

No Liberal seat is safe after Saturday's monster swings

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Huge swings against the Liberals in the weekend by elections have ripped the blue ribbon off the Liberal seats of Lane Cove and Ryde, which are now being seen a marginal electorates.



Supporters against forced mergers came from many parts of the state on polling day.

Described by Opposition Leader Luke Foley as “monster swings” the backlash of around 25 per cent against the Liberals in Manly would be enough to threaten Anthony Roberts MP if repeated in Lane Cove.

And the swing of 16 per cent in North Shore should put the Liberals on notice in Ryde, Drummoyne, Parramatta and other Sydney seats, says the local Coalition fighting the government’s proposed merger of Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde.

“These are big swings, there is considerable anger against forced mergers and Anthony Roberts’ seat is at risk,” says Save Hunters Hill Coalition spokesman Phil Jenkyn OAM.

“I’m sure a good Independent will run against Roberts, not affected by party politics, and will win the seat.

“Even in the safe seat of North Shore, the Liberal candidate Felicity Wilson was elected with less than half the vote of the community, only around 41 per cent of it.”

The Coalition said anti-merger candidate Carolyn Corrigan would have won North Shore if more Independent voters had given her their second preferences.

“A good independent candidate would win Lane Cove, certainly with preferences,” he said.

Many Liberal Party members blame the forced mergers for the backlash against the party but Premier Gladys Berejiklian says many issues were involved.

“I believe that in by-elections every single issue that comes up affects votes, because there’s so much concentration and people are more attuned to what’s going on,” she said

“But as Neville Wran said once, you can take the swing, I’ll take the seat.”

Luke Foley said the “monster swings” are a reflection on the unpopularity of the Premier, a staunch advocate of forced mergers.

“I think that it does reflect on the Premier’s performance .. it is now the best part of three months since she took over,” Mr Foley said.

“It is the first chance that voters have had a chance to express judgement on a premiership and it’s a resounding thumbs down.”

Mr Foley has declared the Seat of Ryde to be a frontline seat he wants Labor to win and he has told The Weekly Times that Labor is prepared to preference a “conservative independent” in Lane Cove, devoid of ties to One Nation.

Mr Jenkyn said the Liberals have been tainted by forced mergers.

“The anger over forced mergers is very toxic,” he said.

“Community anger will continue to grow and result in a landslide loss in 2019 for the Berejiklian government, unless it now withdraws its despised and hated forced council amalgamations.

“Because of the Premier’s failure to listen to the people, from her failure to understand how communities work and from the spin that continues to ooze from the Government there is a loss of trust and support for the Liberal Party.”

Mr Jenkyn said that he hoped an Appeals Court decision would scrap the forced merger of Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde but voters would not forget the issue at the next State election.

“They will remember who stood up for our community and who did not,” he said.

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