

Killalea meeting calls for ballot

Referendum demanded

A PUBLIC meeting last night unanimously supported a referendum to determine the future of the Killalea State Park.

South Coast Labour Council (SCLC) secretary Arthur Rorris told the more than 100 people gathered that the NSW Government had "snookered" itself by supporting the referendum.

"If you call a referendum, you must have the honour and decency to abide by the result," he said.

The meeting, held at The Links Golf Club at Shellharbour, was organised by the Save Killalea Alliance in conjunction with the SCLC.

Made conspicuous by their absence were the empty, labelled seats of NSW Minister for Lands Tony Kelly, Kiama MP Matt Brown, Shellharbour MP Lylea McMahon, and Killalea Trust chairman Ed Gilmore, who all declined to attend.

Those present included former Shellharbour mayor and ALP Member for Kiama Bob Harrison, and trust members Colleen Camarda and Phil Smyth, who voted in support of the referendum.

The meeting was held in the wake of a proposal by Shellharbour Mayor David Hamilton that Shellharbour

City Council take over control of the park from the Killalea Trust as an alternative to leasing part of the land to private developers.

Included in his proposal was an Illawarra-wide levy and a limited \$2 million, Government-funded development that would help pay for the estimated \$250,000 annual maintenance bill.

A spokesperson for Mr Kelly told the *Mercury* that while he objected to a Government-funded \$2 million complex, he would consider other parts of the proposal if a referendum showed support for the Hamilton plan.

Concerns for the park escalated on April 30 with Mr Kelly signing an agreement to lease three parcels of park land, for 52 years, to Killalea Coastal Investments, allowing for a proposed 202 residential lodges, swimming pools, tennis courts, restaurants and a conference centre.

At last night's meeting, Mr Rorris said events to date had shown the arrangement was nothing more than "a sleazy deal".

"When you add it all up, the unanswered questions, the way the deal was done and the leasing for 52 years, it's privatisation by stealth."

The meeting proposed a letter war, demanding Shellharbour and Kiama councillors back a referendum.