

## **BATTLE TO SAVE HUNTER'S HILL IS ON AGAIN! – 26 FEBRUARY 2015**

**THE STATE Government intends to force Metropolitan Councils in Sydney to merge into 18 Mega Councils many with well over 250,000 people, thereby destroying local democracy and local communities. It intends to amalgamate historic Hunters Hill into a Mega Council of over 323,500 people.**

**The Government also intends to continue with the existing broken and corruption-prone planning system that marginalises communities and restricts consultation. It continues to ignore communities and their values, listening only to big developers and big business and their lobbyists.**

A reading of the Government's so called 'Fit for the Future' document, with its 'incentive payments' for merging councils if over 250,000 people - known by some as 'bribes for mergers', reveals a determination to dominate local government, create monster bureaucracies, and destroy the role of local communities and their elected councillors. The Government intends to rely on the present broken planning system to continue to green light developments, with little transparency and community involvement. These actions if allowed to continue would take the 'local' out of 'local government' and overturn 150 years of Hunters Hill's history and protection of its and the nation's heritage.

The old and discredited arguments are trotted out by the Government that 'bigger is better', that services and performance are increased with amalgamation. This is simply not true. Hunters Hill, like all city councils, belongs to a Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCS) that group together to share where appropriate common costs in relation to major or similar services, and deal with regional issues. Savings in costs may thereby be achieved and regional solutions determined and put to Government. There is no evidence to show there are any benefits to be gained in moving from a collaborative approach (ROCS) to single large corporate style entities.

**HUNTERS HILL is Australia's oldest garden suburb, and one of the nation's most significant heritage places and council areas. It was one of the earliest municipalities (1861), and recently celebrated its Sesquicentenary.**

It contains more heritage buildings and places per head of population than any other local government area in the nation. Its heritage was saved from destruction by the direct action of its community. It has a very strong sense of belonging and community and has many long established cultural, sporting and community groups.

**ALL ATTEMPTS in the past to amalgamate Hunters Hill with surrounding councils have failed. Those attempting to do so came over time to realise the significance of the area to the nation, the strength of its community, and the many adverse impacts that would flow from amalgamation.**

It simply makes no sense to destroy community spirit and cohesion and put at severe risk the nation's heritage. The State government is heading down a destructive path similar to other misguided governments subsequently thrown out of office.

**THE CONVENORS of Save Hunters Hill Municipality Coalition, former Mayor Ross Williams and Phil Jenkyn OAM, call on the community to let the Government and the local member Anthony Roberts MP know in no uncertain terms your views, how you value this community, its heritage and local governance – and no forced amalgamations!**

**See [here](#) for list of relevant State politicians and local candidates for State Election 28 March 2015**