

Inspired by a local little girl's bravery Hunters Hill takes the fight to Baird!

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**“I’ve just quit the Liberal Party” says
outraged Sue Hoopmann!**



Inspired by The Weekly Times, nine year old Emily Edwards is congratulated on her passionate speech by Hunters Hill Emeritus Mayor Sue Hoopmann OAM during Monday night's Council meeting. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO

A brave little girl and a famous former Mayor brought Hunters Hill councillors close to tears as they voted on Monday night to continue an appeal against the Baird Government's proposed forced amalgamation of their heritage municipality.

Nine year old Emily Edwards and Emeritus Mayor Sue Hoopmann OAM made passionate anti-amalgamation speeches at Monday night's Extraordinary Council meeting which voted five to two to delegate authority to Mayor Richard Quinn to pursue the appeal, subject to legal advice on timing.

Emily from Hunters Hill said she had been inspired to speak out after reading articles in *The Weekly Times* denouncing Baird's proposed forced merger with neighbouring Ryde and Lane Cove.

“I might only be nine but I realise what would happen if we become a mega council,” she said.

“We may be small, but in Hunters Hill we fight for what we believe in and we believe in Hunters Hill being here for another 150 years!”

Although still in primary school, brave Emily knows that even children can see through Baird’s argument about a mega council being more efficient.

“It is not about becoming efficient at all, it is all about money and property development”

Emeritus Mayor Hoopmann announced she had resigned from the Liberal Party in anger over the way Baird’s cabinet has treated Hunters Hill.

“This State Government is refusing to listen to us or do anything but tell lies,” Sue Hoopmann said.

“After 30 years I’ve now resigned from the Liberal Party because it has changed. Power and money rule it now.”

Sue Hoopmann had served on Hunters Hill Council for twenty years and recently ten years as Mayor.

She warned that in amalgamated municipalities in Melbourne heritage homes had been torn down without the community’s knowledge and she urged the current council to fight on with the appeal to save the heritage in Hunters Hill.

Like Emily, Clr Meredith Sheil also referred to coverage in *The Weekly Times*, particularly last week’s front page which showed how Baird’s popularity had nosedived over forced mergers.



“That collapse started, not with the greyhounds, but with the forced mergers and has continued all the way through this sham Fit For The Future process, which has split communities,” she said.

“We are fighting for the very life and future of Hunters Hill.”

Clr Meredith Sheil

Councillor Zac Miles argued that an appeal by Hunters Hill isn’t going to change Baird’s mind and the council was merely “kicking the can” in a costly but futile protest.



Long serving independent Clr Peter Astridge strongly disagreed.

“In my opinion this is worth fighting for as we’ve fought for Hunters Hill in the past,” he said.

“We’re here to bring the Baird Government to its knees!”

Deputy Mayor Mark Bennett blamed “government deceit” for the costly appeal and said that if you’re dishonest, you’ve got a fight on your hands in Hunters Hill.

Clr Peter Astridge

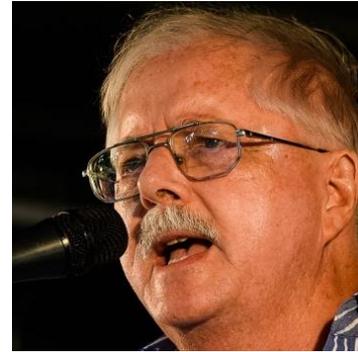
Legal advice to the council is that it has a good chance of winning the appeal on around five of seven arguments but these were not revealed by lawyers at the meeting.



Former Mayor Ross Williams



Art collector Ron Kaplan



SHHMC Phil Jenkyn OAM

More important is the principle at stake, according to local art collector Ron Kaplan, who spoke at the meeting.

“Even if we only have one per cent chance of winning, we should go for it!” he said.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality spokesmen Phil Jenkyn and former Mayor Ross Williams addressed the issue, which was also an agenda item at the regular council meeting.

“This community wants you (councillors) to appeal and you have strong community support against a government on the run,” Mr Jenkyn said.

Gladesville businesses in Hunters Hill were warned that if the heritage municipality is merged with Ryde, they would be charged the much higher Ryde Council rates.

“The cost (of an appeal) would be far outweighed by the cost of the rates,” Mr Williams said.

“But this is more than an issue about costs, it is about the will of the people and we’re fighting a deceitful and spiteful government for our democracy and our heritage.”

The Weekly Times last week offered to be the first to contribute to a fighting fund to help cover the costs on appeal.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/inspired-by-a-local-little-girls-bravery-hunters-hill-takes-the-fight-to-baird/>