

SHOCK ANNOUNCEMENT: Richard Quinn to contest Lane Cove

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Former Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn to challenge incumbent Anthony Roberts for the seat of Lane Cove at the March 2019 election

HUNTERS HILL Emeritus Mayor Richard Quinn will run as an independent candidate for the seat of Lane Cove during next month's state election.

Mr Quinn officially announced his candidacy this week following his resignation from the Liberal Party.

He aims to defeat sitting Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts (Lib) who gained 67 per cent of the two-party preferred vote at the last state election, but who also saw a swing of 9.5 per cent against him.

The widely respected Emeritus Mayor Quinn is yet to announce his election promises, slogan or campaign colour but was straightforward about his motivation to stand against Mr Roberts.

"I want to advocate for the Lane Cove electorate in government, not advocate for the government in the Lane Cove," Mr Quinn told The Weekly Times.

Mr Quinn is presently in a public relations role at St Joseph's Catholic College in Hunters Hill but rose to national fame when he was the Mayor of Hunters Hill during the recent [TWT-backed fight against the state government's failed attempt to forced merger](#) of Hunters Hill and Lane Cove into Ryde.

He remains passionately opposed to any forced amalgamation without public consultation and local approval.

“The very reason we were so successfully able to oppose the forced amalgamations was the lack of democracy and the lack of consultation with the community and this community will not put up with that,” he said.

“In parliament I will continue to be a vocal advocate for this community, doing only what is in the best interests of this community.”

He also rates his chances as good and he points out that recent local government elections saw the Liberals lose power across Northern Sydney.

“I’m optimistic of a good result in Lane Cove because of the council results and because of the huge swings against the state government in the Orange and Wagga by elections, where people voted for community-based candidates,” he said.

“People feel the government is not listening to them.”

Mr Quinn is widely known for his controversial claim the state government refuses to move the radioactive waste in Nelson Parade, Hunters Hill to a western Sydney treatment plant for “political reasons”, to save the Liberal held seat of Mulgoa.

If true, it could well prove to be a costly political gamble for the government which can’t afford the loss of blue-ribbon seats like Lane Cove.

“Action from the government on Nelson Parade has been promised for years and nothing has been done and the waste material is still there,” Mr Quinn said.

“It will be an election issue.”

He said voters are also angry with the state government’s new planning laws which have taken away councils’ planning powers and given them to government supported independent planning panels.

Of particular concern are the panels’ tendency to approve developments on the grounds of state government compliance codes, rather than respect and uphold local objections.

“Discussing planning issues and concerns will be a strong part of my campaign,” Mr Quinn said.

He declined to comment on Labor Party speculation that the government is deliberately holding back tens of thousands of dollars in awarded legal costs to Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Councils in a bid to force Hunters Hill into debt, triggering an almost inevitable forced merger with Ryde.

“One of the personal catalysts in my decision to stand as a candidate is that, more than a year after Hunters Hill and Lane Cove were awarded these costs by the court, they are still waiting for the government money to come through,” he said.

“What is the point of being a member of the Liberal Party when its forums are a sham, controlled by Liberal party power brokers?”

“It is a party that does not want to consult with its own members, and we saw that during the forced amalgamations which came as a sudden shock to us all.”

The Emeritus Mayor is a strong advocate for democracy and this “core belief” underpinned his reason for quitting the Liberal Party.

Mr Quinn has received the strong support of Save Hunters Hill Municipality spokesman Phil Jenkyn OAM.

“Richard Quinn is an outstanding candidate who was at the very forefront of the campaign to stop the forced mergers,” Mr Jenkyn said.

“He is passionate about our community, our unique identity and our special sense of place.

“On every level he has demonstrated his integrity and his ability to speak clearly, responsibly and powerfully for our local community.”

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