated by the win and thrilled that the Council's court costs will go back into the community.

He also said he is especially thrilled that events such as Moocooboola threatened by a forced merger with Ryde will survive far into the future.

"We have a proud history caring for our natural and built environment and our community events and our heritage are also worth celebrating at Moocooboola."

Mayor Quinn (Ind) will not be standing for election on September 9 and has given his support to anti-merger campaigners Deputy Mayor Mark Bennett and Cllr Justine McLaughlin.

"I particularly commend Cllr Meredith Sheil and Cllr Peter Astridge who have also fought for democracy from day one.

"This victory confirms everything we've said from day one that the process used in the forced mergers was flawed and that our community should have a say."

With court costs awarded to ratepayers, Hunters Hill Council now has an extra \$300,000 in the bank to spend on community projects.

"I have received a number of messages of support from people in our community and that is indicative of the support we've had," the Mayor said.

"It is with a great sense of satisfaction that I'll be celebrating with our community at Moocooboola and with The Weekly Times, whose support I greatly acknowledge.

"Let's make this our biggest and best celebration ever."

Hunters Hill Council hopes to work cooperatively with the State Government in future and will look at possible local government reform as well as the possibility of reviving a proposed Joint Regional Authority agreement with Ryde and Lane Cove.

Residents in Ryde and Lane Cove are invited to join the celebration.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/moocooboola-to-celebrate-hunters-hills-historic-win-for-local-democracy-says-mayor/>