

EXTRACTS FROM HANSARD

Legislative Assembly Hansard – 03 August 2017 – Proof

Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017

[https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard/Pages/hansard-by-bill.aspx?bill=Local%20Government%20Amendment%20\(Amalgamation%20Referendums\)%20Bill%202017](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard/Pages/hansard-by-bill.aspx?bill=Local%20Government%20Amendment%20(Amalgamation%20Referendums)%20Bill%202017)

Second Reading

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-98413>

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:01)

“I acknowledge those in the gallery today who stridently advocated against forced council amalgamations—the passionate individuals who comprise Save Our Councils. I recognise many of you, too numerous to name, but I thank two notable individuals, Phil Jenkyn and Will Tuck, who tirelessly campaigned for democracy.”

“The bill, if passed, will ensure that council amalgamations, which have plagued this Government, will be dealt with once and for all. More importantly, the bill also will ensure that local residents finally will have a say on their council's future.”

“The bill will give every voter across New South Wales the chance to vote on any future amalgamation of their local council, or a vote on whether to remain merged or to de-merge, if amalgamation already has taken place.”

“If the Government has nothing to hide and believes that local communities are happy with their forced mergers, then there is no reason why this bill should not pass.”

“We need a vote on this bill today.”

“I hope that Government members in this House give this bill due consideration and find the courage to support it.”

“The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, the Opposition, the Christian Democratic Party, The Greens, the Animal Justice Party and the other Independents—that is, every non-Government member in both Houses—are extending a hand of fellowship to the Government.”

“We are offering a way out for the Government to right a wrong and have this issue laid to rest before the 2019 State election.”

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (11:12):

“I do not support the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017, and neither does this Government.”

“Last Thursday, the Government made it clear that it wants to end the uncertainty around councils so that ratepayers can go to the elections next month to elect their preferred councillors, knowing that those councillors will have a mandate for the following three years to represent their local communities.”

“The measures proposed in the bill will cause disruption and uncertainty in our local communities. It will unwind the certainty that this Government delivered last Thursday when it announced that it will not proceed with the pending metropolitan mergers.”

“The bill will also require referendums for all future merger proposals. Requiring our local communities to hold referendums or plebiscites on mergers or the reversal of mergers is an unnecessary and costly exercise.”

“The bill is unnecessary. The plebiscite or referendum is an expensive and resource-intensive exercise.”

“The bill is a roadblock to all future merger proposals.”

(Mr Michael Daley: “I want the Minister to let us know whether she is going to filibuster or whether there will be a vote?”)

“This bill is a roadblock to all future merger proposals. The provision in the bill that requires all future merger proposals to be endorsed by a referendum is unnecessary and may prove to be an insurmountable barrier to any future council mergers.”

“I am extremely pleased that the 20 new councils have already saved more than \$50 million, on their own reporting, which is nearly three times the original target.”

(Mr Michael Daley: Rubbish!)

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The member for Maroubra said, "Rubbish", but that is in the councils report to the Office of Local Government.

(Mr Michael Daley: From your dodgy administrators).

“Snowy Valleys Council held "Bark in the Park" days in Tumbarumba and Tumut, which provided free dog-microchipping sessions for the pets of residents. It is a great initiative that helps people ensure that their pets are microchipped and can be identified and matched with their owners. It is a great initiative for the residents of those former individual council areas that have come together under the Snowy Valleys Council umbrella.”

“The proposals in this bill will be disruptive and costly to the new councils and to their communities. As I have said, they will create uncertainty and anxiety.”

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (11:49 : 1): “This is a shameless and arrogant filibuster that is fooling no-one. I move:

That the member for Vacluse be not further heard.

We want a vote on this bill today, and so do the people of New South Wales.

Mr Michael Daley: The question is to be put without further debate or contribution.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

(Ed - Extracts coloured red for emphasis)

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