

the city streets

THE COMMUNITY REACTION



Property Council's Illawarra Chapter chair Geoff Jones

From a town planning view, the appointment of administrator will make for a transparent process, things will be more black and white. But the drive, enthusiasm and vision is supposed to come from council. The image of Wollongong had been tarnished, but if the city gets the fundamentals right with clear long-term plans and infrastructure, investors will come to the region.



South Coast Labour Council secretary Arthur Morris

Wollongong is the third largest city in NSW and has a proud history of independence and achievement. (A long-term administrator) would be the ultimate insult from the State Government, who many believe share the blame for the mess that has been created in Wollongong. The administrator will work for Morris lemma, and from what I have heard the perception is that people are not getting much representation at the state political level.



Member for Throsby Jennie George

I do feel for the people who have been caught up in the process that are not subject to any investigations, people have given up a huge part of their life to work for the council. Concerns have been raised over how the community would have an input into the decision making process of Wollongong council.



Member for Cunningham Sharon Bird

The ALP has taken a hit recently, but the party is committed to rebuilding its reputation in the Illawarra. It is going to take a while for the finger pointing and blaming to die down, but I don't think that achieves anything. A rebuilding process, led by an administrator, needs to be in place.



Illawarra Business Chamber president Les Dion

We believe it is very important we start afresh to fix things and that the recommendations of ICAC are implemented. I'm sure people are thinking twice about doing business down here, but that is another reason it is good to start with a fresh new face.



Shellharbour Mayor David Hamilton

I don't think it's good for local government as a whole. I don't think it's good for the Illawarra. But with the chain of events it's understandable. I feel sorry for a lot of these councillors who, like myself, eat, sleep and breathe for the benefit of residents. There's a lot of councillors who were dedicated to Wollongong, and it's a sad, sad thing for them.

Hay forced to roll with political punches

By SARAH ALLELY

WOLLONGONG MP Noreen Hay was taking it all in her stride yesterday.

At the Independent Commission Against Corruption hearings on Friday, a tape recording was played of a conversation Ms Hay had with allegedly corrupt developer Frank Vellar, where she agreed to lobby Labor councillors on his behalf.

Ms Hay was immediately stood down from her position as Parliamentary Secretary for Health by

NSW Premier Morris Iemma.

But she remained adamant she was innocent.

Yesterday ICAC Commissioner Jerrold Cripps QC made that official, telling the Premier that the MP was not a person of interest.

After being reinstated by Mr Iemma, Ms Hay was circumspect about the timing of her name being mentioned at the inquiry.

"I'm happy, it's vindicated what I said on Friday, which was that ICAC had told me I was not an affected person and that I had

been co-operating," she said yesterday.

Ms Hay said she was contacted by ICAC investigators late last year, but the conversation with Mr Vellar about his plans for the North Beach Bathers' Pavilion had not been mentioned.

Despite the commissioner clearing her name fairly early yesterday, the timing of the tapes being played on Friday afternoon could not have been worse for Ms Hay - just in time for the weekend papers.

"These things happen. I'm in

public life. The Premier had no option, I accept that he had made a statement earlier in the week to stand down anyone mentioned at the inquiry," she said.

"My name gets thrown up on Friday, what else could he do?"

The ICAC is investigating 14 people in relation to Wollongong planning practices, with allegations of sex and bribes.

Mr Cripps said yesterday there were no plans to name any further persons of interest, but the situation could change depending on the testimony of further witnesses.

Ratepayers robbed of voice

By VERONICA APAP

IT was wrong that Wollongong ratepayers would be disenfranchised from local politics for the next 4½ years, according to the Local Government Association.

President Genia McCaffery said it was disgraceful that residents would not be able to vote in the September elections.

"Who's going to manage local development in that time?" she said. "An administrator who is not accountable to the people of Wollongong."

Ms McCaffery sympathised with the Wollongong councillors who were not

involved in corruption. ICAC commissioner Jerrold Cripps, QC, yesterday recommended the positions of all 13 councillors be vacated.

"I feel very sorry for the many good councillors on the council who were working very hard to clean up the council," she said.

The biggest issue raised at the ICAC hearings was political donations and she has called for a massive overhaul of the system.

"I don't believe the things the Premier proposed last week do anything to restore public confidence in the political process," she said.

Chase on for 'conman'



RAY YOUNAN

INDEPENDENT Commission Against Corruption officers will execute an arrest warrant on alleged conman Ray Younan.

However, an ICAC spokeswoman could not give any details about the investigation into the whereabouts of the man accused of posing as an ICAC investigator and taking cash and gifts from Wollongong councillors.

Younan is rumoured to be in Lebanon but will not be pursued at this stage by state or federal police, with ICAC officers conducting the investigation themselves.

We tell you **FIRST**

MONDAY: ICAC FALLOUT ROCKS REGION

TUESDAY: SHOCKWAVES

WEDNESDAY: SEX, BRIBES & CITY COUNCIL

THURSDAY: Plot to silence Beth

FRIDAY: YES YES YES NO

SATURDAY: ROCK THROWER TO NICOLE: I'M REALLY SORRY

SUNDAY: ONLINE FOOTY TIPPING

SUNDAY: OXLEY: THE EVIDENCE

quote

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- WOLLONGONG MP NOREEN HAY