

Local Government needs urgent reform because

**1. Communities are divided many times over and arbitrarily.** The suburb of Gladesville is split in two as one side of Victoria Rd is managed by Hunters Hill Council and the other by Ryde. I have a Masters degree in Safety and over the years have raised a number of safety issues and have organised petitions, made detailed evidence based submissions and it's a waste of time as they pass the buck to each other and take no responsibility. It's all "to hard" for them.

Currently spanning across the two councils are 13 high rise developments in our small village area with many more in the pipeline; one of which is 26 storeys and the 3-4 others 15 - 18 storeys. Coordination of such massive, once in a lifetime infrastructure development, is essential but it is happening piecemeal without regard for the whole. Such poor planning makes major errors inevitable.

**2. Councils are very uneven in their competency, prone to corruption, political point scoring for the sake of it.** Ryde's ex-mayor is one example but it should be noted he was notorious prior to the ICAC findings. As myself and 3 children were voting at our recent election, one Councillor was physically assaulting another and an ambulance called for suspected spinal injury. Two of the candidates campaigned solely along party lines without outlining their work history, community work etc. Ryde Council has a history of dysfunction due to pushing issues on party lines and personal self interest. Meetings have been attended by the police and cancelled because of their dysfunction.

**3. Councillors have too much power and ignore professional advice to pursue their own agendas.** By way of example, recently after a thorough investigation by council experts who are professionals in the field, the Group Manager strongly recommended against approving a new child care centre in a particular location because of traffic congestion, chaos and associated child safety risks advice. It was stated that this was because of previous poor planning by the Council itself (probably because of Councillors interference). Anyway it turned into a liberal/labour stoush and the centre was approved. Crazy!

My view is the qualified Council staff should run the show on a clear rules basis THAT IS ENFORCED so that outcomes are for the greater good and of high quality, consistent standard. Councillors are disrupters, unprofessional and have too much power and are now on party politics platforms rather than the best outcome for the community. Too many Councillors are connected to developers and play favourites. We need a rules based system THAT IS ENFORCED.

On the other hand I have been a rate and made renovations under Marrickville Council and found them to be absolutely fantastic ...rules based, professional, responsive, quick following up. I couldn't fault them.

**3. Councils wastes our money.** In Ryde, \$500,000 and rising has been spent on it's No Amalgamation campaign. Unscientific surveys & statistics manipulation are used as they try to preserve their fiefdoms. We have just got a new Council website when the old one was of high standard and perfectly adequate and I am a regular user. \$710,000 will be spent on an international Design competition for a new Civic centre. Hunters Hill Council has spent vast sums on legal fees to justify all sorts of [REDACTED]. They are now so poor they wanted to close our library (they had to back down because of public outcry) are selling public land to developers in [REDACTED]' and allowing these developers to make merry and build massive, very low quality developments, e.g. the proposed Gladesville Village Development.

Councils say they are so poor and so short staffed but find so much money and time to make grandiose schemes and promote themselves. Meanwhile our short street which has a large nursing home, disabled school and leads to a park has no foot path so people with walking frames, strollers and toddlers are walking on the road. They couldn't even get their act together to mow the long grass at our river park for the long Easter Break and they have never fixed the electric b-b-q there. I could go on.