

Labor grabs power as local government conference blasts forced mergers

CITY of Sydney Labor Cnr Linda Scott (pictured) has been elected as the new President of the NSW Local Government Association.

The Weekly Times Local Government correspondent at the Association's Annual Conference in Sydney this month - Phil Jenkyn OAM - also reports that City of Canada Bay's Mayor Angelo Tsirekas (ALP) has been elected Vice President, representing our local Metro Urban area.

"The election of the new Board signalled a significant shift towards the Labor Party," Mr Jenkyn reports.

"The Liberal/National Party candidate for the position of President Cr Gail Giles-Gidney was

defeated and there are only five representatives of the Coalition on the Board of 19 members.

"This devastatingly poor result for the Coalition follows a similar poor performance in the recent local government elections."

Mr Jenkyn said motions passed at the conference reflected council and community anger against the state government over forced mergers.

He said conference Motion 85 on forced mergers includes a requirement that where

an amalgamation with one or more councils is proposed there must be a binding referendum in each council area asking voters if they want their council to be amalgamated or not.

In order for an amalgamation to go ahead, each council area would need to achieve a majority vote in favour of the amalgamation.

"This reflects the recently defeated Bill passed by the Upper House on the same idea Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017; to allow indi-

viduals to vote on amalgamations and for their voices to count," Mr Jenkyn said.

On the issue of Mandatory Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels (IHAPs) the conference endorsed the President to campaign with NSW councils against the State Government takeover of planning powers through IHAP legislation.

"Local Government NSW called on NSW Parliament to revoke legislation that mandates Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels (IHAPs) for all councils in Sydney and Wollongong."

