



READER PHOTO **Bridge with a view:** Sea Cliff Bridge provides a stunning vista of the Illawarra coastline. Picture: RYLEE COLE

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Share your memories

On the night of August 17, 1998, Wollongong was hit by the worst flash flooding in its history, devastating the region and leaving one person dead. The Mercury will mark the 10th anniversary of the floods with a special feature on Thursday, August 14. If you would like to share your stories with us, email your details to scoop@illawarramercury.com.au or phone 4221 2206 during business hours.

weather

Today
Fine, sunny. 7-16

Tomorrow
Fine. 9-19

Friday
Fine, but windy. 11-20

Saturday
Fine. 10-16

For more details see P56
www.bom.gov.au

numbers OzLotto Draw 754

8 11 18 20 31 35 37 21 42

index

Business	46	Crosswords	54	TV	71
Classifieds	57	Editorial	26	Weather	56
Column	26	Letters	27	World	22
Comics	55	Socials	52	Zest	29

PERSONAL NOTICES

Deaths: Best, Ellen; Brocklesby, Albert; Buchanan, Berna; Callaghan, Rosalie; Hughes, Charles; Kingsman, Carol; Pendergast, Roseanne; Redmond, Len; Thompson, Stan.
Details Page 57

surf

Swell size: 1.5m
High tides: 6.20am, 6.26pm
Low tides: 11.45am
Air temp: 16 degrees
Water temp: 17 degrees

Surf report: Still plenty of surf. Most beaches have 1.5m waves. Conditions bumpy with south-west to south-east winds. Best waves at northern side of point breaks and southern ends.
- Phil Byrne

petrol

What you paid for petrol yesterday
Prices viewed: Tuesday, July 29

Woonona: BP	1pm	154.9
Fairy Meadow: BP	2.10pm	155.9
Shellharbour: 7/11	2.30pm	158.9

Average prices* (Monday)

Wollongong	160.0
Sydney	152.7
Canberra	159.1
Newcastle	157.4

* Source: NRMA

Who's who

General Manager: Ben Marsh
Editor: Stuart Howie
Deputy Editor: Carol Johnstone
Chief of Staff: Jen White
Commercial Director: Sharon Byrne
Advertising Sales Director: Stephen Royall
Promotions Manager: Maria Thomson

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CONTACT US

Office locations:
21 Auburn St, Wollongong, NSW, 2500 02 4221 2333
10 College Ave, Shellharbour NSW, 2529 02 4295 9000
Postal addresses: PO Box 1215, Wollongong, NSW, 2500
PO Box 243, Shellharbour NSW, 2529

Letters to the Editor: letters@illawarramercury.com.au
Editorial Chief of Staff: cos@illawarramercury.com.au
Sport: sport@illawarramercury.com.au 02 4221 2218
Racing: racing@illawarramercury.com.au 02 4221 2214

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Lake Illawarra Area Command: 4295 2699
Wollongong Hospital: 4222 5000
Shellharbour Hospital: 4295 2500
Radio Doctor: 4228 5522
Poisons Information: 131 126
Lifeline: 131114
State Emergency Service (SES): 132 500
National Security Hotline: 1800 123 400
Coast Guard Port Kembla: 4274 4455
Wires: 4285 5630
Integral Energy: 13 1003
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City scandal: ICAC clears Hay - again

By BRETT COX and AAP

NSW Labor MP Noreen Hay has again been cleared by the corruption watchdog of any involvement in the sex and bribes for development scandal involving Wollongong City Council.

Premier Morris Iemma sought the advice of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) last Friday in relation to Ms Hay, the MP for Wollongong.

It followed allegations in a sworn statement from former Wollongong Labor councillor Frank Gigliotti that Ms Hay summoned him to a meeting with local developer Frank Vellar.

Mr Gigliotti claimed Ms Hay pressured him to overturn a council decision on the North Beach Bathers' Pavilion, and said he believed Ms Hay was acting on Mr Vellar's behalf.

Mr Gigliotti and Mr Vellar were both persons of interest in the ICAC investigation into Wollongong City Council.

The entire council was sacked in March following the inquiry's public hearings.

A spokesman for Mr Iemma yesterday said Ms Hay had again been cleared.

"The ICAC commissioner has confirmed his previous advice to the Premier of March 3, 2008," he said.

"That Ms Hay is not an affected person within the meaning of section 74A of the ICAC Act in relation to the commissioner's then public inquiry concerning the conduct of officers of Wollongong City Council and others (Operation Atlas)."



Cleared: Noreen Hay arrived back from London last week in the midst of new claims. She has again been cleared.

It was the second time Mr Iemma had been forced to seek ICAC advice over Ms Hay and the Wollongong council inquiry.

Ms Hay was stood aside as parliamentary secretary in February after a taped phone call played to the ICAC inquiry revealed she had agreed to lobby Wollongong councillors on Mr Vellar's behalf.

Attempts by the Mercury to contact Ms Hay yesterday were unsuccessful.

The MP has said she was simply making a representation to council as she would for all sorts of people in her electorate.

On Friday she said: "It's my understanding ICAC have looked at this, deemed I was not a person of interest and that's it."

Detention policy shift ends a 'shameful' era

THE Rudd government's softening of immigration detention policies will help restore Australia's international reputation after the "shameful" Howard years, human rights advocates say.

But the Federal Opposition has accused the Government of taking a "relaxed" approach to border security and sending the wrong message to people smugglers.

Under changes unveiled by Immigration Minister Chris Evans yesterday, asylum seekers and visa overstayers will be detained only if they are judged to pose a risk to the community. Boat people will continue to be detained on

Christmas Island but with a renewed focus on resolving their cases quickly.

They will be given access to legal representation and the opportunity to appeal immigration department decisions to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The immigration department will have to justify every three months why a person is being detained.

"This isn't about a mass opening of the gates, this is about a more humane treatment of asylum seekers, a more humane detention policy," Senator Evans said. "We think this will allow us to maintain strong border security but also treat people with human dignity." Federal Human Rights

Commissioner Graeme Innes said it was the biggest step forward in immigration policy since children were moved out of immigration detention centres.

But Opposition immigration spokesman Chris Ellison said the Labor plan would relax the strong border protection system put in place by the Howard government.

"The fact that we only have six unauthorised arrivals in detention in Australia today demonstrates the past success of the coalition government's strong border protection policies," he said.

EDITORIAL
A fair go for refugees - P26