

Orange By-election a Big Wake Up Call to Baird Government!

**HUNTERS HILL HAPPENINGS
with Mayor RICHARD QUINN**



THE WEEKEND result in the Orange by-election should send a big wake up call to the NSW Government.

As highly respected election analyst Antony Green has confirmed, the swing against the Nationals and the current NSW Government is the biggest swing against any sitting government in the state's electoral history.

What the Orange result and the recent US election results also confirm is that pre-election polling is by no means a reliable indicator of the outcome.

Governments that push ahead with agendas that don't have broad community support are destined for political annihilation at general elections.

A reform agenda in any organisation needs broad support, with those affected actively engaged in and supportive of the proposed reform.

Issues such as the forced amalgamation of councils and the greyhound racing ban have surprised and blind-sided communities, who feel let down and disempowered by their elected representatives. Put simply, a 'no surprises' approach to government is needed, where political parties and aspirants openly and honestly articulate their policies prior to an election.

This is the only way to gain the trust of electors, the majority of whom subsequently give a mandate on polling day to the successful party or coalition of parties.

The forced merger of councils has exposed the NSW Government's profound dishonesty with the people of NSW.

Following the ordered release of documents, disclosure of which was strongly resisted by the NSW Government, it is now apparent that plans to forcibly merge councils were well under way prior to the 2015 State election.

Unlike other policies, such as the lease of electricity infrastructure, the Baird Coalition chose not to disclose this to the people of NSW. Instead, a disingenuous post-election consultation process that complies legally and was intended to 'tick a box' has been rejected as a sham by communities across the state.

A fundamental principle in any democratic society has been deliberately and dishonestly thrown aside by the Baird Government, namely that people expect and demand a say in how they are governed.

Constant calls for a poll or plebiscite on the issue of forced council mergers were rejected by the Government and their Delegates.

All the Government had to do was ask the people, the stakeholders. This is Change Management 101. The people of Orange have now had their say. I look forward to a similar opportunity in March 2019.