

Mayor Quinn hopeful in Hunters Hill legal appeal

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Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn says he is hopeful of a favourable outcome to the historic municipalities Court of Appeal hearing into the process and procedure used to justify a forced merger with Lane Cove and Ryde.



Mayor Richard Quinn



Save Hunters Hill Phil Jenkyn

The council's legal team delivered their submission last Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and the Mayor hopes the outcome will be the same as Ku-ring-gai Council's successful appeal last month.

"At this stage we're hopeful but I'd never pre-empt the outcome of a court case, although our case is similar to Ku-ring-gai's case," he said.

The Ku-ring-gai case verdict noted that a secret State Government KPMG report used to justify the claimed savings to ratepayers in a forced merger had not been made public and that ratepayers and a Boundary Commission delegate had not seen them.

Mayor Quinn said that – if successful – the State Government would be forced to start a forced merger process from scratch and he also believes that a "fair go" for Hunters Hill is for ratepayers to be given a direct say on a forced merger through a plebiscite.

"That has been our position from day one and we believe it is only fair for the government to actually ask us what we want."

The government has not previously agreed to a plebiscite and pro-merger supporters argue that one isn't necessary because the government has a mandate to act in what it believes to be the best interest of New South Wales.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality spokesman Phil Jenkyn also hopes for a win in court but feels the idea of a government mandate to destroy Hunters Hill Council is an outrageous one.

“If this government had any moral integrity or political acumen it would withdraw this forced merger immediately,” he said.

“Its integrity is in tatters and I don’t think Premier Gladys Berejiklian has got the courage or the intellect to get on top of this.”

Mr Jenkyn rubbished the Premier’s view that Sydney is over governed by too many councils and her comments that Brisbane has one council.

“In Brisbane it is just a huge bureaucracy and people in Brisbane wouldn’t even know who their local councillors are, let alone expect them to give a rats arse about a local park,” he said.

“I’ve never seen anything worse than the behaviour of this Berejiklian Government towards our local, democratic councils and I can tell you that Gladys Berejiklian is on a hiding to nothing in the next election.”

Should Hunters Hill’s appeal be successful, it is expected it will recover court costs involved.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/mayor-quinn-hopeful-in-hunters-hill-legal-appeal/>