

Cabonne's anti-merger campaigners demand action following byelection

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MESSAGE SENT: Anti-merger campaigners Marj Bollinger, Derek Johnson and Ros Chapman in Molong. Photo: LYNN PINKERTON

Voters sent the National Party and the state government a message on Saturday and now campaigners want them to deliver by Friday.

“They’ve said they’re listening, it’s now a chance to prove this with actions rather than words,” Cabonne Amalgamation No Thank You (ANTY) spokeswoman Marj Bollinger said.

Preferences are still being counted after the byelection and no clear result is expected for several days. The vote pushed NSW Nationals leader and Deputy Premier Troy Grant to resign from the party leadership on Monday.

“At least he heard our voice, we’ve been trying to talk to him, he wouldn’t return emails, letters, phone calls or invites to our events,” Mrs Bollinger said.

“I wish he had heard it earlier so that it wasn’t so painful for him.”

Mrs Bollinger said the byelection and Mr Grant’s resignation provided a new opportunity for Nationals’ Member for Bathurst and local government minister Paul Toole to change the plans for Cabonne Council.

“Mr Toole is now in the position to do as we asked, and withdraw the amalgamation process for Orange, Blayney and Cabonne by the end of the week,” Mrs Bollinger said.

“We’re happy to work with whoever becomes the member to support them if they support us, it is a democracy, we have to work together.”



PROTEST: Save Our Council’s Karen Pensabene from Strathfield and Carolyn Corrigan from Mosman. PHOTO: TONY RHEAD

Sydney’s Save Our Council’s Coalition (SOCC) president Carolyn Corrigan said the phone had been ringing hot since the weekend.

A member of Mosman Council, she brought 20 campaigners to the byelection.

“Whatever the final result, the cataclysmic, seismic swing has sent shock-waves through both the Liberal and National Party Coalition in Macquarie Street,” Councillor Corrigan said.

“SOCC knew Orange was a critical byelection, it was the first opportunity for NSW’s regional residents. We know the mood, there’s a palpable anger over forcing people to something without asking.”

Cr Corrigan said she couldn’t see the motivation for the Nationals to pursue amalgamations.

“The Nationals have been told, I feel, to toe the line. It’s about property development in Sydney and ensuring unfettered property development,” she said.

“Saying mergers are a done deal is a weak, pathetic response, you’re supposed to stand up for your community.”



BIG SWING: Sydney anti-amalgamation campaigners Ross Williams and Phil Jenkyn at Orange High School. Photo: DECLAN RURENGA

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