

# Government has lost its way

**The massive swing against the NSW Liberal Party in the April 2017 by-elections of North Shore and Manly were a direct result of the Liberal Government's forced council amalgamations agenda, a failure to hold plebiscites, an inability to genuinely listen to the community and a dramatic loss of trust from the people.**



*Phil Jenkyn OAM*

The ongoing battle between the left and right factions of the Liberal Party and the influence of property developers and political lobbyists on party policy has compounded the problems faced by the Government.

The Court of Appeal in the Ku-ring-gai case recently found that the council was denied procedural fairness by being refused access to relevant documents underpinning financial conclusions in the government's public KPMG analysis.

This refusal to provide basic material applies to all merger proposals including proposals implemented and is a fundamental legal flaw in the process adopted by the Government.

Five other councils with similar claims await the decision of the same Court of Appeal.

Woollahra is shortly before the High Court with its special leave application.

The Government's whole process in attacking local communities and their elected local councils is in shambles both legally and politically.

The Government has no mandate from the people. It has refused to allow plebiscites in the process. It is frankly fearful of the people.

Save Our Councils Coalition calls upon the Liberal/National Government to withdraw its forced council amalgamations and to do so now.

If it fails to act now it is probable that the courts will continue to set aside the merger proposals, community anger will continue to increase in the run up to the Local Government elections in September and further increase in the run up the State elections in March 2019.

This is a government that has seriously lost its way. Now it is time for it to act decisively, withdraw forced amalgamations and work cooperatively with communities on genuine reform.

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Letter to the Editor – The Weekly Times 26 April 2017

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