

Sunday's Rally calls Baird a dictator

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A section of the large crowd at the Local Democracy Not Dictatorship Rally on Sunday 13 March 2016

Sunday's large community rally in Hyde Park against forced mergers has called Premier Mike Baird a dictator and has demanded his government to immediately stop the forced merger of Hunters Hill and Lane Cove with Ryde.

The rally condemned the forced merger process as an attempt to murder local democracy, abolish our local services and destroy the identity of the three threatened local municipalities.

The rally was organised by Save Our Councils Coalition and the Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition with support from ratepayers across NSW supported by ratepayers from Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Ryde and Canada Bay which is under threat of being merged with Strathfield and Burwood.

Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition spokesperson Phil Jenkyn warned that only property developers will benefit from the abolition of Hunters Hill Council and its heritage protection laws.

"The Save Our Councils Coalition called Sunday's rally because it is imperative that our elected representatives and Governments follow basic democratic principles in this country", he said.

"They must not be allowed to act as arrogant dictators favouring particular sections of society".

"We believe in no forced amalgamations, keeping our councils local and holding a referendum to give our community a say.

"This is in contrast to the Baird Government dictatorship, which is intent on destroying our democratic institutions, failing to respect the will of the people; deliberately lying to the public, ignoring social, environmental and heritage issues; and favouring development at any cost".

Strathfield resident and Coalition supporter Nella Gaughan said she was impressed by the large turnout at the rally which included a bus load of angry residents from Kiama.

"It is becoming clear to the Baird government that it does not have the support of the people", Ms Gaughan said.

"From forced amalgamations to the destruction of cultural heritage and overdevelopment our democracy is being eroded, our rights as citizens stripped to accommodate the big end of town.

“We will continue the fight to restore democracy and we will continue to expose the government’s misinformation and propaganda on forced amalgamations”.

“We want to remind the Baird government that Democracy is government by the people for the people.

“But the state government’s intentions are to silence the voices of the people and remove the democratic rights of local communities across NSW.

“Community groups all over NSW are coming together to stand up for their right to be heard.”

She urged local residents to keep fighting.

“Tell our local politicians you want them to oppose forced council amalgamations ... write letters, send emails and phone them”, she said.

“If they continue to support forced council amalgamations then dump them at the next election”.

<http://www.weeklytimes.com.au/sundays-rally-calls-baird-a-dictator/>