

Orange by-election: Council mergers blamed for swing against Nationals

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FORCED council amalgamations are the major contributor to the huge swing away from the NSW Nationals in the Orange by-election, according to Local Government NSW.



Keith Rhoades, president of peak industry association Local Government NSW, said the main catalyst for the [swing](#) was the forced council amalgamations and the greyhound ban.

“When you think back it (the greyhound ban) was basically a captain’s call,” Mr Rhoades said.

[TROY GRANT STARES DOWN LEADERSHIP SPILL](#)

With swings away from The Nationals of up to 60 per cent in the Cabonne area, particularly Molong and Blayney, Mr Rhoades said the “outrage by the people” was evident, because they were not consulted.

“Now the people have spoken loud and clear: the community wants to keep local government local,” he said.

Mr Rhoades said the Government hadn't respected the rights of communities to have their say.

"In Molong and Blayney the communities weren't consulted on council amalgamations and this is the first time they had a chance to vote on their democratic rights," he said.

While counting was continuing and no result was known, Mr Rhoades said "one would not think the Nationals will retain that seat".

ORANGE BY-ELECTION: VOTERS ABANDON NATIONALS

"Small communities love local democracy and they relate to the local council ... and the Government didn't listen to the people," he said.

"These are hugely significant results and demonstrate very clearly that communities will not tolerate a Government that doesn't respect their right to have a say in their day-to-day lives.

"Now's the time for Mike Baird and Paul Toole to show the community that they are listening, and put an end to this crash or crash-through forced amalgamation approach."

<http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/politics/orange-byelection-council-mergers-blamed-for-swing-against-nationals/news-story/4e94d36559e41c84f78ba3a9c0f2b475>