

D-DAY FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY!

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BY OUR CHIEF CIVIC ROUNDSMAN

Next Monday is a decisive day in the community's fight against Dictator Baird's mad forced amalgamations of local democratically elected councils.

**SAVE OUR
COUNCILS** NSW



The Community



The Little Dictator

On Monday the Supreme Court is expected to hand down its verdict on Woollahra Council's appeal against the Baird Government's forced merger with Waverley and Randwick Councils.

Monday's verdict is expected to have significant ramifications for Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Councils who are fighting against a forced mega council merger with Ryde City Council.

Woollahra Council has appealed to the Supreme Court against a Land and Environment Court decision to dismiss its claim the Baird dictatorship used undemocratic and flawed procedures to force it to unwillingly merge with Waverley and Randwick Councils.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition spokesman barrister and former Hunters Hill councillor Phil Jenkyn OAM said around half the arguments put by Woollahra Council are the same as those put in legal action by Hunters Hill and Lane Cove.

"If Woollahra wins its appeal it greatly strengthens our councils' (Land and Environment Court) case that the process used for the forced mergers in Hunters Hill and Lane Cove is fatally flawed like Woollahra and doesn't reflect the opinion of more than 80 per cent of ratepayers opposed to a forced merger," Mr Jenkyn said.

"Of course, if Woollahra wins it will also be a significant win for local democracy but if Woollahra loses its appeal it does not stop our case because our case still has many differences."

A court decision in the case run by Hunters Hill and Lane Cove is expected to be brought down by judge Tim Moore within weeks.

Mr Jenkyn stressed that the Hunters Hill and Lane Cove court cases challenge the process and procedure used by Baird and that if Baird loses – and fights again – so will Hunters Hill and Lane Cove.

“Yes, Baird could start the forced mergers again from scratch but our strategy is that, if necessary, we’ll continue to fight until Baird is thrown out of office at the next election,” he said.

“Until then we’ll continue to strike hard when Baird least expects it and where he is most vulnerable.

“This is not a fight we intend to lose and it is not a fight we will lose ... we’re going to save Hunters Hill and Lane Cove!”

Hunters Hill Council recently voted to increase its legal budget to fight a possible appeal and the majority of its councillors support a local plebiscite on the forced merger issue.

A plebiscite was recently ruled out by Ryde City councillors and does not have the support of most of Lane Cove’s Liberal councillors.

“Clearly Lane Cove and Ryde don’t believe Local Government Minister Paul Toole will listen to them but that shouldn’t stop us holding a plebiscite here in Hunters Hill,” Mr Jenkyn said.

“Who knows, it might be what it takes to convince this arrogant government to back off before it loses the next election.”

Hunters Hill ratepayers fear a forced merger with Ryde could see the Hunters Hill Town Hall sold off to developers for around \$20 million before their Council would be re-established under a new Premier.



Phil Jenkyn

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