

# The Sun-Herald

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## Rude, arrogant, ruthless

Former colleague spills beans on Beth Morgan • Why Joe won't go



New claims in the Wollongong affair Pages 4,5

The man who gave up \$1 million to go fishing with his dad  
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Photo: Dallas Kilponen

Rudd's perfect pitch for the world's biggest event

# LET'S STEAL THE CUP

PRIME Minister Kevin Rudd will today unveil an audacious campaign to wrest the 2018 FIFA World Cup from bid favourites England, boasting: "Overcoming tough odds is what Australian football does best."

Full story, page 13





## THE GONG SHOW

# Colleagues spill beans on sex scandal town planner

## Tripodi: I did nothing wrong

By LISA CARTY

PORTS and Waterways Minister Joe Tripodi hit back at his critics yesterday, saying he played no role in securing a \$200,000 government job for his Labor mate Joe Scimone.

But he admitted he felt the "weight of responsibility" for the crisis in which the NSW Government now finds itself.

Mr Tripodi said he hoped any investigation into Mr Scimone's appointment would be concluded quickly.

"There have been media reports that this could be resolved as early as this week and I sincerely hope this is the case," he told *The Sun-Herald*.

"Of course I feel bad the Government is in this position but I maintain I did absolutely nothing wrong. I had no role to play in his appointment and it would have been improper for me to do so."

Mr Tripodi said NSW Maritime, which appointed Mr Scimone to the job, had confirmed that he had played no role in the appointment, even though NSW Maritime falls under his portfolio.

Mr Tripodi said he had been unaware of the Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation affecting Mr Scimone at the time he was appointed.

On Friday, Premier Morris Iemma said he had asked ICAC whether it should conduct an independent investigation into the appointment.

Mr Iemma said Mr Tripodi "insists" he had nothing to do with the process and his gut feeling was that he was telling the truth. If Mr Tripodi wasn't he would be sacked immediately, the Premier said.

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Standing firm ... Joe Tripodi is confident of being cleared of any wrongdoing.

Photo: Derren Pateman

## Beth Morgan 'was rude, arrogant and ruthless'

By LISA CARTY and COURTNEY TRENWITH

SHE slept with developers while processing their building applications but it was Beth Morgan who wrote Wollongong City Council's guidelines on ethical dealings with developers.

Ms Morgan lectured the staff on the guidelines even as some of them grew to hate her for snubbing them while "sucking up" to the bosses.

One of her former colleagues has told *The Sun-Herald* repeated complaints were made about the young blonde planner's relationships with developers - including her sexual liaisons - but they fell on deaf ears.

"She was very ambitious and she knew what side her bread was buttered on," the former colleague said.

"She didn't socialise with us because we were beneath her but she had a very good relationship with the managers and directors. She would start the morning getting coffee for her manager, Joe Scimone, and talking in his office for an hour.

"She got into work very early, around 7.30am - when the managers got in - and she would flirt with them.

"She just wanted to climb the ladder. She was rude, arrogant and ruthless. She made everyone's life hell."

Ms Morgan gained statewide notoriety last week when she became the star attraction at the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry into Wollongong City Council, with revelations she had sex with three prominent developers - Glen Tabak, Michael Kollaras and Frank Vellar - while reviewing their development applications.

One former colleague said "everyone" knew things were bad but the extent of the bribery and corruption claims were a shock, even to them.

"Everyone knew about the sex stuff but no one knew about the bribes and money," the colleague said.

Yesterday, as Ms Morgan remained in hiding, her former husband, Adam, was recovering from a horrendous week in which he was swept up in Wollongong's bizarre sex and corruption crisis.

Mr Morgan met his then wife when they worked together at the council in 2000. Their only child, Hannah, was born in 2003. They later divorced.



Adam Morgan yesterday. Photo: Lee Besford

Yesterday, he and a female companion left his Coniston home to take his four-year-old daughter to the shores of Lake Illawarra where family festivities were held to mark the third birthday of his nephew, Max.

Mr Morgan smiled ruefully when he was asked about the sort of week he'd had.

"I'm just trying to distance myself from the whole situation," he said. "I'm spending the day with my daughter."

Ms Morgan's neighbours said they felt sorry for the woman at the centre of one of the biggest sex-developments scandals in NSW history.

"You do have to feel sorry for her

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THE GONG SHOW



Beer and skittles . . . Beth Morgan, the star of the Wollongong City Council ICAC investigation, with husband Adam.

Photo: Sylvia Liber



Under scrutiny . . . Joe Scimone.

Scimone's mates fear the toll of ICAC stress

By LISA CARTY

ACCUSED serial sexual harasser Joe Scimone is so devastated by the claims raised against him at the Independent Commission Against Corruption last week that friends fear for his health.

The former Wollongong City Council office manager will face intense scrutiny at the inquiry on Tuesday.

The 50-year-old Wollongong bachelor stands accused of making aggressive, unrelenting sexual advances to his subordinates and paying a bribe to convicted criminals posing as ICAC investigators.

In a week that shocked the state and rocked the Iemma Government, Mr Scimone was alleged to be one of several leading Illawarra identities caught in a sting in which fraudsters offered to destroy ICAC evidence against them.

Premier Morris Iemma has asked the ICAC whether it should investigate the circumstances surrounding Mr Scimone's appointment to a \$200,000 job in the department headed by Ports Minister Joe Tripodi.

Mr Scimone left his \$330,000 a year job at Wollongong City Council last year after a harassment complaint was made against him by former staffer Vicki Curran.

Yesterday people close to Mr Scimone said they were extremely worried about his mental health.

"I've known Joe for a long time and he has always been a bit unusual," a friend said.

"He's been absolutely gutted by everything that has come out in the last week."

Another friend said Mr Scimone's emotional state was precarious.

because she's a single mum, obviously wanting someone important in her life," a female neighbour said.

"I barely saw Beth but she'd wave, smile, say hello."

Ms Morgan kept such a low profile in her Wollongong townhouse complex that it was days before her neighbours realised she was the woman in the news.

"I remember seeing a few newspapers. It didn't click at first," Dylan Bradbery said.

"She kept to herself. She was a nice person to have in the block because she didn't make any noise and she didn't bother us and we didn't bother her."

Another neighbour said the story was all everyone was talking about in Wollongong.

"I think there's a lot of empathy for her around town," he said. "I think she's incredibly naive, which is a shame."

Ms Morgan was not home yesterday and it is believed she is staying elsewhere.

The major players in the council planning scandal are bracing themselves for another big week at ICAC.

Wollongong City Council's retired general manager Rod Oxley will face the inquiry tomorrow to answer accusations that he rode roughshod over town planners when they

knocked back controversial development applications.

Just days after the council's former environment and planning director David Broyd told ICAC that Mr Oxley was close to some developers and was "too open for representations" from them, Mr Oxley will fight to restore his reputation.

He retired in May last year after 19 years, but only after the council agreed to pay his legal fees for any future ICAC matters.

Yesterday he was at home in Mount Pleasant, tucked under the Illawarra escarpment, reviewing transcripts of last week's evidence.

He refused to comment on the

allegation or detail his response, but those close to him said he was preparing to fight tooth and nail to clear his name.

Ms Morgan was the only woman to make regular appearances at what was known in Wollongong planning circles as the "Table of Knowledge", which convened outside a kebab shop.

In June last year Mr Oxley was invited to have a seat at the table, with the *Illawarra Mercury* reporting: "Rod was told this was where the real decisions were made in Wollongong and he appeared completely relaxed as he enjoyed the morning frivolities".

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