

# September elections threaten to wipe out the local Liberals

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**The Liberal Party will be decimated at the September local government elections if it refuses to scrap forced mergers threatening Canada Bay, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde, the President of the Save Our Councils Coalition said last Friday.**

President Brian Halstead issued his warning in response to the so-called “monster swing” against the Liberals in the North Shore by-election as well as independent polls that show around four out of five local ratepayers oppose the mergers.

The Liberals have Mayors in Canada Bay, Lane Cove and Ryde Councils and they can expect a hard time from Mr Halstead’s Coalition, which is expected to run a Put The Liberals Last campaign.

“The massive swing against the Liberal Party (in North Shore) was a direct result of the Liberal Government’s forced council amalgamations agenda, a failure to hold plebiscites, an inability to genuinely listen to the community and a dramatic loss of trust from the people,” Mr Halstead said.

“This Liberal Government has seriously lost its way and now is the time for it to act decisively, withdraw forced amalgamations and work cooperatively with communities on genuine reform,” Halstead says.

“If it fails so to act it is probable that the courts will continue to set aside the merger proposals and community anger will continue to increase in the run up to the Local Government elections in September.”

Mr Halstead’s warning comes amid speculation the Liberal Party will run candidates in Hunters Hill for the first time, although the Party will be acutely aware than more than 80 per cent of surveyed ratepayers oppose its forced amalgamations.

The Liberals are the majority party on Canada Bay and Lane Cove councils.

Save Hunters Hill Coalition Municipality spokesman Phil Jenkyn said the September election will be decided by local voters who will support candidates who have stood by their community and will punish those who have not.

“The Liberals attack on our local communities and our elected councils is in a shambles both legally and politically,” Mr Jenkyn said.

“This Liberal government has no mandate from the people, it has refused to allow plebiscites and is fearful of the people.”

Mr Jenkyn has previously said the Liberals have a choice to make between communities and property developers.

“The ongoing battle between the left and right factions of the Liberal Party and the influence of property developers and political lobbyists on party policy, has compounded their problems,” he said.

Mr Jenkyn hopes Canada Bay, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Ryde will win a Court of Appeal case against the process used to justify their forced mergers, as Ku-ring-gai council did.

“The Court of Appeal in the Ku-ring-gai case recently found that the council was denied procedural fairness by being refused access to relevant documents underpinning financial conclusions in the Government’s public KPMG analysis.

“This refusal to provide basic material applies to all merger proposals including proposals implemented and is a fundamental legal flaw in the process adopted by the Liberal Government.”

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