

Hunters Hill shocked by Ryde Mayor's speech

THE WEEKLY TIMES September 21, 2016

BY OUR CIVIC ROUNDSMAN

A shocked Coalition representing Hunters Hill ratepayers has accused Ryde's new Mayor Clr Bill Pickering and his Liberal team of putting politics before people.



*New Ryde City Mayor Bill Pickering with new Deputy Mayor Jane Stott.
TWT on-the-spot PHOTO.*

Mayor Pickering was elected to his second term in Ryde's top job on Friday night and his victory speech declared Baird's forced merger of Ryde, Hunters Hill and Lane Cove to be "inevitable" and he promised to lead Ryde into a new mega council as the city's last Mayor.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition Phil Jenkyn blasted Mayor Pickering's comments as surrendering 146 years of local democracy in Ryde, only months after the Mayor gave a pro local democracy speech in Hyde Park.

"A majority of councillors on Ryde City Council are endorsed Liberal members and it may be reasonably inferred are subject to the policies of their Party," Mr Jenkyn said.

“If the new Liberal Mayor of Ryde is saying that amalgamation is “inevitable” and that he has now given up the battle to keep an independent Ryde City Council after 146 years, he will be accused of putting party politics ahead of the interests and wishes of his community,” Mr Jenkyn said.



Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn



Save Hunters Hill Phil Jenkyn

“If he is supported by the other endorsed Liberal Party members, then so will they.

Mr Jenkyn said eight out of ten Ryde ratepayers will be as shocked by the new Mayor’s comments as ratepayers in Hunters Hill and Lane Cove.

“Polls conducted in each area resulted in over 80 per cent of residents of each local government area wanting to keep their own council,” he said.

“What is a real concern for local democracy is when councillors put party politics above the needs and wishes of their residents.”

“For Ryde Council to now change its position and surrender its independence not only lets down its own community but also surrounding communities and their councils who were supporting Ryde as a separate and undivided council.”

The Hunters Hill based Coalition also believes Mayor Pickering has backed a loser.

“Amalgamation is not inevitable!” Mr Jenkyn said.

“The Baird Liberal Government is on the nose over forced amalgamations, the recent ICAC findings, its treatment of the greyhound industry, and a host of other undemocratic actions.

“This dramatic turnaround in the government’s fortunes was reflected in the large swing against the Liberal Party in the recent local government elections.

“The Hunters Hill Court case (against forced amalgamation) is still pending along with 10 other councils and important legal issues are involved including what constitutes a valid public inquiry.”

The Coalition is backing Hunters Hill’s independent Mayor Richard Quinn who recently told *The Weekly Times* the historic municipality will fight on, regardless of Ryde.

“Our Coalition will continue to support local communities who wish to keep their local councils against undemocratic governments who are forcing amalgamations,” Mr Jenkyn said.

“Hunters Hill is a strong community and remains confident that Hunters Hill will not be amalgamated.

“History has shown both in Victoria and Queensland that forced amalgamations do not work, and strong communities find a way over time to de-amalgamate, Noosa being but one example.

“Each council has been found to be sustainable and efficient in its own right.”

Bill Pickering Speech to Local Democracy Rally in Hyde Park

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6zk5lYkOX8>

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/hunters-hill-shocked-by-ryde-mayors-speech/>