

# Hunters Hill votes on forced merger opinion poll

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**Hunters Hill Council will wait for the result of this Saturday's Federal Election before it votes on a ratepayer funded poll on its proposed forced amalgamation with neighbouring Lane Cove and Ryde.**

The Council's decision on Monday night mirrors a similar vote by Lane Cove to take up a Labor Party election promise to spend \$200 million on polls in council areas forced to amalgamate despite council opposition.

It follows confirmation given at Monday night's Council meeting that the Australian Electoral Commission will not fund a plebiscite as previously sought by councillors.

General Manager Barry Smith advised councillors the State Electoral Commission can carry out a poll but it will cost ratepayers around \$100,000.

"It can be compulsory but it will not be binding and it will take at least three months to organise," Mr Smith said.

A similar poll was conducted in Kiama which had a 70 per cent turnout and a vote of 90 per cent against a forced merger.

Councillors Gary Bird and Zac Miles are opposed to it.

"This will be a complete waste of money, it is over the top, or is it our aim to do it to punish the State Government?" Cllr Miles said.

Councillor Dr Meredith Shiel disagreed.

"I reject claims this is to punish the State Government," she said.

"It is to ensure we are evidence based in support of our community and if we can't find the funding we should fund it ourselves with the support of Lane Cove Council."

Both Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Councils are strongly opposed to an amalgamation with Ryde, which will dominate a combined mega council and could leave Hunters Hill with one elected representative.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/hunters-hill-votes-on-forced-merger-opinion-poll/>