



## President's report for the year ending June 2017

It has been a year of stunning success but also great disappointment. The organisation was led by Carolyn Corrigan so effectively until she stood down in March to contest the North Shore By Election. Stunning success for those councils that took legal action and now remain independent - when the Government recognized that the community resolve would not go away and abandoned more forced amalgamations. Disappointing for those councils amalgamated against their will who have yet to get the right to have a say in their form of local government.

One only has to review the thousands of emails over the year that indicate the level of activity and the continued actions. Over the twelve months there were press releases, meetings, rallies and media contact covering the following activities as a minimum – The Federal Election Campaign where big swings against the Liberals in NSW were recorded, this was followed by attendance and reporting of court cases and appeals, GIPA application to try to identify opportunities and successful calls for donations to support our work. A number of papers were discussed on the administrators and all this led to the Orange by election.

The Orange campaign was a turning point. Major action supporting the country colleagues caused the loss of the seat by the National Party, the loss of the leader of the Nationals and then eventually the Nationals coming down against mergers in the bush. This was the first real kink and change to an illogical policy of no more mergers in bush but continuing in the city.

Activity continued - Woollahra lost their appeal but by appealing to the High Court showed that this issue would not go away. Each of these actions was supported by press releases and statements.

At the Local Government Conference in November there was a significant rally with large number of delegates at the conference supporting our position with signs as well as a rally outside the conference when Baird attended.

Baird threw in the towel in December saddling the new Premier with the hated amalgamation policy. Then there was the by elections in Manly, North Shore and Gosford, our own Carolyn Corrigan went very close to winning the seat with big swings against the Liberals. Kur-ring-gai had a victory as did Hunters Hill and Strathfield in court actions. The Government's position was looking very shaky. Further pressure come as all the parties except Liberals and Nationals supported a 'Referendums Bill' in the Upper House.

Attacks from all sides and recognition of the damage being done led to the Government abandoning in July all mergers before the courts – giving a stunning victory.

Our aim in the next twelve months is to build our organisation and continue to show amalgamations do not work, support those seeking de-amalgamation and take action on all the other threats to local democracy coming from this Government.

I would like to thank all the committee for their contribution and support over the last twelve months.

BT Halstead Save Our Councils Coalition President 8 Dec 2017