

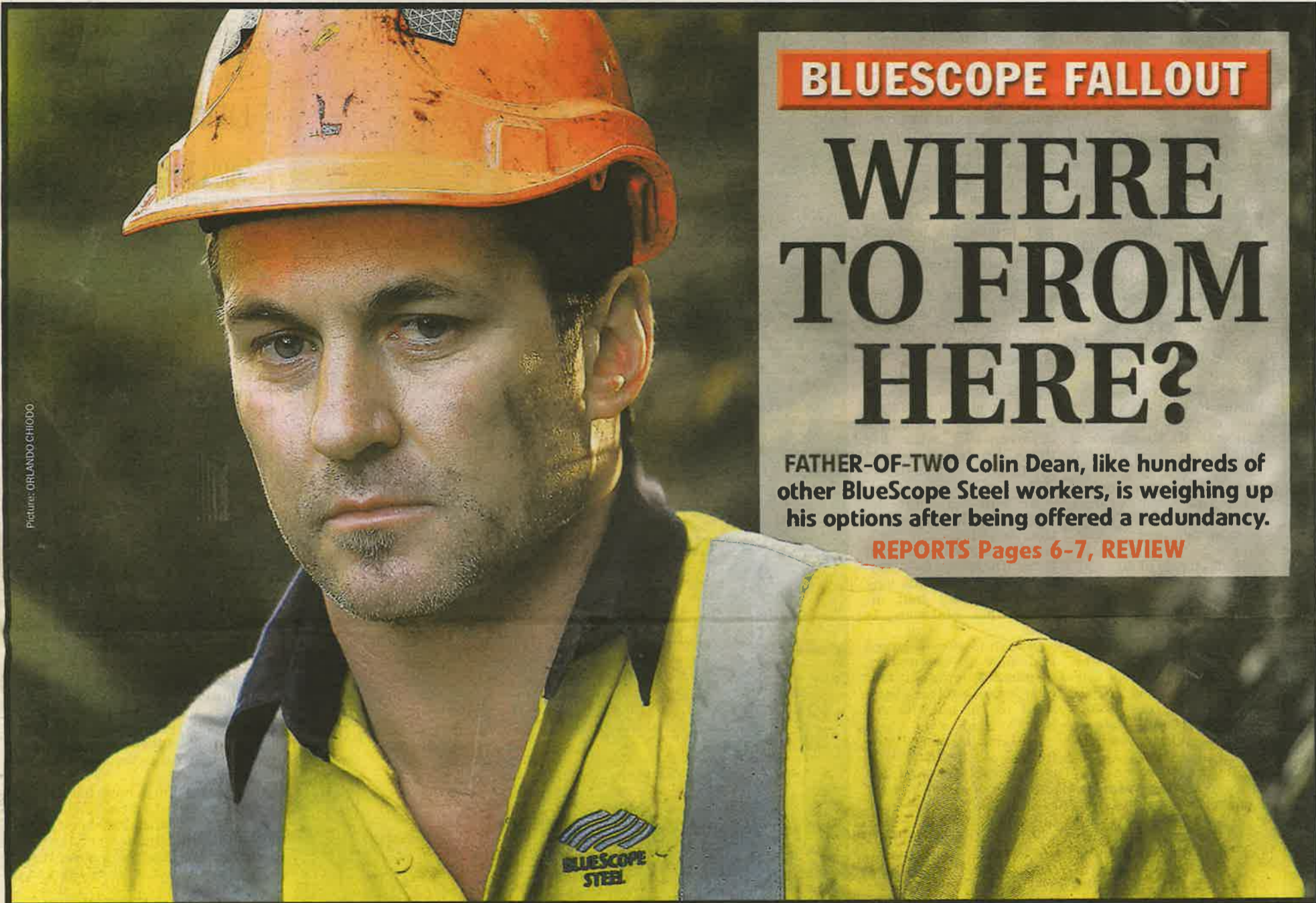
EXCLUSIVE POLL BRADBURY WOLLONGONG'S NEXT MAYOR

ILLAWARRA MERCURY

SINCE 1855

WEEKEND EDITION August 27-28, 2011

\$2 (incl GST)



Picture: ORLANDO CHIODO

BLUESCOPE FALLOUT

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

FATHER-OF-TWO Colin Dean, like hundreds of other BlueScope Steel workers, is weighing up his options after being offered a redundancy.

REPORTS Pages 6-7, REVIEW

INSIDE



Another death on Picton Rd

A male motorist died after his car collided with a truck on Picton Rd, near Cordeaux Dam, yesterday afternoon. REPORT: Page 3

LIFTOUT



VELLAR TO WALK FREE

Disgraced developer Frank Vellar is a free man today. A Sydney magistrate imposed a two-year good behaviour bond on the man at the heart of Wollongong City Council's corruption scandal. Vellar told the court that ICAC had "brought me financially to my knees" and ruined his relationship with his wife and children. FULL REPORT P2



28/08/0001

TODAY: Sunny. Chance of late shower ☀️ 20° | TOMORROW: Mostly sunny ☀️ 19° | SPORT DRAGONS GO ON THE ATTACK

Vellar escapes prison term for lying offences

By SHANNON TONKIN

FRANK Vellar is unlikely to see the inside of a jail cell for the crimes he has committed.

The Wollongong developer yesterday escaped a prison sentence on three charges of lying to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) after being found guilty earlier this month of hiding the true nature of his relationships with former council planner Beth Morgan and ex-councillor Val Zanotto.

Instead, the 45-year-old copped a two-year good behaviour bond and a total of \$3000 in fines for failing to declare any record of cash benefits he had paid Ms Morgan or a \$150,000 loan deal with Mr Zanotto in a 2007 statement to the commission.

Downing Centre Local Court Magistrate Clare Farnan deferred a decision on a fourth, more serious charge of fabricating a document, but said she believed the offence warranted a jail term.

However, Ms Farnan has asked for a report to be prepared on whether Vellar could serve any sentence by way of an intensive correction order, which would see him avoid spending a single night in jail.

The order, which was introduced last year to replace weekend detention, would see Vellar instead serve his sentence period in the community under strict supervision of Corrective Services NSW.

Vellar will learn his fate on October 21, almost three years to the date after he was recommended to face a raft of

charges following ICAC's investigation into Wollongong City Council.

Yesterday, he accepted responsibility for his actions, saying he was "extremely remorseful".

"I acknowledge the court's decision and accept that morally I have done wrong," he said, telling the court the scandal had ruined his personal and professional life.

"It's brought me to my knees."

When asked if his life had changed dramatically since the ICAC inquiry he replied: "That's an understatement".

Vellar also spoke of the fallout within his family since the March 2008 public inquiry, describing the relationship with his three children, now aged 17, 15 and 13, as "strained".

He told the court the intense media coverage of the scandal and subsequent court case had been "horrendous", saying it had cost him any anonymity and had affected his children as well.

"I wish to move forward and show the community, members of my family and people close to me that I want to get on with my life," he said.

Vellar's lawyer Peter Bodor told the court the media attention had ensured "a forest of punishment" had already befallen Vellar.

He described Vellar's offences as "naively unsophisticated", submitting they were at the lower end of the scale of criminality.

But, Crown prosecutor Sally Traynor disagreed, saying they were at the middle to upper range of objective severity.



Picture: ADAM McLEAN



MR THOMSON

Gillard claims Thomson call unremarkable

PRIME Minister Julia Gillard has denied she knew about allegations surrounding Labor backbencher Craig Thomson and his former union before the public did, as Opposition Leader Tony Abbott again called for her to tell what she knew of the affair.

Senior government ministers yesterday rounded to support Ms Gillard after it was reported that when she was deputy prime minister her chief of staff had called Fair Work Australia to ask if it was investigating the Health Services Union (HSU).

Ms Gillard said yesterday Ben Hubbard rang FWA in April 2009 to "check facts", after allegations in a Fairfax Media report about the HSU and Mr Thomson, who was its general secretary for five years to 2007.

She said there was nothing suspicious about the phone call, which was so "unremarkable" neither she nor Mr Hubbard had a clear memory of it.

"It is completely unremarkable for a chief of staff to ring a public servant to check a fact," she said in Hobart.

"Mr Abbott's been out there today claiming that somehow that means I had knowledge of these events in relation to Mr Thomson, and didn't speak about them publicly and I was the only one who knew."

"These things have been on the public record since April 2009."

FWA has since 2009 been investigating the finances of the HSU under Mr Thomson's stewardship and plans to report by the end of the year.

NSW Police this week began an "assessment" of evidence relating to the alleged misuse between 2002 and 2007 of union credit cards issued to Mr Thomson, who now holds the marginal NSW Central Coast seat of Dobell.

Police are expected to determine next week whether a full investigation is warranted.

Who's who

General Manager: Ben Marsh
Editor: Stuart Howie
Deputy Editor: Carol Johnstone
Chief of Staff: Veronica Apap
Commercial Director: Sharon Byrne
Ad Display Sales Manager: Belinda Green
Classified and Features Sales Manager: Doreen McKibbin-Agno
Promotions Manager: Amanda Watson

CONTACT US
Office location: 21 Auburn St, Wollongong
Postal address: PO Box 1215, Wollongong, NSW, 2500
Phone: 02 4221 2333
Newstips: 02 4221 2207
Editorial Chief of Staff: cos@illawarramercury.com.au
Letters to the Editor: letters@illawarramercury.com.au
Sport: sport@illawarramercury.com.au 02 4221 2218
Photo sales: 02 4221 2340
Subscriptions: 02 4221 2234
Classifieds: 13 24 25
Faxes: Editorial 02 4221 2338
 Advertising 02 4221 2368
 Classifieds 02 4221 2334



index

Business	51
Classifieds	58
Comics/Stars	57
Editorial	32
Letters	33
News Review	28-31
Shares	52-53
Socials	56
The Form	43
TV	Weekender
Weather	55
World	26-27

PERSONAL NOTICES

Deaths: Repaci, Francesca; Brauning, Hans; Breaasley, Ray; Caputi, Tony; Hughes, Bill; Kawalla, Herbert; Lewis, Irene; Fogarty, Kevin; McMahon, Clive; Mitrovski, Tasa; Connell, Joy; Dingli, Ron; Dobbins, Neville; Gil, Paco; Heather, Allan; Liebl, Geraldine; Smith, Terry; Robinson, Bill; Sinclair, Laurence; Reynolds, Barry; Ransome, Helen; Schroeter, Margot; Sullivan, Agnes.
Details: Pages 58-59

services

Ambulance, Fire and Police:	000
Emergencies only	
Wollongong Area Command:	4226 7899
Lake Illawarra Area Command:	4232 5599
Wollongong Hospital:	4222 5000
Shellharbour Hospital:	4295 2500
Radio Doctor:	4228 5522
Poisons Information:	131 126
Lifeline:	131 114
State Emergency Service (SES):	132 500
National Security Hotline:	1800 123 400
Coast Guard Port Kembla:	4274 4455
Wires:	4285 5630
Endeavour Energy:	13 1003
Sydney Water:	13 2090
NRMA Roadside assistance:	13 1111

trains

Cityrail: www.cityrail.info/timetable
Phone 13 1500 for information

online

www.illawarramercury.com.au

numbers

winning numbers

14	21	27	28	44	43
----	----	----	----	----	----

Powerball
Thursday draw 797

petrol

Prices paid for petrol yesterday

Prices viewed: Friday

Warrawang: IGA Express E10 at 1pm	135.9
Coniston: Petroleum unleaded at 1pm	136.9
West Wollongong: Caltex E10 at 2.20pm	140.9

Average unleaded price*

Wollongong	144.4
Sydney	144.7
Canberra	141.2
Newcastle	139.7

* Source: NRMA

Seen it cheaper? Phone 4221 2206

surf

Swell size:	0.5-1m
High tides:	6.39am, 6.44pm
Low tides:	12.43am, 12.15pm
Air temp:	20 degrees
Water temp:	17 degrees

Wollongong: There's swell about but a bit smaller. Most beaches have 0.5m to 1m of north-easterly swell. Conditions will be smooth early then bump-up with the north-easterly wind later. North ends of beaches are best.

- Phil Byrne