

Tumbarumba comes to the city to get its council back

On Wednesday 14 February 2018 a delegation from *Save Tumbarumba Shire* travelled to Parliament House in Sydney to get their council back.



Part of the delegation from Tumbarumba with Save Our Councils supporters outside Parliament House in Sydney 14 February 2018

Dr Neil Hamilton from *Save Tumbarumba Shire* ([video](#)) explained – "We are here today to initiate an inquiry into the merger process that will hopefully get our council back."

The delegation left with the Minister for Local Government a proposal signed by approximately 700 residents to re-instate its boundaries. This followed a media conference and demonstration outside the Parliament in Macquarie Street.

The Liberal/National Party Government forced Tumbarumba to merge with Tumut in May 2016 over the strong objection of its community. This forced merger was and is bitterly opposed by the community. It is also strongly opposed by Save Our Councils Coalition and many communities across NSW.

Since the forced merger the Tumbarumba community has held protests including a candlelight march, and conducted an optional citizen plebiscite asking residents whether they wanted to reverse the merger, resulting in a resounding yes.

A number of speakers addressed delegates, community and the media.



Peter Primrose Labor Shadow Minister for Local Government, Dr Neil Hamilton Save Tumbarumba Shire and Robert Brown Shooters, Fishers & Farmers Party all spoke in support of Tumbarumba.

Will Tuck from Save Our Councils ([video](#)) put it this way – "Tumbarumba should never have been merged. Its council was the second best 'fit for the future' council in NSW and was not recommended for merger by the delegate after an inquiry. The Baird/Berejiklian Government simply went ahead and merged Tumbarumba anyway."

There is no doubt that this was and is a disgraceful and unforgivable act.

Brian Wilkinson *Save Tumbarumba Shire* ([video](#)) revealed that "Gladys Berejiklian told me that she genuinely felt Tumbarumba had received a raw deal in this amalgamation process."

One might ask of the Premier – what are you going to do about it? Let it remain a festering sore all the way to the next election?

David Shoebridge from *The Greens* ([video](#)) said – "We are here today in solidarity with the people of Tumbarumba and from shires and councils around the State who are demanding they get their councils back. If Gladys Berejiklian thinks that the issues of forced council mergers are going away, she is going to have a hell of a fright in 12 months' time when she is told she will be out of office if she hasn't give them their councils back."

"What happens in local communities should be a decision for local people. Labor's policy is that if communities choose to demerge, that is a decision for them and they should be allowed to demerge" – the commitment from Peter Primrose Labor Shadow Minister for Local Government ([video](#))

Robert Brown from the Shooters, Fishers & Farmers Party ([video](#)) noted that "Gladys has not yet fixed the problem of forced amalgamations. There has to be an opportunity for communities to decide if they wish to demerge. We will continue to fight - we will support legislation for a plebiscite to enable you to have your say."



Robert Borsak Shooters, Fishers & Farmers, David Shoebridge The Greens and Fred Nile Christian Democrats all supporting Tumbarumba getting its council back.

Fred Nile from the Christian Democrats ([video](#)) reminded the community – "we have always been wholeheartedly against forced council amalgamations. We call upon Gladys today to agree to de-amalgamate Tumbarumba and also Guyra."

Every political Party (except the Liberal/National Party) is strongly against forced council mergers, and is strongly for giving communities whose councils were forcibly merged a plebiscite to allow them to de-merge.

Unless the Government allows communities who have lost their council this opportunity to de-merge, it is highly likely that the Liberal/National Party will be thrown out at the next State election.

The media covered the event and issues on the evening news – [9 News](#) and [Prime7](#) and [WIN News](#) and Alan Jones is on the case – listen [here](#).

A war cry could be heard across Parliament House, Sydney that day – "Save Tumbarumba!" – "Give us back our council now!"

If the Liberal/National Party Government refuses to listen, it does so at its peril.

Phil Jenkyn OAM [Save Our Councils Coalition](#) 16 February 2018