

Former mayor keen to continue fight against mergers



Ross Williams speaking at a protest against the merger of Hunters Hill council with its neighbours.

John Besley

A burning desire to continue to fight Hunters Hill's amalgamation threat is behind former mayor Ross Williams' decision to return to local government.

Mr Williams, who served four terms as mayor from 1989 to 1993, says the upcoming September mayoral and councillor elections will be "critical" for the future of Hunters Hill.

"This election could set the direction of Hunters Hill for a very long time."

Mr Williams is co-convenor of the Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition and believes his experience at the forefront of the battle against the harbourside sub-

urb's forced amalgamation with Ryde and Lane Cove will be vital in determining Hunters Hill's fate.

"I fought the battle against Ryde's desire to overtake Hunters Hill in 2003. We successfully survived at that time and my experience, passion and enthusiasm for the area will help maintain Hunters Hill in this saga with the state government."

While the amalgamation issue was a major factor behind the resurgence of Mr Williams' local government career, removing party politics from local government also added to his desire for change.

Mr Williams will run for mayor as an independent, with fellow independents

Alison Voulgaris and Derek Low running on his ticket for the North Ward of council.

"I'm a true independent," he said. "I've never been a member of any political party and my only commitment is to serve the interests of the community. I believe that party politics really has no role in local government.

"It comes at the cost of the community's desires."

He also said he would be "disappointed" if there were any liberal-endorsed candidates.

"The liberal party has a policy to forcefully amalgamate this council. They would destroy the area they're running for.

"I can't get my head around that conundrum."