



TO THE POINT with PHIL JENKYN

The Weekly Times January 24, 2018



Community demands democracy for local planning decisions

SAVE HUNTERS HILL Municipality Coalition calls upon the NSW Government, and our local member Anthony Roberts as Planning Minister, to revoke the recent 'Local Planning Panels Act' mandating panels and restore local decision-making on planning to our local councils.

Specifically, we call upon you as our local State member to listen to the local community on this issue.

We are entitled to and demand local democracy for our elected council and councillors.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian in her media conference on July 27, 2017 admitted that she and the Cabinet got it wrong and didn't listen to the community over forced council mergers.

She said: “Perhaps we should have listened earlier on in the process. Every single person who sat around the cabinet table needs to bear responsibility, including myself.”

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MINISTER ROBERTS, you were a member of the Cabinet and you got it very wrong.

You didn't and wouldn't listen to your community.

You are our local member and are supposed to represent us.

The Hunters Hill community held a large public meeting on February 23, 2016.

That meeting made it very clear for all to see and hear that you were not listening to our legitimate concerns.

Perhaps you should now view the speeches delivered that evening



Your government's unsuccessful attempt to destroy Hunters Hill and Lane Cove and the City of Ryde councils was a direct attack on the local democracy of each of these communities.

Each one has been electing their own aldermen and councillors to make decisions involving planning and local developments for their area for over 120 years.

Hunters Hill Council is the earliest having been established over 156 years ago.

Its council has a proud and successful record of managing its historic municipality, with over two thirds protected as 'conservation areas'.

It is now recognised as Australia's most significant heritage municipality and oldest garden suburb.

The 'Local Planning Panels' legislation was rammed through the Parliament in the dead of night by Minister Anthony Roberts.

The Act takes away totally the right of our elected representatives – our councillors – to have any say or role in relation to local development applications.

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LOCAL PANELS are dominated by non-elected officials from outside our area appointed or vetted by the Minister.

Our communities and their elected councillors for the first time in our long histories are being deleted from having a say on what is to be actually built in our areas.

This is another direct attack upon our local democracy by an out of touch and arrogant State Government.

The Minister and the Government are still not listening! One might ask – will they ever learn?

The Local Government Association (LGNSW) has called upon Minister Roberts to revoke this legislation mandating panels. So has Hunters Hill Council, Lane Cove Council, City of Ryde Council, the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC), and many other councils and communities.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition calls upon Anthony Roberts to withdraw this legislation NOW or resign as our local member.

PHIL JENKYN OAM is Co-convenor of the Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition.

Hunters Hill Guest Column

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