

Council anti-merger supporters head to Orange to campaign at by-election booths

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David Fitzsimons



SIGN OF THE TIMES: Opposition Leader Luke Foley, Shadow Local Government Minister Peter Primrose and protester Kathy Neilson. Photo: Contributed

A “fighting team” of 20 council merger protesters from Sydney is heading to Orange on Saturday to campaign at by-election polling booths.



NO DONE DEAL: Shooters Party MLC Robert Borsak opposes forced council mergers outside Orange City Council offices on Wednesday. Photo: DAVID FITZSIMONS

The Save Our Council’s Coalition (SOCC) announced on Wednesday its supporters would man booths in Orange, Parkes and Forbes working with local anti-merger campaigners.

It came as NSW Opposition leader Luke Foley reaffirmed in Sydney on Tuesday he would give residents the chance to vote to demerge through plebiscites if Labor won power in 2019 while the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party said the mergers were “not a done deal.”

SOCC president Carolyn Corrigan said the byelection was a “pivotal moment” for the State government.

“People are letting politicians know they are sick and tired of them not listening.”

She said 20 protesters from Sydney would man booths in Orange while another group from Gundagai would be in Forbes and Parkes.

“We’re not coming to Orange to tell the good people of Orange how to suck eggs. We are going to be at the polling booths, we have posters authorised and we are going to be available to talk to people.”



SOCC President Carolyn Corrigan with leading radio commentator Alan Jones AO. Photo: Contributed

Ms Corrigan said the residents should vote on mergers in a plebiscite.

“SOCC completely supports the statement by Luke Foley that ‘if Labor is elected to form a government at the next state election we will give local communities in enforcibly merged areas the chance to vote by way of plebiscite to determine democratically their own future.’”

Mr Foley told a rally at Parliament House: “The government had no mandate to implement forced mergers and on Saturday people in the Central West in the seat of Orange have the chance to send the government a message. I hope and trust they do.”

Local anti-merger supporter Marj Bollinger of Cabonne Shire’s Amalgamation No Thank You (ANTY) group said: “Every person that is able to put their point of view against what the government is doing is welcome.”

Shooters party MLC Robert Borsak, in Orange to support candidate Phil Donato said: “We would like to do whatever we can in the parliament to stop or stall the forced amalgamation.”

He rebutted Nationals candidate Scott Barrett’s claim the fight was lost.

“It’s a long way from being finished, it’s a long way from being over, it’s not a done deal,” Mr Borsak said.

<http://www.centralwesterndaily.com.au/story/4282212/merger-protesters-bring-their-guns/?cs=103>