

Voters are waking up to Mike Baird magic tricks

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LETTERS



NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant resigns

Troy Grant speaks out about his decision to stand down after a disastrous by-election result in Orange. (Video courtesy: ABC News 24)

To distract us from the disaster of the Orange byelection, Magic Mike's Coalition government has announced its "commitment" to a metro rail line from the Sydney CBD to Parramatta ("[Metro to Parramatta 10 years away](#)", November 15). Current cost estimates are "at least \$10 billion", and construction will "start within five years".

But these vagaries are compounded by lack of detail about the real costs, the actual route and how many stations will be built.

More and more people are realising that many of Mike Baird's policies, with their lack of transparency and authentic community consultation, involve the same sleight-of-hand, smoke-and-mirrors illusion of all magic tricks.

After the result in Orange, perhaps our political establishment will begin to realise that you can't fool all the voters all the time.

Rob Phillips North Epping

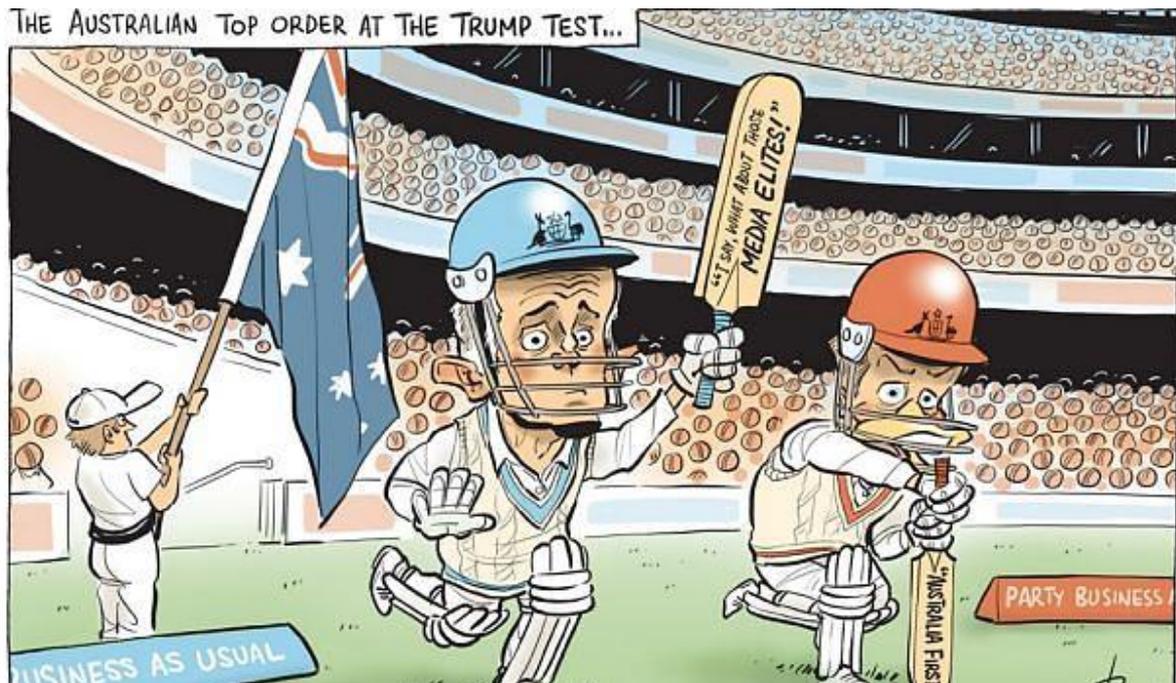


Illustration: David Pope

The surprise Orange byelection result and subsequent resignation of Troy Grant has prompted speculation about whether the Baird government might be prompted to listen more carefully to voters. The early signs are not great. The Premier immediately played down concerns about council mergers, perhaps the single most important source of local resentment, as a simple "fear of the unknown".

There is some irony in this. For months Cabonne residents have been attempting to find out just what it is that the government "knows" about the proposed merger with Orange Council that they don't, given the stated benefits make no sense at face value and appear to be based on seriously flawed assumptions – and despite the fact that Cabonne has easily complied with the published performance criteria for remaining a stand-alone council.

Despite court actions, we still have access only to the summary reports, with the detailed modelling kept under lock and key. So in a sense Mike Baird is right: we really are scared of the "unknown".

It is depressing that despite handing out such an obvious rebuke via the ballot box, we remain stuck with a Premier who appears to be as self-righteous and hard of hearing as ever.

Bring on 2019, please.

Chris Brown Molong

At the 2015 state election, Mark Coure won the seat of Oatley with one of the biggest swings statewide. Last May, Hurstville and Kogarah (the two councils that cover most of the electorate) were merged. Now the new Georges River Council plans to sell part of our local park for high rise, and the locals are not happy.

I can't speak for the rest of NSW, but Mike Baird's unyielding pursuit of amalgamations won't help Coure's chances at the ballot box in 2019.

Peter Mahoney Oatley

Mike Baird's arrogant obsession with selling out and selling off (Letters, November 14) reaches far and wide across our great state.

Here at Suffolk Park, in the far north-east, our beef with Baird is his planned sell-off (without any community consultation) of our local sports fields, children's playground and community garden. This three-hectare lot is a vital and integral part of the life of our community – the home to local sports clubs and a place where our children can play.

Incredibly, despite well-documented evidence (and plain common sense) indicating that communities need open spaces for cohesion and amenity, Baird is, once again, "going for the money".

Pam Timms Suffolk Park

In Pittwater a high proportion of people wanted to retain their local council, but the state government ignored them. Amalgamation proceeded after a drawn-out and fake "community consultation".

Now Mike Baird's puppet council is trying to impose a huge increase in development and population on the leafy local community of Mona Vale.

Again, its plan was initially put up for "community consultation". Freedom of information revealed that of 1300 suggestions on the suburb's future, only one suggested higher buildings and an increase in population. The result is that this community is now on the warpath, with a protest rally scheduled for November 27 on the Mona Vale village green.

The Pittwater electorate is the home of the NSW Planning Minister. Will these events cast a long shadow? A complete blackout for the minister, more likely.

David Catchlove Newport