

## Orkopoulos confesses

Former NSW Labor MP Milton Orkopoulos has admitted being a public law-maker and a private law-breaker, telling a court he used and supplied illegal drugs and broke a law he helped to pass. **Page 11**



## Air show row

Shellharbour residents say overweight aircraft should not be allowed to land at Albion Park this weekend. **Page 10**

### ICAC failed to act on councillor's complaints

# I blew the whistle years ago: Anthony

## EXCLUSIVE

By PAUL McINERNEY

**SACKED** Wollongong councillor Andrew Anthony wrote to the Independent Commission Against Corruption more than three years ago to blow the whistle on council planning processes, including cosy relationships between developers and councillors.

The corruption watchdog responded on December 2, 2005, saying his complaints did not appear to involve serious and systemic corrupt conduct and that it did not intend pursuing the matter.

Yesterday, Mr Anthony told the *Mercury* he decided to break his self-imposed silence in light of the dramatic events which unfolded at ICAC's public inquiry in recent weeks.

"It's also to let the people out there accusing independent councillors of doing nothing about what has been revealed by ICAC that some of us did try," Mr Anthony said.

He revealed he had made two anonymous telephone calls to ICAC a few months before writing and signing his letter of complaint on November 2.

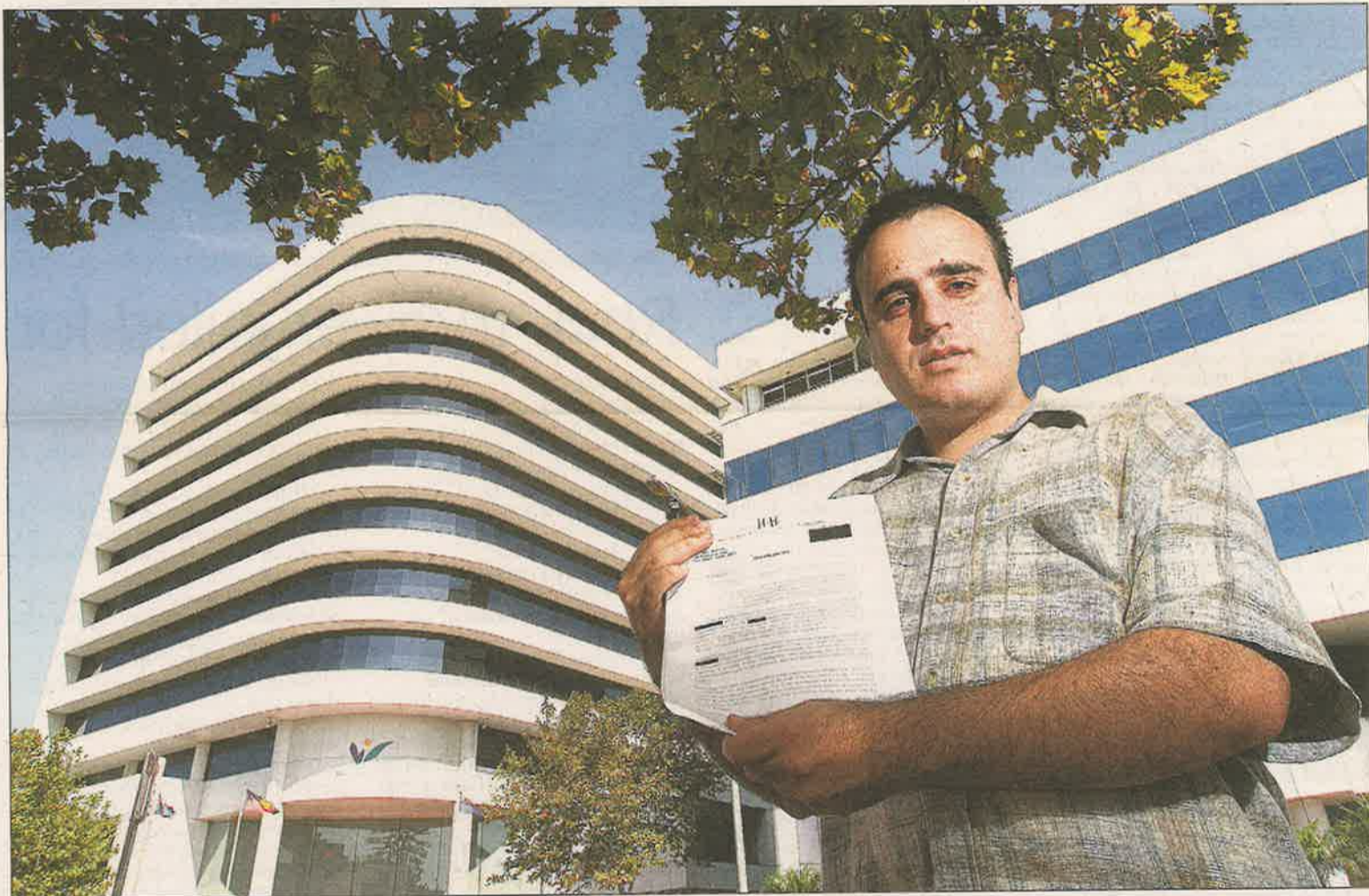
In the letter he made three specific allegations.

The first was that he and friends had witnessed a Labor councillor have a number of meals with a developer whose project the councillor later voted to approve and that the same developer had made significant donations to the Labor Party.

Mr Anthony said he did not want to make public the identity of the councillor, but said he was one of the four identified by ICAC Commissioner Jerrold Cripps as being at the heart of systemic corruption within council before his decision to recommend the council's sacking.

Nor would he reveal the identity of the developer, who he said was not named at ICAC's inquiry.

ICAC's response was: "Council-



**Rejected:** Former Wollongong City councillor Andrew Anthony pictured yesterday with the reply he received from ICAC.

Picture: KIRK GILMOUR

lors may vote on matters in which they have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest. Further, councillors may meet with developers and receive political donations."

ICAC advised Mr Anthony that he could raise the matter with Rod Oxley, council's general manager at the time, if the councillor failed to declare his interest in the matter.

Mr Anthony says he did not do so.

His second complaint involved an assertion that the council in early 2005 had ignored com-

munity opposition to a proposed subdivision.

ICAC said it did not consider this complaint corrupt conduct.

Mr Anthony's third complaint, that he had been the subject of repeated threats from Labor councillors and that he feared for his safety, was a matter ICAC believed could be dealt with through the council's Code of Conduct as a disciplinary matter.

This complaint was not referred by ICAC to council because Mr Anthony did not consent to the disclosure of his identity.

After a brief outline of the definition of corruption as defined under the Act, the ICAC assessment officer concluded his letter: "As the matter does not appear to involve serious and systemic corrupt behaviour, the ICAC does not intend to pursue the matter."

"The matter will now be referred to the Operations Review Committee for its advice as required under the ICAC Act."

Mr Anthony said his concerns about the "abuse" of planning instruments, like SEPP1 in re-

lation to height and floor space ration restrictions, were shared by other independent councillors at the time.

"It would be easy to say 'told you so', but the findings by the commissioner and the subsequent sacking of the council can give no-one any comfort," Mr Anthony said.

"There were probably many complaints received by ICAC about what was going on, but I hope the concerns I raised may have helped in some way to bring about the investigation."



**Victim:** Isabelle Broadhead died in a car crash.

## Isabelle's legacy: a safer world for other children

By VERONICA APAP

**THREE-YEAR-OLD** Isabelle Broadhead has given an extraordinary gift to children all over Australia.

Her mum Danielle yesterday said Isabelle's tragic death in 2006 had ensured other children would be safer in the future.

Isabelle's seatbelt crushed her when the family's car hit a tree after swerving to avoid a truck on Cordeaux Rd, Mt Kembla.

Empowered by their grief, Mrs Broadhead and her husband Noel led a campaign to change laws that allowed young children to be placed in inappropriate restraints.

Last week updated child restraint laws received unanimous support from Australia's transport ministers.

"The law will go through unchanged which is good," Mrs Broadhead said.

Under the tougher minimum standards, children up to six months old must be

restrained in a rearward facing infant capsule, then a forward facing child seat until the age of four and a booster seat from four to seven years old.

"For us it's quite bitter-sweet," Mrs Broadhead said.

"We're relieved children in Australia will be safer, we just wish something had

been done before we had to lose Isabelle."

Mrs Broadhead, of Mt Kembla, said she would like to see children up to the age of nine in booster seats.

However she understood more time was needed so bigger booster seats and child restraints could be designed and made available.