

To The POINT
With
ROSS WILLIAMS



Baird Must Back Off from Local Government Mergers

A government that is deceitful, spiteful and morally bankrupt, has been caught out by the NSW community. Premier Baird's support has plummeted from 61 percent to 39 percent in just nine months since the controversial decision last December to forcibly merge councils.

Baird's spiralling demise has been accelerated by several other ill-conceived, autocratic, insensitive and out of touch policies.

The Liberal Party is being severely punished for its lies and arrogance with devastating results in the recent Federal and Local Government elections.

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COWARDLY MINISTERS and backbenchers have stood by in silence while Baird's development driven ideology has wreaked havoc in our community.

At last in recent days, disarray and desperation within the government has led to several humiliating policy backflips.

If a new found sense of correcting mistakes and listening to the community are the drivers, why is he still silent on council mergers and not acting to reverse this flawed merger process?

As a consequence, Liberal Party stalwarts are leaving the party in droves and speaking out against a government that disregards its electorate.

Just last week a prominent local Liberal and former Hunters Hill Mayor, Sue Hoopmann OAM in a speech to Council cited her disgust at the merger process as the reason for her public resignation after 30 years dedicated service to the Liberal Party.

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WHERE IS our local member Anthony Roberts MP in all this?

I fear he is in hiding as he has refused to meet with the co-convenors of SHHC to explain why he has back flipped, now supporting mergers after several years of publicly declaring this was a bad idea.

What has happened to change his mind? Has he succumbed to the rhetoric of his government of “development at all cost” thereby pushing aside all decency, local democratic rights and the need for communities to have a sense of belonging.

Come on Mr Roberts resign and let someone who is prepared to represent our community’s interests do the job.

The impact of the proposed merger, more correctly called a “Ryde Takeover”, is starting to emerge.

Wholesale dismembering of our heritage protections fought for over the last 154 years in favour of development, and our local businesses and shops facing a 3-fold increase in rates to match what happens in Ryde, will be just two of the policies that will diminish our community and burden local commerce.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO the five Hunters Hill Councillors who are determined to right this injustice and voted to appeal the Land & Environment Court’s decision facilitating the merger.

It is the correct decision for which Council has both a mandate and a responsibility to keep up the fight to save Hunters Hill.

Mr Baird you have shown you can back down when you have made a wrong decision that is opposed vigorously by the community.

It’s time to rethink your position on forced council mergers and put communities first, not development.

If you continue to defy the wishes of the local communities and force mergers it will result in your demise and history will forever record you as an arrogant and dictatorial Premier.



The five Hunters Hill Councillors: Justine McLaughlin, Dr Meredith Sheil, Mayor Richard Quinn, Deputy Mayor Mark Bennett and Peter Astridge, who will continue to fight Baird's proposed forced merger with Ryde. TWT on the spot PHOTO.

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THE WEEKLY TIMES October 19, 2016

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