

Face to Face Dogfight in Parliament!

Barking Mad Premier meets Doggedly Determined Hunters Hill Mayor

BY TWT CIVIC ROUNDSMAN 7 DEC 2016

Premier Mike Baird will not back down on forced Council mergers of Hunters Hill with Lane Cove and Ryde despite crisis talks with Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn last Thursday.



Mayor Richard Quinn



Premier Mike Baird



Clr Meredith Sheil

Hunters Hill Mayor Clr Richard Quinn and Clr Dr Meredith Sheil were given 15 minutes with Baird to put Hunters Hill's case against being forced to merge with neighbouring Ryde and Lane Cove but were disappointed with the outcome.

“He’s like a dog with a bone who wants to take this all the way, which is just like us because we intended to doggedly fight this all the way,” Mayor Quinn said.

“We told him that more than 80 per cent of our residents oppose a forced merger and I think that while he has an understanding of this he doesn’t place a huge emphasis on it.

“It is all about economic factors for him and I am disappointed because I was hoping for greater consideration and I suspect he doesn’t get what the Hunters Hill community is about.”

This is despite the Mayor and Clr Sheil making every effort to argue why Hunters Hill has strong and unique Development Control Plans and Local Environment Plans to preserve the character of the heritage municipality and how these are at risk under a mega council dominated by City of Ryde.

“We strongly argued the case for local democracy and that Hunters Hill is likely to have only one elected representative on a merged council,” the Mayor said.

But how does Mike Baird feel about being called a dictator?

“He said he didn’t feel that was fair and he asked me if I felt he was a dictator and I said yes, I do!” Clr Sheil said.

“We made it clear that Hunters Hill will fight to the death to preserve our character and our democracy and that Ryde has a completely different view of heritage to us.

“I told him this was the key thing driving his plunge in popularity here as well as other things that drive his brand as dictatorial, like the bulldozers demolishing people’s historic homes in amalgamated suburbs like Haberfield.

“But at least the fact he held this meeting is a breakthrough.”

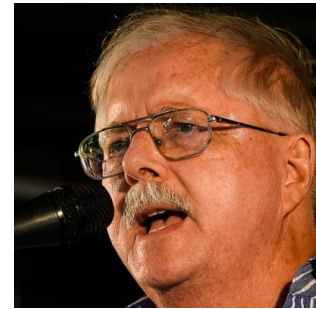
What strikes ordinary people about meetings with the Premier and Cabinet is the hordes of trendy “twenty something” advisers that surround our elected Liberal representatives.

“I just feel the people around him (Baird) have a vested interest,” Clr Sheil said.

“So we stressed that the views we put are not just our views, they are our community’s views.”

The Mayor and Clr Sheil urged the Premier to give the Joint Regional Authority alternative a fair go before a forced amalgamation and presented a letter from the Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition.

Coalition spokesman Phil Jenkyn OAM said he hopes the Premier reads it, responds to it and leaves the door open for future meetings “which will be more than Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts has done,” Mr Jenkyn said.



Phil Jenkyn OAM

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/face-to-face-dogfight-in-parliament/>