

Hunters Hill defers forced merger poll question

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Hunters Hill Council voted four votes to three on Monday night to defer the wording of its September 9 residents poll on a forced merger with Ryde and Lane Cove until its next meeting.



Phil Jenkyn OAM addressing Clr Zac Miles and Hunters Hill Council

The deferral was passed with the crucial vote of Mayor Richard Quinn after Deputy Mayor Mark Bennett, Clr Gary Bird and Clr Zac Miles requested a further fortnight to consider the poll question and seek advice from NSW Electoral Commission.

The non-compulsory poll will coincide with the September 9 Local Government elections, alongside a poll in neighbouring Lane Cove.

Councillors Dr Meredith Sheil, Justine McLaughlin and Peter Astridge supported a poll question proposed on Monday night by Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition spokesman Phil Jenkyn OAM.

This would ask: *“Do you support the amalgamation of Hunters Hill Council with the City of Ryde Council and Lane Cove Council as proposed by the New South Wales Government ?”*

Mayor Quinn has led the Council’s fight against a forced merger but voted against immediately adopting the Jenkyn proposal.

“It is of the utmost importance that we are, if possible, unanimous and I would hope that when we decide our position on the question we will be united,” he said.

Mr Jenkyn said his proposed question was fair, accurate, straightforward and destined to get a NO vote.

“If you live in Hunters Hill you would answer .. amalgamate with Ryde, you’ve got to be joking !” he said.

“I don’t know if they’d be many people here silly enough to want to destroy Hunters Hill.”

Councillor Sheil said there was no other question that could be put.

“This is the question our community has wanted to answer for years,” she said.

Councillor McLaughlin agreed.

“This is the one question the State Government didn’t ask and it is the one question the Boundary Commission delegate didn’t ask.”

The State Government’s main reason for a forced merger is that Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde Councils have been found by the government to be Unfit For The Future; a case the three councils reject.

Former Mayor Ross Williams warned that a poll is unlikely to change the government’s view with Premier Gladys Berejiklian last week vowing to push ahead with proposed forced mergers across Sydney.

“We are facing a very direct threat from a very arrogant government and because it hasn’t listened to anything we’ve said I wouldn’t be surprised if it just ignored what we say in a poll,” he said.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/hunters-hill-defers-forced-merger-poll-question-2/>