

# RALLY BLASTS BAIRD

## Calls for Local MPs to resign!

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BY OUR CIVIC ROUNDSMAN

**Friday's Public Rally in Lane Cove Plaza unanimously called upon Premier Mike Baird to immediately withdraw his planned forced merger of Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Ryde City Councils.**

Lane Cove's largest public rally in many years further passed a resolution supporting former Prime Minister John Howard's federal legislation that no local government amalgamations without a referendum and that the Federal Government legislates for Constitutional Recognition of Local Government.

And there were calls for local State members of Parliament for Lane Cove and Ryde Anthony Roberts and Victor Dominello to resign.



*Longtime Lane Cove resident Sue Ingham said it all on her motorised scooter: "No Forced Amalgamations and Keep Fighting, never give up"! TWT on-the-spot PHOTO.*

The Rally saw Christian Democrats Leader the Reverend Fred Nile unite with Labor's Shadow Spokesman on Local Government Peter Primrose MLC, Ryde Mayor Jerome Laxale and local councillors to vow to keep fighting the forced mergers and the unpopular Premier.

Community leaders and ratepayers from all walks of life also spoke at the rally to further demand constitutional recognition of their historic council areas and to enact laws that stop

future mergers without approval in a referendum.

They also called on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to intervene to “Stop Baird” and further voted to reject a Delegates report from the recent Boundary Commission public hearing at the Hunters Hill Sailing Club which they described as being “failed, false and fabricated.”



*Official speakers at last Friday’s Rally in Lane Cove Plaza Against Forced Amalgamations are ( from left) Lane Cove Clr Scott Bennison, Lane Cove Clr Karola Brent, rally coordinator Don Murchison, Lane Cove Clr Daniel Strassberg, Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition spokesperson Phil Jenkyn, legal advisor Paul Hargrave, Christian Democrats Leader the Reverend Fred Nile, Christian Democrats Senate candidate Nella Hall, Ryde Mayor Jerome Laxale, NSW Shadow Spokesman on Local Government Peter Primrose MLC, Lane Cove Clr Pam Palmer and Hunters Hill Clr Peter Astridge. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO.*

Ryde Mayor Jerome Laxale demanded the resignation of Ryde MP Victor Dominello and Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition spokesman Phil Jenkyn reiterated his demand for Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts to resign as Energy Minister.

Both accuse our local MPs of not having the guts to stand up for their constituents, despite opinion polls that show that more than 80 per cent of ratepayers in the three threatened local council areas would be behind them if they did.

Reverend Nile told the rally he has drafted a de-merger Bill, being introduced into NSW Legislative Council.

“My Bill to restore the powers of local councils is a de-merger Bill, announced in Parliament”, he said.

“It is a non-party Bill to be supported by all members of the Upper House”.

The Christian Democrats Leader can count on support from Peter Primrose MLC who demanded the public release of a KPMG report used by the Baird Government to claim forced mergers will save money.

“Back on December 18 Mike Baird stood up without warning and with a \$400,000 KPMG report this community is not allowed to see” Mr Primrose said.

“How can communities comment on a report they’ve never seen?”

Lane Cove Liberal Councillor and former mayor and accountant Scott Bennison agreed and fears the Baird Government has got its sums wrong with a possible \$600 million error that ratepayers will have to pay for.

“Forced mergers do not work, this will be a costly mistake and rates will have to rise in Lane Cove, which currently has Sydney’s lowest rates”, he warned.

“This is not a fight between political parties it is a fight for local democracy and, especially, against bad policy”.

Should Baird press ahead with a mega council, Hunters Hill Clr Peter Astridge warned that Hunters Hill ratepayers will not accept it or accept local collaborators paid to serve on it.

“Those local councillors who signed the government’s Expression of Interest forms are not supporting their councils, they are supporting themselves and we don’t want them representing us” he said.

Baird has so far spent tens of thousands of taxpayers’ dollars to convince us to obediently agree to force mergers prompting rally speaker, Lane Cove Councillor Karola Brent to compare it with the “false facts and propaganda” of the Hungarian Communist regime she fled from.

Ninety One year old retired Royal Australian Air Force officer Ted Jacob gave a rousing speech at the rally that echoed the Battle of Britain.

“I’ve lived in Lane Cove for 91 years except for my time in the Air Force and can’t think of a better place in the world to live” he said.

The main thing we need now to save Lane Cove is strong leadership and to keep up the fight!”

Sue Ingham came to the rally on a motorised scooter and stressed that being a small municipality is no handicap to fighting.

“If Baird can’t be stopped now ... things will overtake us so keep fighting, keep fighting!”

Other speakers included rally organiser Don Murchison, Christian Democrats Senate candidate Nella Hall, lawyer Paul Hargrave, Adrial Lee, Alison Bird, Will Tuck, Guy Hallows, Jim Sanderson, Peg Neil, Brian Halstead, John Dressler, Jacqui Barker, Clr Daniel Strassberg and Lane Cove Clr Pam Palmer.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/rally-blasts-baird/>