

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION  
No. 2005-5 Date 10 OCT 05  
IN THE MATTER OF:

*OP GRAND*

EXHIBIT No. *3*  
*[Signature]* CLERK

# OPERATION GRAND

## COPIES OF RELEVANT NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Crime and Misconduct Commission  
Terrica Place  
Cnr Creek and Adelaide Streets  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
Telephone: 3360 6273

Ref: TH

# OPERATION GRAND

## MEDIA ARTICLES

NO	PRESS	DATE	JOURNALIST/ARTICLE
1	The Gold Coast Bulletin	30.08.03	Alice Jones "Stirrings for our Top Job"
2	The Gold Coast Bulletin	19.09.03	Alice Jones "Running for Cover"
3	The Gold Coast Bulletin	23.10.03	Alice Jones "Mayoral contender's "old, tired barb fires up Gary's Angels"
4	The Gold Coast Bulletin	30.10.03	"Builder the first to nominate for Division 3 vacancy"
5	The Gold Coast Bulletin	15.11.03	Alice Jones "Ron's race for office on start block"
6	The Gold Coast Bulletin	22.11.03	"Rowe eyes Council"
7	The Gold Coast Bulletin	29.11.03	Alice Jones "Principal to fight for Division 5 seat"
8	The Gold Coast Bulletin	02.12.03	"Challenger speaks out"
9	The Gold Coast Bulletin	26.12.03	Alice Jones "Virgin Army ready to go into battle for "a better" Gold Coast – Watch out Council"
10	Gold Coast Sun	18.02.04	Murray Hubbard "Councillors lock horns as battle reaches climax"
11	Gold Coast Sun	18.02.04	Murray Hubbard "Pollies and power in a school of controversy"
12	The Gold Coast Bulletin	19.02.04	Alice Jones "Business leaders put pressure on Baildon over city gridlock – Top end of town warns Mayor"
13	The Gold Coast Bulletin	19.02.04	Fiona Hamilton and Alice Jones "Nominees jostle for poll position"
14	The Gold Coast Bulletin	19.02.04	"Politicised Council will end farce"

<b>NO</b>	<b>PRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>JOURNALIST/ARTICLE</b>
15	The Gold Coast Bulletin	20.02.04	"Tickets please"
16	The Gold Coast Bulletin	20.02.04	"Planning boss forms faction with plan to rule civic roost – Power play to control Council"
17	The Gold Coast Bulletin	21.02.04	Alice Jones "Baildon enters the race"
18	The Gold Coast Bulletin	23.02.04	Joanne Gibbons "It's a Power backout"
19	The Gold Coast Bulletin	23.02.04	"I'm convinced of a bloc plan says Crichlow"
20	The Gold Coast Bulletin	26.02.04	Peter Gleeson "No bloc here, say election hopefuls"
21	The Gold Coast Bulletin	11.03.04	No title
22	The Gold Coast Bulletin	12.03.04	"Candidates asked to reveal donors"
23	Courier Mail	15.03.04	Greg Stolz "Developer refuses to discuss supporters"
24	The Gold Coast Bulletin	20.03.04	Alice Jones "Power bid to stop fee hike sparks anger"
25	The Gold Coast Bulletin	22.03.04	Brian Mossop "Pair driven by passion"
26	The Gold Coast Bulletin	24.03.04	Murray Hubbard "To the polls"
27	Gold Coast Sun	24.03.04	Alice Jones "Greg foots the bill for change of heart"
28	The Gold Coast Bulletin	25.03.04	Alice Jones "Meet the money man behind a power bloc looking to control your Council"
29	The Gold Coast Bulletin	25.03.04	Alice Jones "Ray powers the bloc"
30	The Gold Coast Bulletin	25.03.04	"Labor Lawlor backs a Lib"
31	The Gold Coast Bulletin	26.03.04	Alice Jones "How a plot took shape"
32	The Gold Coast Bulletin	26.03.04	Alice Jones "Move to thwart bloc"

<b>NO</b>	<b>PRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>JOURNALIST/ARTICLE</b>
33	The Gold Coast Bulletin	27.03.04	Alice Jones "Three admit to fund"
34	The Gold Coast Bulletin	27.03.04	"Barden's role in power bloc "explained""
35	The Gold Coast Bulletin	29.03.04	Peter Gleeson "Clarke: We can make it work"
36	The Gold Coast Bulletin	29.03.04	"Dawn of another stint in office"
37	The Gold Coast Bulletin	29.03.04	Peter Gleeson "Running the full distance"
38	The Gold Coast Bulletin	29.03.04	Alice Jones "Three bloc-busters – Saroff, Crichlow and Young face hard fight"
39	The Gold Coast Bulletin	29.03.04	Ryan Ellem "The new boys on the block are ready to roll"
40	The Gold Coast Bulletin	30.03.04	"All bets are off as Irene threatens to dob in "independent"
41	The Gold Coast Bulletin	31.03.04	Jenny Rogers "Developing a lobby"
42	Gold Coast Sun	31.03.04	Murray Hubbard "Eddy determined to get funds disclosed"
43	The Gold Coast Bulletin	03.04.04	Peter Gleeson "Mayor-elect's deal may see "bloc" leader as deputy" "Power pact for Clarke agenda"
44	The Gold Coast Bulletin	07.04.04	Fiona Hamilton "Power bloc seizes control of Council over dinner"
45	Gold Coast Sun	07.04.04	"Come clean" says Eddy
46	Gold Coast Sun	07.04.04	Murray Hubbard "More Crs needed on Coast: Power"
47	The Gold Coast Bulletin	08.04.04	Alice Jones "Council 'power bloc' moves fast at first meeting"
48	The Gold Coast Bulletin	12.04.04	Alice Jones "Saroff calls for resignation over campaign money"



NO	PRESS	DATE	JOURNALIST/ARTICLE
49	The Gold Coast Bulletin	13.04.04	"Mayor calls Pforr on trust fund story"
50	The Gold Coast Bulletin	13.04.04	Peter Gleeson "Paying the piper"
51	Gold Coast Sun	14.04.04	Murray Hubbard "Pforr denies he lied about election funds"
52	Gold Coast Sun	14.04.04	Merilyn MacKenzie "Roxanne hits back on funds"
53	The Gold Coast Bulletin	15.04.04	Alice Jones "I confess: the bloc really does exist. We had to stop those greenies"
54	The Gold Coast Bulletin	15.04.04	"Morgan: We had a brief"
55	The Gold Coast Bulletin	16.04.04	Alice Jones "Accept umpire's decision and move on, says Clarke. Funds probe clears Pforr"
56	The Gold Coast Bulletin	17.04.04	Alice Jones "Power's passion for politics"
57	The Gold Coast Bulletin	17.04.04	"Hackwood feels wrath of the bloc"
58	The Gold Coast Bulletin	17.04.04	Alice Jones "Shock for the bloc 'Voters misled' claims probed"
59	The Gold Coast Bulletin	19.04.04	Carly Hennessy "Boykambil residents voice fears over Hope Island works. Pforr: My vote will be honest"
60	Gold Coast Sun	21.04.04	Merilyn MacKenzie "Young muscled out admits Shepherd"
61	The Gold Coast Bulletin	24.04.04	Alice Jones "Council will not survive 100 days"
62	Gold Coast Sun	28.04.04	Murray Hubbard " 'D-Day' nearing for Council bloc"
63	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.05.04	Alice Jones "Bloc flexes muscles on \$140m cuts"
64	Gold Coast Sun	05.05.04	Murray Hubbard "Integrity was put at risk, says Chamber"

NO	PRESS	DATE	JOURNALIST/ARTICLE
65	Gold Coast Bulletin	05.05.04	Alice Jones "Residents pay for poison pen stunt"
66	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.10.04	Peter Gleeson "Cracks in Council power bloc"
67	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.12.04	Fiona Hamilton "Dawn calls for CMC probe on exemption. Sunland under fire over rate discount"
68	Gold Coast Bulletin	02.12.04	Fiona Hamilton "Lambs silent on 'no conflict' calls"
69	Gold Coast Bulletin	22.12.04	Fiona Hamilton "Chip and the bloc. Mayor's voting figures say it all"
70	Courier Mail	11.08.05	Tuck Thompson "Protesters accuse Council of steamrolling"
71	Courier Mail	11.08.05	Greg Stolz and Tuck Thompson "Developers infiltrate Council"
72	Courier Mail	11.08.05	Tuck Thompson and Greg Stolz "CMC probes controversial trust fund"
73	Courier Mail	11.08.05	Greg Stolz and Tuck Thompson "Dossier lists litany of election handouts"
74	Courier Mail	11.08.05	Greg Stolz "Councillor denies conflict of interest"
75	Courier Mail	12.08.05	Greg Stolz "Cashed up candidates victims of 'confusion'"
76	Courier Mail	12.08.05	Greg Stolz, Tuck Thompson and Renee Viellaris "Dinner scam funded polls"
77	Courier Mail	12.08.05	Tuck Thompson and Greg Stolz "Expert urges inquiry into links"
78	Gold Coast Bulletin	12.08.05	Peter Gleeson "Power slams 'guerilla campaign'"
79	Courier Mail	13.08.05	Tuck Thompson "Resident wants the lowdown on height"
80	Courier Mail	13.08.05	Tuck Thompson and Greg Stolz "Coast planners bullied: ex-officer"

<b>NO</b>	<b>PRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>JOURNALIST/ARTICLE</b>
81	Gold Coast Bulletin	13.08.05	Peter Gleeson "Bloc brawling could end Council. Mayor blasts misconduct allegations"
82	Gold Coast Bulletin	15.08.05	"Rookie Rob calls for contentious Council to be canned"
83	The Australian	16.08.05	Greg Roberts "Poll gift advice appears to vary"
84	Courier Mail	19.08.05	Greg Stolz "Club cash cloaked in secrecy"
85	Gold Coast Bulletin	23.08.05	Fiona Hamilton "Heat on as second poll fund bared"
86	Gold Coast Bulletin	26.08.05	Fiona Hamilton "Boyle eyes loophole. Concern that political donations can be moved without disclosure"
87	Gold Coast Bulletin	27.08.05	Fiona Hamilton "CMC probes Mayor. Papers served over Clarke's election donations"
88	Courier Mail	30.08.05	Michael Corkill "Ex-planners clean up on Coast deals"
89	Gold Coast Bulletin	30.08.05	"A CMC 'please explain' for the Mayor"
90	Gold Coast Bulletin	31.08.05	Carly Hennessy "Axe to fall if deceit proved"
91	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.09.05	Fiona Hamilton "Donor's land in change of use"
92	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.09.05	"Mayor disputes his own return amendments"
93	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.09.05	"Feuding factions concur on probe"
94	Gold Coast Bulletin	03.09.05	Fiona Hamilton "Loose lips may sink bloc's ship"
95	Gold Coast Bulletin	09.09.05	Fiona Hamilton "Council denies CMC 'link' to projects axe"
96	Gold Coast Bulletin	10.09.05	Fiona Hamilton "Developers Rix outed as poll donors"
97	The Weekend Australian	10.09.05	Greg Roberts "Plot for control of Council"

<b>NO</b>	<b>PRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>JOURNALIST/ARTICLE</b>
98	Gold Coast Bulletin	12.09.05	Fiona Hamilton "Council 'I spy' fury. Row erupts after Pforr admits covertly taping meeting"
99	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.10.05	Fiona Hamilton "Chamber boss used \$5200 from fund"
100	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.10.05	Fiona Hamilton "THE BLOC"
101	Gold Coast Bulletin	01.10.05	Fiona Hamilton "Betts: I wouldn't do it again"

AL/Briefs/Index – media references exhibited at Inquiry

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 30 AUG 2003, Page 018**  
**Stirrings for our top job**  
**Campaign brews over a coffee**  
**By Alice Jones council reporter**

THE story goes something like this.

There was coffee at a quiet table in a Chevron Island cafe.

City council powerbrokers Sue Robbins, Bob La Castra, Ted Shepherd and David Power were huddled in a group. Late to arrive was Ray Hackwood.

They had gathered to consider the idea of Cr Power running for mayor.

He told the group he had the backing of some influential developers, to the tune of \$500,000, and he wanted to know if he could count on their support.

Well, that's the story anyway.

Cr Power says it's not true. Cr Robbins firstly said it didn't happen and then described it as an innocent coffee. And Cr Hackwood said while the mayoralty was a hot topic, Cr Power's future wasn't on the table.

Cr Hackwood is right about one thing at least: The mayoralty is the issue of the day.

Cr Power reckons at least eight councillors, including himself, have fielded approaches to challenge for the top job.

"I have got enough problems at the moment. I don't need to worry about things like that," said Cr Power.

"I haven't even thought whether I'm running for council.

"Give me a break. All we had was a cup of coffee."

When Cr Robbins was first asked about the coffee meeting by The Bulletin she denied it had happened.

She soon changed her tune, admitting that yes, the group had taken the opportunity to share a coffee when a Friday co-ordination committee meeting finished early.

Cr Robbins, touted by many as having the potential to become the city's first female mayor, also admitted that she had been urged by many to run.

The most recent encouragement came from Mackay Mayor Julie Boyd and Bundaberg Mayor Kay McDuff when the trio spent the day together on an urban renewal trip.

Cr Robbins said while she thought she would make a good mayor, she did not think she would run for the top job at the next election.

"It's been suggested to me by many and varied people. The two female mayors of Mackay and Bundaberg said, 'You should think about it!'"

Cr Hackwood said he would never consider running for mayor and denies that he was asked for his support during the councillor's Chevron Island coffee meeting.

"Quite clearly - I'll say it publicly - I support Gary Baidon."

Cr Max Christmas, who just last year was being touted as a mayoral prospect, said this week he had not been approached by anybody.

"I've been left out in the cold, no one has spoken to me," he said.

Cr Eddy Sarroff, who has previously been approached by the Liberal Party to run for mayor on a party ticket, said there was a 'remote chance' he would consider it.

"The main driver in that will be my family. I have children and I want to spend a bit of time with them. It would have to be something exceptional to push me to do it."

Cr Dawn Crichlow says she is often told that she should run for mayor but she did not take it seriously. "David Power is serious because he made the statement he had a commitment of \$500,000."

Cr Daphne McDonald said her constituents often urged her to run for mayor but it was not a job which interested her.

Crs Ted Shepherd, Peter Drake and Margaret Grummitt said nobody had encouraged them to run.

Cr Shepherd did not rule out a run for the top job in the future when he had more experience in local government. Cr Peter Young said he had been approached by constituents but had had no serious offers.

Cr La Castra said he had no desire to be mayor.

Cr Jan Grew did not return The Bulletin's call.

Cr Alan Rickard could not be contacted.

How they rate

DAVID POWER

Approached: Yes

Obsessions: Planning issues

Comment: Accomplished on town planning issues but is too sarcastic and lacks bedside manner 5/10

ALAN RICKARD

Approached: Has aspirations

Obsessions: The Broadwater

Comment: Hard to read, was an excellent finance chairman but seems to have other agendas now 2/10

RAY HACKWOOD

Approached: No

Obsessions: Roads, footpaths

Comment: Friendly, helpful but admits he does not have the profile nor the speaking skills to be mayor 2/10

MARGARET GRUMMITT

Approached: No

Obsessions: Frank St, Schoolies

Comment: Hardworking and good-hearted but is too politically naive to be mayor 3/10

PETER YOUNG

Approached: No

Obsessions: The environment

Comment: Works hard, very intelligent, good people skills, would be a good mayor 6/10

DAWN CRICHLOW

Approached: Yes

Obsessions: Ibis, Southport, bureaucracy, yellow buildings

Comment: Dedicated, and eccentric, but needs to tone down to make a good mayor 6/10

TED SHEPHERD

Approached: No

Obsessions: Hinterland, hoons and the Village Green

Comment: Tries hard and is dedicated to The Hinterland, does not have the profile, or the cunning to be mayor 2/10

MAX CHRISTMAS

Approached: No

Obsessions: Coloured pots, Surfers Paradise

Comment: Has the best intentions of the city at heart. Speaks (misfires) from the hip. 1/10

BOB LA CASTRA

Approached: Yes

Obsessions: Community, sport

Comment: Passionate about the things he likes but has little regard for bigger picture issues such as planning 3/10

EDDY SARROFF

Approached: Yes

Obsessions: Broadbeach, rates

Comment: Ambitious and hardworking and colourful, but his fiery temperament may hinder his prospects. 5/10

JAN GREW

Approached: Unsure

Obsessions: Film, pitbulls, Robina

Comment: Does not have the citywide profile. Would need to work on her people skills 1/10

PETER DRAKE

Approached: No

Obsessions: Burleigh

Comment: Means well and sometimes hits the mark, but can be erratic and vague, tired and emotional 3/10

DAPHNE McDONALD

Approached: Yes

Obsessions: Water, water and women in government

Comment: Works hard within her community, a job which suits her well 4/10

SUE ROBBINS

Approached: Yes

Obsessions: Sensitive issues, Australian flag, beach markets

Comment: A straightshooter, has a good mix of compassion and reality, would make a good mayor 5/10

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 FRI 19 SEP 2003, Page 005**  
**Running for cover**  
**Councillors tightlipped on invitations to meet Ron Clarke**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

IN his run-up to the March city council elections, mayoral hopeful Ron Clarke says he has contacted every councillor, except Dawn Crichlow, and has had meetings with three. But there is an air of secrecy surrounding Mr Clarke's claims.

Not all would confirm having received an invitation to meet the former Olympian and only one admitted having already met the athlete-turned-businessman.

Ray Hackwood is the only councillor to admit having met Mr Clarke, who refuses to 'name names'.

Mr Clarke says he is attempting to find 'like-minded candidates' to run against all sittings councillors in all divisions. If he were to win the mayoral race, there would be little he could achieve with his one vote, he said, with the status quo.

But Mr Clarke was quick to point out that he would not fund candidates and was not running a Ron Clarke ticket at the election.

Mr Clarke joking that he needed all his money to contest the mayoralty, a campaign that could cost up to \$500,000.

"I have spoken to three of the councillors but I don't want to identify them. They may be embarrassed that they have met with me," said Mr Clarke. "I'm trying to maintain a complete independency. "A few councillors have said they are supporting (Mayor) Gary (Baildon) but that's no problem to me. He's made a few enemies as well but at this stage they are fence-sitting.

"They have been quite open to the problems in the area ... you don't have to be Einstein to realise the real problems being faced." The first outing of the Ron Clarke allegiance will come in November when Mr Clarke hires community halls around the Coast.

At those meetings discussions will be held on the options open to the council to ease the rates burden on residents.

Members of the Concerned Ratepayers Group, some of whom are tipped to run for council seats, will probably attend. Mr Clarke said he had wound up all his Melbourne interests and had moved to the Coast permanently.

He said he would go public with his manifesto and his vision in November - probably after the football finals season.

The Bulletin contacted councillors for their reactions.

Cr Ray Hackwood met Mr Clarke but would support Gary Baildon for another term whom he believed was doing a good job.

"It was a bit vague. He wasn't too sure what was state government and what was council. I probably did the same myself when I first got into council."

Jan Grew has received an e-mail and will meet Mr Clarke to inform him of the key issues facing residents in her council division.

Sue Robbins declined Mr Clarke's invitation to meet. "I don't have anything to talk to him about."

Alan Rickard said: "I think it would be an abrogation of responsibility not to discuss issues (with Mr Clarke) . . . but really they have got to paddle their own boat or run their own race."

Dawn Crichlow has not been contacted but would welcome a meeting. "I'm really disappointed he has put his hand up and not even bothered to turn up to one meeting."

Eddy Sarroff said: "I'd like to hear his views on Hinze Dam."

Max Christmas said: "I just think he's so far out of touch with the place. I don't think anyone from Melbourne could understand the place."

Peter Drake said: "I don't think he's a shining light golden answer to the Gold Coast's problems."

Peter Young said: "I'm going to listen to his vision. I'll be interested to hear what he has to say because unfortunately most of the stuff he has published is fairly uninformed."



**Caption:** Ron Clarke

Ray Hackwood

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 23 OCT 2003, Page 003**  
**Mayoral contender's 'old, tired' barb fires up Gary's Angels**  
**Ron on run in triple trouble**  
**By by Alice Jones, council reporter**

THE toughest trio in the city council unleashed their female firepower on mayoral wannabe Ron **Clarke** yesterday after he branded them 'old and tired'.

Councillors Dawn Crichlow, Sue Robbins and Daphne McDonald were sensationally excluded from Mr **Clarke's** list of 'councillors worth retaining'.

It was a bizarre and politically naive move from the former Olympic runner, who has not even met councillors Robbins and McDonald, and who obviously did not reckon on the strength of the feisty females, all of whom have a reputation for speaking their minds.

"The amusing part is Ron is old enough to be my father," said Cr Robbins, who at the age of 45 has clocked up six years in council.

"I believe he is probably one of the oldest mayoral candidates in the history of the Gold Coast. I wonder if he hasn't included me in his anointed list because I refused to meet with him."

Mr **Clarke**, who at 66 and after only recently moving permanently to the Gold Coast, has announced he will contest the mayoralty at the city council elections next March.

During a speech to the Southport Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, Mr **Clarke** said he believed many residents wanted new blood.

When asked which councillors he believed were doing a good job, Mr **Clarke** failed to mention councillors Robbins, Crichlow, McDonald, Max Christmas, Peter Drake, Ray Hackwood and Margaret Grummitt.

The snubbed group, he said, had been on the council for too long, were tired and were problem makers, not problem solvers.

Cr Crichlow, who during a meeting two weeks ago told Mr **Clarke** he would make a bad mayor and that he was wasting his time, said the 'carpetbagger' had since changed his tune towards her.

While Cr Crichlow will not reveal her age, she says she is much younger than both Mr **Clarke** and 63-year-old Mayor Gary Baildon.

"I'm amazed," she said. "On the 20th of August Ron **Clarke** was quoted in the paper as saying I would make a very good deputy mayor. He said he admired my forthright nature and that he found it refreshing in a politician.

"I just think he's fickle. I think this is going to make the city farcical. I don't think he knows that the Gold Coast has even got a southern end, maybe he hasn't realised because he's stopped everything at Miami. I think he's lost the plot."

Cr McDonald, who at the age of 55 works seven days a week and is on call 24 hours a day, said she was particularly upset to read Mr **Clarke's** claim that he had met with all of the city's councillors.

She is yet to meet the mayoral hopeful and finds it frustrating that he has publicly written her off in spite of that.

"I haven't spoken to Ron **Clarke** at all," said Cr McDonald.

"He rang my office and I left a message with his office and I still haven't heard from him.

"If people are going to make statements they really have to be truthful. I'm still happy to meet with him. I feel there are issues on which he has been making statements that show he's either getting bad advice or he's just not aware of council procedures.

"I think I'm just as enthusiastic today as I was when I was first elected. I certainly don't feel my age and all the people he is criticising are probably many, many years younger than he is.

"I just feel that's a comment that won't really be very acceptable to the community.

"It will not be Ron **Clarke** who makes the decision, it will be the community and if the community is not happy with the representation they are getting from their councillor they will be the ones who are making the decision.

"I think he forgets that the mayor only has one vote and that being mayor doesn't make him any better."

Mr **Clarke** yesterday backed away from his comments, saying he did not remember calling any of the councillors old.

His rejection of councillors Crichlow, Robbins and McDonald also had nothing to do with the fact that they were women, he said.

Fists of fury: from left, Daphne McDonald, Sue Robbins and Dawn Crichlow are not happy, Ron \* Picture: Donna Cosford

False start for mayoral hopeful Ron **Clarke**

**Caption:** Fists of fury: from left, Daphne McDonald, Sue Robbins and Dawn Crichlow are not happy, Ron

False start for mayoral hopeful Ron Clarke

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Donna Cosford

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCILLORS, ELECTIONS

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 30 OCT 2003, Page 008**  
**Builder the first to nominate for Division 3 vacancy**

HOPE Island builder and volunteer worker Grant Pforr will run for the council seat being vacated by Alan Rickard.

Mr Pforr said he had already been considering contesting Division 3 but news yesterday of Cr Rickard's surprise resignation helped him make up his mind.

He is waiting for confirmation of financial backing and expects to officially announce his intention tomorrow.

"I was going to stand last time for Max's division because I was president of the Southport Surf Club. I have been mulling it over for a while," he said.

"I have always been community- minded. - I'm a strong believer in making your mark and moving on because you can get a bit stale otherwise."

Mr Pforr, 45, has lived on the Gold Coast most of his life.

He grew up at Paradise Point and now lives at Hope Island with his wife and two teenage sons.

As well as three years as surf club president, Mr Pforr helped establish the Coomera Water Sports Club, attracting more than \$1 million in government grants.

"I have had a good breeding ground, the politics you get in surf clubs is unbelievable and you don't get paid for it," he said.

Mr Pforr says a lifetime spent living in Division 3 has equipped him well for the job of local councillor.

"I'm familiar with what the division needs, I'm fully in favour of the correct development," he said.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS

**BIOG:** GRANT PFORR

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 15 NOV 2003, Page 007**  
**Ron's race for office on start block**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

HE has been on the campaign trail for the past eight months - and tomorrow Gold Coast mayoral hopeful Ron Clarke will launch his campaign.

The newcomer to local government says he has already learned more than he could ever have imagined about the city and its people.

"I'm an old runner and I really know the value of a two-lap start on everybody else," he said.

"I have been going out and seeing people.

"My aim in getting out early, is to listen to as many people as I possibly can. It's been fascinating stuff," he said.

Mr Clarke said he expected between 100 and 200 people to attend his campaign launch, which is being held at the Gold Coast Arts Centre in the Paradise Room from 11 am.

Everyone who goes along to meet the former Olympic runner will be given a bottle of Gold Coast water, a calico shopping bag and a copy of Mr Clarke's campaign manifesto.

In a bizarre twist, the launch will also feature an aerobics display, candlemaking lessons and children's face-painting.

Highlighting one of his key interests in the need to help and nurture those people less fortunate, Mr Clarke has invited to the platform Dr Rhonda Galbally, founder and chief executive officer of Our Community, a pioneering online organisation that offers practical resources, support and a link between Australia's 700,000 community groups.

Mr Clarke said Dr Galbally had already worked closely with the Brisbane City Council and he hoped that she could offer similar advice to the Gold Coast City Council if he was elected mayor next March.

"She is an icon as far as community welfare is concerned," said Mr Clarke. "I think we should be doing more. Everybody in every community should do a lot more for their disabled and not so fortunate people."

Mr Clarke has already outlined many of his policies, including his love of the environment and his interest in sustainable development.

He said the flood mitigation problem was one that must be addressed by the city council, which he accused of ignoring its obligations.

"They have been prioritising their expenditure and I have learned they could have built up the wall on the dam for \$20 million which is what they are spending on the Taj Mahal building.

"They have looked after themselves," said Mr Clarke.

**Caption:** Ron Clarke

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS  
**BIOG:** RON CLARKE

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 SAT 22 NOV 2003, Page 067**  
**Rowe eyes council**

St Stephen's College principal Brian **Rowe** is considering contesting the March council election.

Mr **Rowe**, who is on long-service leave from his school duties, confirmed this week that he was toying with the idea of running in Division 5 or 3.

He had been approached by a number of people keen to see him in council and was yet to decide, said Mr **Rowe**, who has run the school since it was founded eight years ago.

"I'm considering a lot of options, there's a chance," he said.

"There's a lot of interest there, I've got to weigh everything up."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION CANDIDATE

**BIOG:** BRIAN ROWE

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 SAT 29 NOV 2003, Page 026**  
**Principal to fight for Division 5 seat**  
**By Alice Jones council reporter**

BRIAN Rowe, the outgoing principal of Saint Stephen's College, will vie for a seat on the Gold Coast Council in March.

Mr Rowe told The Gold Coast Bulletin yesterday that he would challenge Cr Peter Young for a chance to represent Division 5 which takes in Nerang, Gaven, Pacific Pines and Ormeau. He says it's time for the council to work together in the best interests of the entire Coast.

Mr Rowe, who considers Mayor Gary Baidon and Coomera councillor David Power as friends, said he would focus not only on local issues but also on 'the big picture'.

"My want is to see us now as a Gold Coast starting to put all the pieces of the jigsaw back into place," he said. "We need to have people who are prepared to bring the 14 pieces, the divisions, together to make that big picture.

"We need to reaffirm our vision, our mission, what we want the Gold Coast to be.

"It's difficult to have a cohesive council when, by their own admission, some councillors don't get on. It makes it very difficult for the big picture to come through."

Mr Rowe, 50, has lived on the Gold Coast since 1982 when he moved from Adelaide with his young family.

From 1983 to 1995, he was master of the junior school at Somerset College before moving to establish Saint Stephen's in 1995.

Seven years on, the school has grown to boast 1130 students in primary and high school. Mr Rowe said setting up a school was an exhausting job and he was ready for a change.

He was keen to throw himself into working with the community and believed that taking on the \$70,000-a-year job of councillor is the best way to do that.

Mr Rowe had an insight into the down side of public life early this year when he was called to give evidence in the court case investigating the insolvency of Saint Stephen's.

He was principal in 2001 when it became embroiled in a financial collapse which affected the viability of the school. Mr Rowe presided over its resurgence.

The college's financial woes spelled bad news for Mayor Gary Baidon who was accused of breaching the Local Government Act for failing to declare a personal interest in the Otto Pfeiffer rezoning which had implications for the school.

Cr Baidon's wife Kathy was on the school board at the time the rezoning was considered.

Cr Baidon was cleared of all the charges.

**Caption:** Brian Rowe

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, EDUCATION SAINT STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

**BIOG:** BRIAN ROWE

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 TUE 02 DEC 2003, Page 016**  
**Challenger speaks out**

I REFER to the 'Familiar faces line up' report in The Weekend Bulletin.

Councillor Peter Drake claims that his opponents 'are running against me because they don't like me'.

As his opponent, I want to make it clear that I do not know Peter Drake personally, nor have I commented about his term in the council.

My decision to contest Division 12 is for two reasons: to serve the residents and be involved in the challenging decisions that need to be made by the council over the next decade. I and my supporters believe I am the best person to represent the division.

Greg Betts Candidate for Division 12

**Type:** Letter



**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 FRI 26 DEC 2003, Page 004**  
**Virgin Army ready to go into battle for "a better" Gold Coast**  
**Watch out council**  
**By Alice Jones council reporter**

IT started as a battle over rising rates; angry ratepayers meeting regularly to push for change in regard to how Gold Coast residents are charged.

But now this grassroots movement has bigger plans to change the way the Gold Coast City Council operates and thinks.

Eight candidates, dubbed the Virgin Army because of their lack of previous council experience, are taking on some of the most powerful and entrenched councillors.

It is not an official ticket, but the group has realised they are 'like-minded' on many issues.

Their professional alliance has built over the past year at the regular meetings of the Concerned Ratepayers Group, of which they are all members.

The candidates are running in eight of the city's 14 divisions and by March they hope to field candidates across the entire city.

Linda Brown, who will contest Division 11 against Cr Jan Grew, and who has been instrumental in collating the group, says they offer the change so many residents want.

"We are all individual people but we have all got the same fundamental beliefs," said Mrs Brown.

"We think we can do a better job than the present council.

"What I like about this group is there's a lot of young people. There's a good mixture."

Mrs Brown's first encounter with the council was early in 2002 when she addressed councillors about her own rating situation.

Holding back tears, she told the council that the steep rise in rates meant that she and her husband could be forced from their Miami dream home.

Her presentation was received with little reaction by the council and the growing community discontent led to a public meeting.

More than 400 people crammed into the Albert Waterways Hall and so the Concerned Ratepayers Group was formed.

Since then the group has continued to meet and the issues it is concerned about have grown.

"I can honestly say the Concerned Ratepayers Group is now quite a forceful group," said Mrs Brown.

"We are affiliated with quite a few bigger groups, Friends of Burleigh, Independent Retirees, Ghecko, the Pensioners Association.

"We have been focusing only on rates but now we have got people coming to us with all sorts of different problems.

"I can see this group becoming bigger, becoming like a centralised information centre for ratepayers.

"As a new set of councillors we would all work together as a team. We're all of the same mindset. This is what we need.

"At the moment they're doing their own thing. They're fighting about who's going to pay. They're not looking at the big picture.

"They're so run by the bureaucrats, our servants have become our masters.

"This city is just growing so fast. I don't think anybody has been able to keep up.

"It's just out of control.

"Someone needs to say pull the reins in, it's becoming not a very nice place to live.

"You can't stop people moving here but you need to have some plans in place, not a bandaid."

Guy Jones, who will take on Cr Ted Shepherd in Division 9, said he was impressed with Mrs Brown and with the direction the CR group had taken since its first meeting. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission community worker, who also used to work as a policeman and as a bodyguard to stars such as Elton John, Luke Perry and Patrick Swayze, said the candidates wanted to take a common-sense approach to council.

"From that first meeting with all the members I realised they're all people who have common

sense. They're just people who are concerned the council has gone haywire," said Mr Jones.

"It has concerned them that much that they wanted to do something.

"What they're saying is very down to earth sort of stuff.

"I don't think we're running as a ticket.

"We're all individual people with individual issues, common-sense people taking this seriously.

"I think I have got life experience to negotiate with fellow councillors and the community."

Labrador computer engineer Wayne **Skuthorpe**, who will run for Division 4, has worked as a consultant to governments at home and abroad since the 1970s.

He has seen how good management can work and believes it is time for a new breed of councillors on the Gold Coast.

"I don't see any imagination in the council," he said.

"Some councillors have a lot going for them, Peter Young, Dawn Crichlow. At least she gets up and does things, says things, is not a bureaucrat.

"Government should not have bureaucrats, it should have people with experience in many areas.

"With the rates, I see it should be a fair system for everybody.

"I like to see equality in things.

"I see that the councillors work for their own little areas.

"They're not working for the Gold Coast as a whole and that I think is what detracts from this place."

Dr Karen Coates had never considered running for council until earlier this year when she lost her fight with the council to run a part-time women's clinic from her rural home.

Her experience with the council made her determined to change the system.

"It was just an absolute eye-opener," she said.

"I never realised how much power council decisions had over your everyday life.

"I figured I could do better.

"We (the Concerned Ratepayers Group) are like minded people who get a lot of support from one another, who feel there's a better way of doing things.

"If we have the numbers in council we could really make a difference and get a more fair and equitable way of doing things, pay community groups more than lip service."

Irene Wareing, who until recently was president of the powerful Friends of Burleigh Group, said she was also excited about being aligned with a fresh group of council hopefuls.

Her work within the community, both through the Friends of Burleigh and her paid work in palliative care, has made her realise residents want a change.

Division 4

**Wayne Skuthorpe**

A 54-year-old computer engineer who worked around the world as an adviser to overseas governments and government departments. He has lived on the Gold Coast for 11 years, initially at Oxenford and now at Labrador. He has experience in management and working with other cultures. He wants to see more imagination in the city council and wants to take control away from the bureaucrats and return it to the people with life experience.

Division 7

**Don Magin**

A 54-year-old lighting designer who runs a Bundall-based company. He is the son of former alderman Neville Magin, and wants to bring back the panache and style of Sir Bruce Small's era. He is passionate about Gold Coast parks and wants to improve the traffic and parking issues in Surfers Paradise. His campaign motto is 'back to basics' and says he has no political or personal affiliations.

Division 9

**Guy Jones**

A former police officer and bodyguard to the stars, Guy now works as a community officer for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. Guy helps Aboriginal children stay in school and later assisting them to find jobs. The program he runs is the most successful of its kind in Queensland. The 40-year-old father of two says all candidates affiliated with the

Concerned Ratepayers Group are common-sense people with wide life experience.

Division 11

Linda Brown

Works in administration for Conrad Jupiters and has been on the Gold Coast and with the company for the past 18 years. She lives at Miami and was initially concerned simply with making the city's rating system fairer. But community pressure has encouraged her to run for council. She says the Irish blood in her means she will not back away from a fight. She wants to ensure that the city's infrastructure and services keep pace with the rapid growth the Gold Coast is experiencing. She says she is on the wrong side of 55.

Division 12

Irene Wareing

A trained beauty therapist who nursed her husband through cancer and later became a palliative care specialist. The 54-year-old mother has lived on the Gold Coast since 1981 and has spent the past six years at Burleigh Heads. Until recently she was the president of the Friends of Burleigh group.

Division 14

Dr Karen Coates

Currumbin Valley women's doctor who was embroiled in a very public fight with the city council earlier this year when a request to run her small practice from home was refused. She will go head-to-head at the ballot box with Cr Sue Robbins, who was the key objector to Dr Coates' approval. Dr Coates, 46, is a mother of two who began her public life aged 17 when she travelled to America for a year as a youth ambassador. Her medical career has taken her to Papua New Guinea and Canberra. She moved to the Gold Coast in 1997 and has been here since.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL ELECTION CANDIDATES

**BIOG:** WAYNE SKUTHORPE,LINDA BROWN,DON MAGIN,IRENE WAREING,GUY JONES,KAREN COATES

Squaring up  
Councillors lock horns as battle reaches climax  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

ONE of the largest campaigns ever mounted to unseat a councillor is under way, with Cr Peter Young locked in a David and Goliath battle with Brian Rowe, former headmaster of St Stephen's College.

Mr Rowe has gathered a formidable team around him - including former deputy mayor Col Kleinschmidt, who Cr Young unseated at the most recent council election.

At that time Division Five, based on Nerang, Coomera, Helensvale and Oxenford, was polarised - Cr Kleinschmidt was pro-development while Mr Young was a conservative greenie.

Cr Young won the battle, unseating the veteran Albert Shire councillor and dairy farmer.

Also included in Mr Rowe's campaign team are two former presidents of the Nerang Chamber of Commerce, David Treacher and Ian Fryer.

His campaign manager is John Lang, a Coomera real estate agent and president of the Coomera Chamber of Commerce.

Also assisting is lawyer and former pupil Michael Yarwood, a former director of St Stephen's. The battle came to a head in a recent council meeting, at which Cr David Power accused Cr Young of breaching his obligations under the Local Government Act.

Cr Young said the allegations were a 'witch-hunt' and a black mark against him by 'political opponents like Cr Power, Cr Ted Shepherd and Cr Bob La Castra.'

Cr Young was duly censured for failing to comply with a council request.

After the meeting, Cr Crichlow said she believed there was a developers 'slush fund' being put together by a councillor to 'get rid of Cr Young'.

She said she and Cr Eddy Sarroff were also on the hit list.

Several other councillors said they had heard rumours about a \$150,000 slush fund.

"I have heard rumours, but I have no evidence," said Cr Ray Hackwood.

He believed there could be a 'payback time' for Cr Dawn Crichlow and Cr Eddy Sarroff.

\* Continued Page 4

\* From Page 1

HE SAID at the most recent council election Cr Crichlow and Cr Sarroff handed out how-to-vote cards for opponents of Cr La Castra and Cr Power.

"To me that's a real no, no. Councillors should keep out of other people's areas," said Cr Hackwood.

"What we have here is a feud between Crs Young and Power, and they are both trying to unseat each other. To me that is wrong. I believe it is up to the electors, not councillors sticking their noses in," he said.

Cr Sarroff said he had heard the rumour that developers were putting money into a slush fund.

"I am concerned if this is true, as should be the community," he said.

"The question needs to be asked why would developers be targeting a councillor?"

"Cr Young is an honest councillor who has worked tirelessly to get the best outcomes for his community.

"I would caution anyone getting involved with this type of activity - it would without doubt be a subject that would be referred to the authorities.

"It's not illegal for developers to fund election campaigns, but if this is happening then you have to ask why and what this will achieve."

Cr Sarroff said the Local Government Act stipulated candidates must declare campaign donations after elections, but believed candidates should declare before the election who gave them money.

"This should be transparent, if there are no strings attached, nothing to hide, then there is no good reason for donations not to be made public prior to the election," he said.

Mr Rowe said his campaign was being funded by family, friends and businesses.

John Lang, his financial campaign manager, said no money from developers had been paid into a specific account for Mr Rowe's campaign.

Grant Pforr, who is contesting division three, to be vacated by retiring deputy mayor Cr Alan Rickard, said he was funding his campaign.

"I am strongly of the belief that campaign funds should be open and accountable, and the public should know before the election where campaign funds have come from," he said. Cr Crichlow said the way of electing councillors was wrong and had led to the problems plaguing council.

"Look, if we were elected by the whole community we would have to answer to the whole community.

"I'd like to see the system changed. Councillors should be voted in by the whole city, instead of division by division.

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 18 FEB 2004, Page 004**  
**Pollies and power in a school of controversy**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

ST STEPHEN'S College at Coomera is no stranger to controversy.

It is also a complex hotbed of political intrigue but, in a way, this should come as no surprise. After all, it was started by Lex Bell, a former Gold Coast mayor and councillor and now former Member for Surfers Paradise.

This breeding ground for pollies and would-be pollies - and those associated with politics and political parties - does not start with the student body.

Political connections go back to the original and early school board, which included Mr Bell, lawyer Michael Yarwood - a former member of both the National and Liberal parties - Kathy Baildon, wife of Mayor Gary Baildon, and Otto Pfeiffer, sworn enemy of retiring deputy mayor, Division Three councillor Alan Rickard.

And let's not forget former Gold Coast City Councillor and National Party powerbroker Lester Hughes, who was a director from day one in 1995.

He is a close friend of Mayor Gary Baildon.

The school started out of a controversy, and despite any academic success, not too much has changed.

In 1994, then staunch Anglican Lex Bell became disenchanted with the church over moves to ordain women.

The Anglican-Catholic Church took a traditional approach to the issue and, out of the controversy, Mr Bell sought to start a Christian school based on Anglican-Catholic principles. That school was St Stephen's College.

The school thrived, and was perhaps too successful.

In the late 1990s it built a second campus at Pimpama.

It is now history that at the time the school was insolvent, with debts of more than \$13 million.

As school administrators the board made better politicians.

In August 2001 the school, with more than 1000 students, put itself into voluntary administration.

The school is now financially back on track, but continues to be a source of political intrigue. Mayor Baildon was taken to court on conflict of interest claims involving his wife, Kathy, and the rezoning of property owned by Mr Pfeiffer.

The case was dropped over a technicality, when former council CEO Paul Stevens couldn't recall when a conversation had taken place with the mayor over the rezoning.

Cr Baildon had pleaded not guilty.

The court case gave some insight into the running of the school with another director,

Suzanne Hampton, a close friend of Kathy Baildon, giving evidence.

She was asked by counsel if the board was split on gender grounds.

Mrs Hampton: Yes.

Counsel: There was a boy's club?

Mrs Hampton: Absolutely.

Some students were allowed to attend free, despite the precarious financial position.

"Some parents with one, two or three children were allowed to have students without fees," she said.

"Even teachers had to wait once or twice for their wages. I was absolutely amazed at what was going on."

Another witness, assistant bursar Julie Campbell told the court there was 'not sufficient internal controls on the finances'.

The controversy that followed the charging of Cr Baildon was described by Bishop John Hepworth, chairman of the school board, as being, 'more to do with Gold Coast politics than with the college'.

The founding headmaster in 1995 was Brian Rowe, who left Somerset College, where he was

head of the junior school, to join St Stephens.

Mr Bell was founding chairman of Somerset College.

Mr Rowe was head of St Stephens from 1995 until 2003, and a director of Stephen's College Foundation Limited (a fundraising arm of the school) from 1998, with Mr Bell, Mrs Baildon, Mr Yarwood, Mr Hughes and Mr Pfeiffer.

Disgraced bursar, Ray Cowd was secretary of that foundation.

Mr Rowe, who considers Cr Baildon and Cr David Power friends, quit the school and, in November 2003, announced his intention to run for Gold Coast City Council Division Five, a seat held by Cr Peter Young, who wrested the seat from Cr Col Kleinschmidt.

Michael Yarwood, one of Mr Rowe's advisers, is former board member, while Mr Kleinschmidt is featured on Mr Rowe's campaign material, stating 'We need him in council'.

Mr Yarwood contributed to Cr Baildon's mayoral campaign, as did companies associated with his client Dudley Quinlivan, named in Parliament as the 'King Con' of marketeering.

Also throwing his hat into the ring for a \$70,000 council seat is Grant Pforr, a builder and former volunteer rowing coach at St Stephen's College.

Mr Pforr is sitting for Division Three - the seat being vacated by retiring deputy mayor, Cr Alan Rickard.

Mr Pforr and Mr Rowe are the directors of the non-profit company, Coomera Watersports Club Limited.

Sitting on the board of the club as an ex-officio member is Division Two councillor David Power, who has also given divisional funding to help get the club into the water.

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 19 FEB 2004, Page 004**  
**Business leaders put pressure on Baildon over city gridlock**  
**Top end of town warns Mayor**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

BUSINESS leaders want the city council to take the unprecedented step of borrowing \$24 million to finish the Surfers traffic scheme.

In a virtually unanimous vote, a forum of 60 business people yesterday urged Mayor Gary Baildon and councillor Max Christmas to pressure their colleagues into spending the money immediately.

In what was taken by many in the room to be a thinly-veiled threat to the Mayor, prominent developer Soheil Abedian - who has previously donated generously to Cr Baildon's election campaign - told him to bring his councillors into line.

The forum, convened by the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce, was scathing of the council's perceived inability to make a unified decision, particularly in regard to desperately-needed infrastructure. Many people expressed frustration at the Mayor's lack of a mandate, calling for the introduction of a party-political system.

The meeting was called to discuss the trouble-prone Surfers Paradise Traffic Management Scheme.

Ever since the council's \$20 million redesign of Surfers Paradise traffic opened nearly a year ago, business people, residents and tourists have been critical.

When funds ran out the project stalled with only a third of the work completed; and that is the way it has remained.

Crs Baildon and Cr Christmas were told yesterday that the ongoing traffic woes in Surfers Paradise and throughout the city would be a key election issue for all councillors.

In a blunt speech Mr Abedian, who heads construction firm Sunland which is undertaking the Q1 and Circle on Cavill projects, was damning in his criticism.

"Our council can't make a decision," he said.

"We have 14 independent councillors. They can hide behind anything and everything, they can shit on officers.

"Council doesn't have a common vision for this time, they come before every election with new ideas.

"We can talk until tomorrow and come up with ideas but nobody can put it together unless 14 councillors say: 'This is the heart of the our city, that is what we want to do'.

"Mayor, we love you but you have to bring the other councillors in line to see your visions.

"Please have one vision and we as a soldier will follow you."

The remaining roadworks in Surfers Paradise would continue the road-widening north and south of Elkhorn Avenue and Clifford Street.

Combined Chamber president John Witheriff said the chamber executive recently agreed that the council must borrow the money to finish the project.

Councillors, he said, must realise that the Surfers Paradise traffic problems impacted on everybody in the city as many residents worked in Surfers Paradise or travelled through the centre.

"Last year we regularly met with the State Government and (Transport Minister) Mr Bredhauer to discuss a range of infrastructure issues including Tugun bypass, Bundall Road, the Surfers Paradise Traffic Scheme, the Motorway at Mudgeeraba and the rail," said Mr Witheriff.

"When we got to this one he said to us that there had been a deal done between the Government and council, the council said 'You give us \$23 million and sign your obligations of the state controlled road to us'.

"We see this as a council job. The city and the ratepayers can afford to borrow for this vital piece of infrastructure and the council should do so. They should complete the job.

"The problem with the Gold Coast City Council is we have got one mayor with one vote and 14 other councillors who have just as much power as the mayor.



"What we need to see is at least eight councillors who see the good sense in undertaking a project that is in our opinion an 'all of Gold Coast project'.

"It should happen immediately. Quite clearly the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce intend to make this an election issue.

"The Mayor and Ron Clarke will make it an election issue."

A reserved Cr Baidon told the group, which included his election competitor Ron Clarke, that if it were up to him he would borrow the money and start work tomorrow.

"I appreciate the comment but as I said before a lot of people live in other areas of the city, you need to be talking to the councillors who are not here," he said.

Analyst Alan Midwood, who chaired the meeting, said: "The judgment seems very clear, we want to get on with stages two and three."

"It looks like borrowing money is the only way to do that and we'll give 100 per cent support to anyone who would promote that proposal."

**Caption:** Council CEO Dale Dickson (centre) surrounded by council officers and forum delegates Graham Bilton, Greg Young, Gary Baidon and Alan Midwood

Surfers Paradise Councillor Max Christmas makes a point

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Richard Webb

**Library Heading:** SURFERS PARADISE, ROAD TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 19 FEB 2004, Page 009**  
**Nominees jostle for poll position**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton and Alice Jones**

A FORMER mayor and a one-time council solicitor have nominated to contest the upcoming local government elections.

Journalist turned councillor Diane Brennan and barrister Anne **Bennett** lodged their nominations with the council yesterday.

Mrs Brennan, who spent 19 years with Ballina Shire Council, will contest Division 4, which takes in Labrador, Biggera Waters and Parkwood.

Mrs **Bennett**, who previously worked for the council's legal department, will contest Division 3 which is being vacated by Deputy Mayor Cr Alan Rickard.

The pair have highlighted water, infrastructure and controlled development as the key issues facing the city.

Mrs Brennan, who started as a journalist covering council, said she had 19 years' council experience to offer.

"I was a journalist and used to cover the council meetings," she said.

"I used to sit in the gallery and get very frustrated.

"I thought, 'If you can't beat them, join them'," she said. Mrs **Bennett**, who has a master's degree in environmental law, worked for the council's legal team for more than four years, at one time filling in as acting city solicitor.

The pair join a growing field for the March 27 election.

Cr Peter Drake in Division 12 has the most competitors so far, with a field of four.

He said he knew many of the candidates and wished them well.

Cr Bob La Castra also has much competition for his Division 8 seat.

Cr Peter Young faces stiff competition from former school principal Brian Rowe, who is running a high profile, big-spending campaign complete with radio advertisements and glossy brochures.

But the pace has grown too much for one man, veteran mayoral candidate Brian Shepherd. Holding the fort at an Ashmore retirement village isn't quite the same as ruling the city, but Mr Shepherd has decided it's enough for him.

After 25 years of trying, and failing, to gain the region's top job, the perennial mayoral candidate has called it quits.

After announcing he would not run in the March 27 local election, Mr Shepherd said he was happy to be remembered as the 'Mayor with Flair that Never Got There'.

"I'm a successful failure," he laughed.

"I've been running for a quarter of a century and lost every time, but I'll still retire and be remembered. The fat lady has sung."

Mr Shepherd will now spend time with his family and rule the roost at the Ashmore retirement village where he lives.

"I'm the mayor there. That's good enough, I've finally made it," he said.

Mr Shepherd still claimed he would have made a great mayor, but could not get there because he did not have the funds required to make the necessary impact on the campaign trail.

"It was always fun, but I never had the money needed to man all the polling booths and get signs," he said.

The would-be mayor, who contested five elections, said he was glad his name would not be on the March ballot paper.

"I think it's going to get pretty heated and costly," he said.

Nominations do not close until February 27.

So far 26 candidates, including seven incumbent councillors, have thrown their hats into the ring.

#### MARCH 27 CANDIDATES

##### MAYOR

- former professional runner Ron Clarke

DIVISION 1

- incumbent Ray Hackwood

DIVISION 3

- Red Cross worker David Childs
- builder and Coomera Watersports Club chair Grant Pforr
- lawyer Anne **Bennett**

DIVISION 4

- former radio general manager Rob Molhoek
- computer engineer Wayne Skuthorpe
- chef Hans Heinrich
- Ballina Shire former mayor Diane Brennan

DIVISION 5

- former headmaster Brian Rowe

DIVISION 6

- incumbent Dawn Crichlow
- Dept of Employment and Training advisor Roxanne Scott
- structural engineer Frank Hosseini

DIVISION 7

- incumbent Max Christmas
- Former engineer, marketing manager and Queensland Liberals vice-president Jim MacAnally
- Life Education team leader Susie Douglas

DIVISION 8

- incumbent Bob La Castra
- Thomas Smith
- podiatrist Matthew Mackechnie

DIVISION 9

- incumbent Ted Shepherd

DIVISION 11

- incumbent Jan Grew

DIVISION 12

- ex-police officer David Dunk
- Greg Betts
- computer specialist Kevin Hinton
- former state hopeful Max Duncan

DIVISION 14

- incumbent Sue Robbins

YET TO NOMINATE BUT HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL RUN  
MAYOR

- incumbent Gary Baildon
- Elvis impersonator Dean Vegas

DIVISION 2

- incumbent David Power

DIVISION 3

- former engineer and Paradise Point Progress Association president Fred Woodley
- private investigator Dennis Walker

DIVISION 4

- Peter Keech

DIVISION 5

- incumbent Peter Young

DIVISION 7

- Surfers taxi driver Terry Stollery
- lighting designer Don Magin

DIVISION 9

- former bodyguard and ATSIC community officer Guy Jones

- bushfire fighter and stand-up comedian Steve Davis

DIVISION 10

- incumbent Eddy Sarroff

DIVISION 11

- Conrad Jupiters worker and Concerned Ratepayers member Linda Brown

DIVISION 12

- incumbent Peter Drake

- trained beauty therapist and former Friends of Burleigh president Irene Wareing

DIVISION 13

- incumbent Daphne McDonald

DIVISION 14

- Currumbin Valley women's doctor Karen Coates

**Illus:** Table

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION CANDIDATES

**BIOG:** DIANE BRENNAN, ANNE BENNETT, BRIAN SHEPHERD

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 19 FEB 2004, Page 024**  
**Politicised council will end farce**

SIX weeks out from the local election, powerful behind-the-scenes players are plotting to take control of the Gold Coast City Council.

The Bulletin has learned that planning boss Cr David **Power** is working to pull together a 'ticket' that would deliver his team a mandate at the March 27 poll.

The Liberals are also planning to field candidates, backed by Brisbane headquarters, with a view to forming a voting bloc within the council.

Even the Greens are in on the act.

They have been putting together a council ticket since July last year and are throwing more at this campaign than any other in the city's history.

The key players in these so-called 'tickets' are not keen to declare their hand publicly just yet, for fear of a voter backlash in seats such as Southport (held by Cr Dawn Crichlow) and Broadbeach (Cr Eddy Sarroff), where the incumbents remain popular.

But the first shots have been fired already, with green-leaning councillor Peter Young being taken on in Division 5 by one of Cr **Power**'s boys, former St Stephen's College principal Brian Rowe.

Cr **Power** already has strong support within council from the likes of councillors Jan Grew, Bob La Castra, Ted Shepherd and Sue Robbins.

What these secret dealings underscore is the need for the politicisation of the Gold Coast City Council, the second biggest in the country with an annual budget of \$500 million.

Why is it that Brisbane City Council can jump into bed with the Beattie Government and jointly fund massive transport infrastructure projects, yet 90km south we are a roads basket case?

Could it have something to do with the fact that Labor's former long-standing Brisbane lord mayor, Jim Soorley, had a mandate to deliver on his pre-election promises because he led an ALP-dominated council?

Much of the Gold Coast City Council's indecision and 'paralysis by analysis' approach to vital infrastructure requirements can be traced back to in-fighting and division and councillors running their own agendas.

They take an oath to the city but then bicker over 'big picture' issues such as water and traffic. Mayor Gary Baildon felt the political heat yesterday when business leaders were damning of his council's inability to deliver on major traffic upgrades.

But Cr Baildon is just one vote.

Unless he gets the support of seven other councillors he can do nothing.

It is no secret that Cr Baildon is grooming Parkwood candidate Rob Molhoek, a former radio executive, for the top job in 2008.

Mr Molhoek is running in Division 4, vacated by Margaret Grummitt, who was beaten as a Nationals candidate at this month's state election.

Cr Baildon says he believes strongly that any future Gold Coast mayor should have some local government experience.

These are high-stakes political games. There will be winners and losers come the evening of March 27.

Whatever the outcome, this council needs new direction, a fresh approach and, most importantly, it needs decision-making certainty. The consequences of more of the same mediocrity over the next four years will spell disaster for the future liveability of the city.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**Type:** Leader

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1FRI 20 FEB 2004, Page 001**  
**Tickets, please**

GOLD Coast politics is about to change for ever. Local government candidates are coy about it, but The Bulletin understands there are moves to establish a powerful voting bloc to seize control of the council.

Councillor David **Power** yesterday denied being one of the movers and shakers behind the ticket that, if successful, is expected to hand him the job of Deputy Mayor.

The revelations about the voting bloc come amid debate to politicise the council.

Many of the candidates already nominated have had political affiliations, chiefly to the Liberal Party.

\* Reports, Page 4

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES, LIBERAL

**BIOG:** DAVID POWER

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1FRI 20 FEB 2004, Page 004**  
**Planning boss forms faction with plan to rule civic roost**  
**Power play to control council**

GOLD Coast planning boss David **Power** is believed to have spent nine months engineering a political 'team' that will see him become deputy mayor and have the numbers to control the council if he succeeds in the March 27 poll.

If Cr **Power's** 'ticket' gets up, there are fears it would render the incoming mayor a lame duck leader. The Bulletin believes Cr **Power** leads a faction that, if elected, would give it control of the council.

He would become deputy mayor and effectively run the city because a newly-elected mayor would have only one vote among the 15 councillors.

The Greens and the Liberal Party are also pulling together their own tickets, but the **Power** ticket is clearly the most formidable, because it already includes six sitting councillors.

The **Power** ticket includes candidates Grant Pforr, who will run in Division 3, to be vacated by incumbent Deputy Mayor Alan Rickard.

Former headmaster Brian Rowe is another on the ticket. He will run against Cr Peter Young, a fierce critic of Cr **Power** in Division 5.

The Bulletin also understands Peter Keech, wife of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development Minister Margaret Keech, will run for Division 4, another vacant electorate created after the resignation of former councillor Margaret Grummitt.

Another ticket member is Roxanne Scott, who will run against Dawn Crichlow in Division 6. They would join incumbent councillors Ray Hackwood (Division 1), **Power**, Bob La Castra, Ted Shepherd, Jan Grew and Sue Robbins.

The Bulletin has been told Cr **Power** has attracted as much as \$500,000 in funding from developers to spend on candidates sympathetic to the incumbent councillors' policy views. But Cr **Power** yesterday dismissed the claims as 'conspiracy theories' and said he would welcome any funding to help his own campaign.

"If there's half a million in funds lying around the place could someone let me know, I'd like some too," he said. "To the best of my knowledge most people are having problems raising funds because of the state election and the federal election.

"I have got enough trouble paying for my own campaign without worrying about other people's. "All of the people that are running to the best of my knowledge are completely independent, whether they are members of a political party.

"Trying to help candidates in other areas never goes down well with the community, that's why I don't get involved in campaigning for other candidates. I've got enough of my own damn problems."

Mr Rowe, who is running an expensive and high-profile campaign said he was totally independent and was funding his efforts from generous community donations.

The former school principal said he was a friend of Cr **Power's** but did not always agree with Cr **Power's** ideas.

"My concern is about the Gold Coast's bigger picture. I think as a council we need to re-affirm our vision and our mission," he said.

"I said that to David and to Gary (Baillon). Whether you regard them as good friends or acquaintances the general concern is our city.

"I have had the good fortune of dealing with David **Power** . . . when I was at Saint Stephen's." Combined Chamber of Commerce president John Witheriff yesterday said an unofficial ticket would have the support of the Gold Coast business community.

A ticket of aligned councillors would ensure some certainty for business people trying to function in the city who currently must tolerate a fickle and indecisive council, he said.

"It is important for the mayor to lead," he said. "What we'd like to see, whatever the ticket is, is that it works with the mayor.

"At least maybe it would bring some certainty in dealing with the council. I haven't got my head around who the ticket is, but the business position is that the worst possible thing we can

get at a council level is lack of decisiveness."

"Even though some of the decisions wouldn't be as we'd like them at least so we can work with them.

"We'd prefer to know that if you reach an agreement with someone we can get an outcome."

Mr Witheriff said tickets not aligned with political parties were notoriously unstable, citing the Tweed Shire Council as an example.

A pro-development ticket successfully controls the Tweed council but Mr Witheriff said the councillors did not always vote together in spite of the ticket.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION CANDIDATE, LIBERAL  
**BIOG:** DAVID POWER



**Baildon enters the race**

**By by Alice Jones**

It may just be a formality, but Mayor Gary Baildon has lodged his nomination. The mayoral race has begun.

Cr Baildon paid his \$150 to the returning officer about 2.30pm yesterday to contest the city council election on March 27.

He will challenge former Olympic runner Ron Clarke and Elvis impersonator Dean Vegas for the right to lead the Gold Coast for the next four years.

If he is successful Cr Baildon will have completed 19 years in local government when he retires in 2008.

"There's a lot of issues that we have got under way that I really want to be there for and finish them," said Cr Baildon.

He said he read yesterday's Bulletin story which claimed that Planning boss, Cr David Power, was canvassing support to run a ticket of at the election.

If successful, Cr Power would have the numbers to control council, rendering the mayor a lame duck.

"I have heard rumours, yes," said Cr Baildon. "I see Cr Power has denied it. I have to take it at face value. I wouldn't suggest for a moment that Cr Power was not telling the truth.

"I have been approached previously about forming a ticket (but) the Gold Coast community has clearly indicated they don't want a party political system. They vote for independents."

He was confident that if he was returned to office he would not become powerless.

"I don't believe that will occur, I'm quite confident that I will be effective as mayor."

Ron Clarke was sceptical that the ticket Cr Power was believed to be mustering to give him a controlling voice on council would work.

The former world champion runner is unsure councillors would forfeit their own independence on council.

"I don't think the councillors are mindless souls who would sacrifice their ideals, and the ideals of their communities, for something Division 2 wants," he said.

**Caption:** Mayor Gary Baildon yesterday after nominating for the election

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS

**BIOG:** GARY BAILDON

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 23 FEB 2004, Page 006**  
**It's a Power backout**  
**By by Joanne Gibbons**

RUNNING a factional ticket for the council elections is political suicide, says David Power. The Division 2 councillor yesterday denied rumours he was planning to wrest control of the council and render the mayor a 'lame duck' with a bloc that includes six sitting councillors. Cr Power is believed to have spent nine months engineering the political team which would hand him the role of deputy mayor and control of the council if he were successful in the March 27 election.

The Bulletin was told a slush fund of \$500,000 had been raised from developers to support 'sympathetic' council election candidates.

Those rumoured to be on the ticket include Grant Pforr, who will run in Division 3, former headmaster Brian Rowe (Division 5) and Peter Keech, husband of Albert MP Margaret Keech, in Division 4.

Roxanne Scott, who will run against popular Southport councillor Dawn Crichlow in Division 6, is also believed to be on the ticket.

Cr Power said many people were making many assumptions about the campaign.

"I wonder how it has been assumed that I have encouraged them in any kind of organised support," he said.

"All the people mentioned, to the best of my knowledge, announced they were running for the council long before I even knew about it (the ticket)."

He said the community would not accept a 'ticket', preferring to look after themselves and their division when casting a vote.

"They have shown that in the past," he said.

"When the ALP moved in on Albert they were soundly defeated, in fact they were destroyed.

"That's why I just find it laughable that people could think someone who had lived through that would want to form a ticket."

Cr Power said he had made no secret of wanting the deputy mayor's position but there were several other contenders.

He said at least two of those on the alleged ticket were also throwing their hat in the ring, but refused to name them.

Cr Power said that fact alone should prove the ticket did not exist.

He said he had no plans to run for mayor and ruled out state or federal politics.

Cr Power said he had done no more than speak to candidates who called him for advice or those in the business community who had asked his opinion on candidates.

He said many other councillors had done the same. "The only person I know who is actively campaigning in other divisions is Cr Peter Young," he said. "He's been in my division introducing around the candidate who is running against me."

Cr Power said the council needed some changes and an improved image.

Frivolous issues were gaining media coverage because some councillors let their personalities take over, he said.

It was damaging the Gold Coast's image because the council was not taken seriously.

"We are getting national media coverage over the colour of a building," he said.

"The coverage is for all the wrong reasons."

Cr Power said he worked well with all members of the council but there were 'always people you worked better with than others'.

"I know a few of the candidates and have done so for some time," he said.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTION, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCILLORS

**BIOG:** DAVID POWER

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 23 FEB 2004, Page 006**  
**I'm convinced of a bloc plan, says Crichlow**

SOUTHPORT councillor Dawn **Crichlow** says she has every reason to believe David Power is forming a ticket in a bid to grab control of the council.

The fiery Division 6 councillor yesterday said she had spoken to at least two developers who had been approached to help fund the ticket.

"One person was approached to put in money to help David Power get rid of Peter Young and myself because he wasn't happy with the planning committee," she said.

"Matters weren't getting through, apparently. Another developer was asked to contribute to get Peter Young out but he wasn't told that the move was against me as well.

"I've been told that this is happening by too many people not to believe it. There is no doubt in my mind that this is what is going on."

Cr **Crichlow** said Cr Power was always first to deny media reports if they were incorrect, but at Friday's council meeting he did not mention The Bulletin front page report.

**Caption:** Dawn Crichlow

David Power

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**BIOG:** DAWN CRICHLLOW

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 THU 26 FEB 2004, Page 021**  
**No bloc here, say election hopefuls**  
**By by Peter Gleeson chief reporter**

CITY council election candidates allegedly linked to a so-called David Power 'ticket' have rejected claims they are part of a voting bloc.

Runaway Bay candidate Grant Pforr said he was an independent funding his own campaign.

Southport candidate Roxanne Scott said she was unaware of such a ticket.

"If they want to give me some money, they'd better hurry up," she said.

Parkwood candidate Rob Molhoek said he met Cr Power last November when Cr Power had discussed the importance of councillors being independent.

Mr Pforr said his association with Cr Power was through the Coomera Sports Club.

"I'm an individual. They won't be swaying my thoughts (but) I will be making decisions for the good of the Gold Coast," he said.

"Being part of a 'ticket' doesn't sit comfortably. I can work with all councillors."

Mr Pforr said he was funding his own campaign and questioned where Division 3 opponent David Childs was securing his council election funding.

Mr Molhoek yesterday said he met with Cr Power last November 'to get as broad a perspective as possible on issues'.

"At no time did he suggest running a ticket," he said.

"He spoke of the importance of each councillor maintaining their (political) independence.

"If we want people to take our city seriously then our public meetings need to be conducted professionally and with due regard for basic courtesy and protocol."

Mr Molhoek said he recently attended a meeting of the council in the old Southport chambers.

"I felt (Mayor) Gary Baidon handled the meeting well, but I was appalled at the antics of some of the councillors," he said.

"I think some of our councillors forget that this is a major city that they are supposed to be running.

"Is it any wonder there haven't been any sound decisions made about water and traffic?

"Is it any wonder that there doesn't seem to be a clear vision for our future?

"Some of them have too much time on their hands and haven't graduated from the playground.

"It's time for a new generation of councillors who know how to behave and whose conduct will be professional.

"In my opinion, it's time to bring some common sense and dignity back into the council. Our city needs to be run in a more business-like manner."

The Bulletin believes the Power ticket also includes incumbent councillors Jan Grew, Bob La Castra, Ted Shepherd and former St Stephen's headmaster Brian Rowe, who is running against Cr Peter Young in Division 5.

Mr Rowe has publicly declared there is no ticket.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTION

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 11 MAR 2004, Page 009**  
**No Title**

THE so-called David Power 'ticket' at the next council election is being funded by a group connected to leading developer Brian Ray.

Mr Ray won't confirm this to The Bulletin - he hasn't returned calls - but we understand the group is bankrolling the campaigns of several council candidates.

Their motives are pure.

Those connected to the group say they simply want a caucus for the incoming mayor, whether it be Gary Baidon or Ron Clarke so that they can have certainty in decision-making.

We also understand the same group is bankrolling the campaigns of several of the pro-development incumbents within the Tweed Shire Council.

Cr Power has denied there is a 'ticket' but with the election campaign in full swing, secrets are difficult to keep.

The Bulletin has been told the ticket is alive and well and they are confident of securing at least six 'like minded people' at the March 27 poll.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**BIOG:** DAVID POWER

**Type:** Leader

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1FRI 12 MAR 2004, Page 005**  
**Candidates asked to reveal donors**

COUNCILLORS and key candidates at the upcoming election have been asked to publicly declare their campaign funding donations.

The Gold Coast Bulletin has asked Mayoral front-runners Gary Baildon and Ron Clarke to declare their electoral donations within two days of the March 27 poll.

The Bulletin will publish the list of political donors.

Each councillor lining up for re-election has also been asked to declare their campaign backers.

Key candidates in a number of seats, including Brian Rowe (Division 3), Grant Pforr (Division 4), Roxanne Scott (Division 6) and Karen Coates (Division 14), have also been asked to provide details of their funding sources.

The battle for the Gold Coast mayoralty has always generated big campaign budgets.

Cr Baildon has always attracted the support of the 'big end of town' during his eight-year reign in the city's top civic job.

But Cr Baildon claims his campaign funding 'war chest' in 2004 is being dwarfed by the big-spending Ron Clarke team.

"I have heard he (Mr Clarke) is spending \$500,000 and I wouldn't doubt that," said Cr Baildon.

Mr Clarke says his campaign fund is about half that.

He says it is his own money and there are no developer contributions.

"I will release my funding and how it was spent and where it was spent two days out from the election," he said.

The Bulletin has been told one of Cr Baildon's usual funding sources, a group of like-minded developers, have swung away from him this time around and are backing a David Power-led 'ticket'.

The 'ticket', denied by Cr Power, is designed to give greater decision-making certainty within council, which does not have party politics and a proper caucus like the Brisbane City Council.

**Library Heading:** DONATIONS, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION  
CANDIDATES

Developer refuses to discuss supporters

By Greg Stolz

MILLIONAIRE Gold Coast developer Brian Ray has refused to reveal whether he and other disgruntled businessmen were bankrolling an unofficial ticket of candidates in next week's **Gold Coast City Council election.**

But Mr Ray admitted he and other business leaders were dissatisfied with the council's performance and believed it would be "better if there was a group of people who were seen to be like-minded about the issues confronting the city".

"There is a whole bunch of people who would like to see a more cohesive response to local government and for the council to act a bit more responsibly," he said yesterday.

Council planning boss David Power is said to be behind a ticket which is also rumoured to include southern Gold Coast planning committee chair Sue Robbins, allied councillors Jan Grew, Bob La Castra and Ted Shepherd and northern division candidates Brian Rowe and Grant Pforr.

The alleged ticket is reputed to have attracted as much as \$250,000 in funding from business leaders.

Cr Power yesterday denied the existence of a ticket.

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2004, ELECTIONS LOCAL AUTHORITIES, GOLD COAST

**BIOG:** BRIAN RAY

**Section:** NEWS

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 20 MAR 2004, Page 025**  
**Power bid to stop fee hike sparks anger**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

A LAST-minute attempt to freeze the controversial infrastructure charges has been linked with a developer-backed ticket striving to gain a majority in council.

Councillors were outraged yesterday when, in the dying moments, planning boss Cr David Power called for a discussion on the infrastructure charges.

Cr Power, reported to be the ringleader of the ticket of candidates, told the council he had been contacted by many developers concerned at the steep rise in charges.

The new charges call for \$14,000 per block from developers to go towards road, water and transport infrastructure.

Chief executive officer Dale Dickson admitted he had been asked by some councillors, who he would not name, to draft a recommendation calling for an indefinite moratorium on the charges to allow further investigation.

Cr Power said developers were concerned the charges were retrospective and applied to pre-sold developments. Developers who sold off the plan have found themselves out of pocket because sale prices did not factor in the new charges.

"The reason I went down this path is so councillors can be aware of the issues that have been raised with myself and other councillors," said Cr Power.

He said there was concern in the business community that the infrastructure charges plan was being applied retrospectively.

But some councillors feared that if they were to agree to the moratorium before the election the new council - possibly with Cr Power's ticket in its ranks - would scrap or reduce the charges.

Planning committee south chairwoman Cr Sue Robbins did not agree with the freeze, and said the charges had been agreed after three years of consultation with the development industry.

Cr Eddy Sarroff, who was furious at the suggestion, said that for too long the council had been powerless to make developers pay for the extra burden their developments put on the city's roads and water supply.

"The big issue is the quantum of these charges," he said.

"Instead of standing behind the decision to implement these charges to build those roads which are much needed, I was disappointed when I heard of this motion to have a moratorium."

The push for a moratorium was unsuccessful and the charges will remain.

\* Yesterday's editorial referred to the troubled councillor Peter Young. This should have read Peter Drake. The Bulletin apologises for the error.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, DEVELOPMENT



**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 22 MAR 2004, Page 010**  
**Pair driven by passion**  
**By Brian Mossop**

Continuing our series on each of the Gold Coast City Council divisions in the run-up to Saturday's election, Brian Mossop reports on Division 5. It is being contested by two well-credentialled candidates with tertiary education, passion and a drive to serve their community. A RIVER runs through it ... the Nerang River, divisive, like the Pacific Highway that splits the region but not the pride of those who live there.

Nerang, 'Gateway to the Hinterland', whose residents are passionate about where they live, where community spirit is important and strong.

The boundaries have been redrawn for the 19,221 voters of Division 5, a division in which there are just two candidates: the incumbent, Peter Young, and the challenger Brian Rowe. Both are men of substance, both have a tertiary education, both have the welfare of the community at heart, both, in different ways, have an enviable track record.

"I think my track record's pretty good," says Peter Young, who unseated then deputy mayor Col Kleinschmidt three years ago and is committed, passionate, independent and seeking a second term, despite what he feels is significant political opposition.

"It has been apparent some people don't want me to get any brownie points," he says, sounding matter-of-fact.

He is prepared to stand on his achievements, which have been considerable.

That's not to say that Brian Rowe could not make a significant contribution to both the division and the debate about how best to make improvements to the city as well as manage and distribute its resources.

The foundation headmaster of St Stephen's College from its opening in 1995, Mr Rowe resigned at the end of last year in order to make a run for council in Division 5, which takes in most of Nerang, Gaven, Helensvale, Pacific Pines, Oxenford and, now, Mount Nathan and Clagiraba.

Although he maintains he has had no funding from developers and is running as an independent ("you don't have the experience I've got and hang on to someone's coat-tails"), Mr Rowe does have substantial financial backing.

The battle for the division promises to be lively. Brian Rowe has his supporters, while Peter Young has won plenty of hearts and minds among the residents, who appreciate his wholehearted approach to their concerns.

"I attend everything and I'm on a lot of committees," says Cr Young. "Keeping people informed is the most important thing. Effective communication is a challenge we have. I want people to be informed. Local government affects people on a daily basis.

"Lots of niggling issues need to be addressed but we are no longer plugging holes. Division 5 serves as a role model."

Mr Rowe sees it a little differently. He says council needs to be cohesive, to be pulling in the same direction.

"It is my belief we're at a stage where we need a bifocal position," he says. "(There is a need to be) passionate about the area, but to work hard to bring the pieces together to create a big picture. You need people to work at the coalface and in visionary terms.

"My campaign has revolved around the jigsaw. All pieces are critical. It's the big picture that's hurting right now. We have not done enough since the amalgamation (of the Albert Shire and the Gold Coast City Council). We're moving too slowly."

It may well be that the desire and the vision to effect change can be altered when the realisation dawns that each councillor has just one vote; that wanting to move mountains is usually easier than actually doing so.

It's that pulling in the same direction that is not always achievable, no matter how much ratepayers would like to see it happen. This deters neither Cr Young, who knows the challenge, nor Mr Rowe.

"The division is a gorgeous conglomeration of different townships," says Mr Rowe.

"We have the history and tradition that is Nerang plus Pacific Pines and the rural touch of Mount Nathan and Clagiraba. Helensvale is a strong community and we have a bit of Oxenford.

"Traffic and water are major issues. Any big city will become clogged through sheer growth. We have to think creatively.

"As for water, there is a perception within the community that council has procrastinated and not moved on as it should have.

"That may well be true. Why flood mitigation and no dam? The perception that nothing has been done needs to be cleared up.

"I don't believe you need a united council ... you need a cohesive council pulling in the same direction. A split council is not good; it all needs to be brought together.

"Council needs to adopt a more dignified and businesslike approach to the city's management and planning."

Like Mr Rowe, Cr Young loves the Gold Coast and, in particular, the region he represents.

"There is lots to do but I love this place," he says. "It's vibrant, it's dynamic."

Passionate about things such as sustainable energy and the environment, Cr Young also sees great possibilities for the Coast, with its universities and its skills, to develop close links with Asia.

"It (Asia) is screaming out for our technology," he says, displaying the vision councillors are often accused of lacking.

"Environmental industries have a foothold and we can create a world hub for them, with fabulous careers.

"Waste management, renewable energy, wind turbines, air and water pollution, ground water pollution ... we have the technology and the skills in Australia. Our solar technology is the best in the world.

"We have a degraded quarry site where we could establish a technology park and bring the experts here.

"It's ambitious, and it's absolutely feasible."

The first stage of a \$12 million Global Centre for Sustainability at Nerang has already been flagged.

Proud of achievements within Division 5, including streetscaping, the completion of a library, the development of a master plan for the Helensvale sporting precinct, \$3 million of \$4.4 million set aside for upgrading the Nerang swimming pool, and Bischof Park in Nerang on the way to becoming a heritage centre, Cr Young knows there is more to be done.

But while major projects like the Nerang River regional parklands, water quality improvements for Lake Coombabah and the Helensvale wetlands, together with a new Helensvale library, will need funding, city-wide priorities aren't forgotten.

The point seems to be that both candidates have a vision for the Gold Coast as a whole rather than merely for their division.

"We need a council that is prepared to actively preserve for our children and our grandchildren the quality of life we enjoy," says Mr Rowe.

"Let's look for people with vision, energy and vitality who are committed to the 'big picture' that is our Gold Coast city."

Cr Young has runs on the board; Mr Rowe is offering to put them there. Just who gets the nod is up to the voters.

'Lots of niggling issues need to be addressed but we are no longer plugging holes. Division 5 serves as a role model'

**Caption:** The two candidates for Division 5 are incumbent Peter Young (left) and Brian Rowe

**Illus:** Map  
Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS, NERANG

**Section:** FOCUS

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 24 MAR 2004, Page 001**  
**TO THE POLLS**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

GOLD Coast ratepayers go to the polls on Saturday with one certainty.

There will be two new faces among the 15 councillors sworn in after the poll is declared. Divisions 3 and 4 will add new blood to the council after Crs Alan Rickard and Margaret Grummitt retired from public office.

There are nine candidates for the two jobs.

While this is the certainty, the real interest is in who will win the city's top job where Gary Baildon, 64 (left) is fighting to keep the mayoral robes, under stiff opposition from Ron Clarke (right).

Mr Clarke, 67, has run one of the most expensive Gold Coast mayoral campaigns ever, with little change out of \$300,000 - or about triple the annual mayoral salary.

Also expected to poll well is Elvis tribute artist, Dean Vegas, 38, who ran his campaign on a string taken from his Blue Suede shoes.

Low profile Greens candidate Ian Latto makes up the numbers.

While Cr Baildon has agreed to announce who his backers are before the election, you will not read who they are in this newspaper.

He has only agreed to release that information on election eve, Friday.

Cr Baildon's campaign manager, Howard Edmunds, said on Friday Cr Baildon stated he was independent of his fundraising team.

Mr Edmunds said Cr Baildon said he did not know who was paying money into his campaign fund - the same response Cr Baildon made during the 2000 election. At that election Cr Baildon's fundraising team accepted money from the infamous property marketeering industry.

Current councillors Eddy Sarroff, Dawn Crichlow and Peter Young believe there is a massive push by developers for certain candidates.

Rumours persist of a 'ticket' put together by Cr David Power, along with a developer/business - white-shoe brigade - slush fund to run the campaigns.

Cr Power said the rumours are just that.

"I can say that I am paying my own campaign funding and there are no slush funds that I know about," he said.

"I will say the business community have asked my opinion on candidates and I have told them who are okay and who are not.

\*Continued Page 4

\*From Page 1

"SOME candidates I know are getting significant support, but that is nothing to do with me. That is their choice."

Some councillors fear for future council development decision-making if a majority of pro-development councillors are elected...a similar scenario that has been the norm in the Tweed Shire since a pro-development team swept to power at the last election.

At present Gold Coast City has the so-called 'Power Bloc' that tends to vote together on a range of issues.

That bloc consists of Crs David Power, Sue Robbins, Jan Grew, Bob La Castra, Ted Shepherd, Max Christmas and Ray Hackwood.

With a full council of 15, they fall one short of a guaranteed majority that would be a lay-down misere voting bloc.

It is understood Ron Clarke, who is funding his own campaign, is backing certain candidates who will support him.

During the campaign Cr Baildon has faced a barrage over his leadership in regard to issues as far apart as water catchment, flood mitigation, traffic and transport, and the ability to negotiate with other levels of government on issues critical to the Gold Coast.

Councillors are also unhappy at his ability to control council meetings.

When asked for a comment on Cr Baildon's leadership, Cr David Power said, 'no comment.' If pro-development candidates are elected to council it will render the mayoral position, when it comes to development issues and irrespective of who the mayor is, as one of a paper tiger. Should he be re-elected the real power will be with Cr Power, chairman of the planning north committee and of the Planning Scheme Review Committee.

Cr Power has stated that if he is re-elected he will throw his name into the hat for the deputy mayoralty... an indication he may run for mayor at the next election in 2008.

In all, 56 candidates have nominated for the 15 positions, comprising the mayor and 14 councillors representing divisions from Beenleigh in the north through to Coolangatta in the south.

The so-called Power **bloc** is not the only 'like-minded' group contesting the election.

A second 'concerned ratepayers' group has formed an alliance of sorts based around a common goal of harnessing rates.

Dubbed the 'Virgin Army', the group of seven was co-founded by Linda Brown who is contesting Cr Jan Grew's seat of Robina.

Guy Jones is taking on Cr Ted Shepherd at Mudgeeraba, while Wayne Skuthorpe is running in Labrador in the seat vacated by Margaret Grummitt.

Challenging Sue Robbins is Currumbin doctor, Karen Coates, while Cr Peter Drake at Burleigh is being tackled by former president of Friends of Burleigh, Irene Wareing.

Don Magin has run a long campaign for Surfers Paradise, held by Cr Max Christmas, and at Palm Beach Cr Daphne McDonald is facing Craig Waiwiri.

Major issues for the sitting councillors are similar to those facing the mayor: water, flood mitigation, traffic, transport and over development.

On top of that is the public perception - well founded - that the councillors have failed to work as a team for the benefit of the Gold Coast.

In-fighting, back-biting, personality clashes and voting trends based on the personality rather than the issue have dogged the past four years.

At the heart of many of these issues have been the unseen forces pulling strings within the council.

Councillor Eddy Sarroff said last week if there were 'no strings attached' to campaign donations, then no one involved should care if the source of campaign funds was divulged prior to the election.

**Caption:** IAN LATTO

DEAN VEGAS

**Illus:** Photo

Second guessing  
Greg foots the bill for change of heart  
By by Alice Jones council reporter

A FRONTRUNNER in the Burleigh Heads poll has been forced to re-print his election material after a preference deal fell through.

Qantas employee and longtime Burleigh resident Greg Betts says he is out of pocket as a result.

He and fellow candidate Irene Wareing had agreed to swap preferences, and based on that Mr Betts printed 'How to Vote' cards showing him at No. 1 and Ms Wareing at No. 2.

However, two weeks ago, Ms Wareing changed her mind and struck a new preference deal with former police officer David Dunk.

Mr Betts, who has been publicly backed by former Burleigh councillor Paul Gamin and his wife, former state National member for Burleigh, Judy, said polling in the beachside seat has grown nasty as eight candidates battle it out for votes. While he waits for his new cards to be printed, he has been forced to hand out superseded cards endorsing Ms Wareing, the former Friends of Burleigh president.

A recent Bulletin poll showed that Burleigh councillor Peter Drake, Irene Wareing and Greg Betts were the three frontrunners in the division, with the others far behind.

"I did the deal with Irene Wareing. We thought we wanted to exchange preferences because we both felt we were the frontrunners," he said. "We thought if we exchanged preferences then one of us would get across the line.

"She rang me up and said she wasn't happy with the way I was putting independent on all of my stuff, yet I was getting backing from the Gamins.

"She said there was a link with the National Party.

"I said Paul Gamin is supporting me because he felt I was the best candidate and he was an independent and he supports my non-party stance, but she decided to go ahead with David Dunk and I'll go it alone.

"It's going to cost a lot of money but I don't feel I want to say anything bad about Irene. If she feels that way I don't want to support her with preferences."

Ms Wareing said she did not feel comfortable with aligning herself with Mr Betts who had waged a high-profile and expensive campaign.

In spite of his protests, she suspected that he had the support of the National Party and some developers.

"I changed my mind because I felt that Greg had backing from the National Party," she said.

"I don't believe in (party) politics in local government. He's had a fairly expensive campaign and there has been some suggestion that there may be some developer funding.

"I had to feel completely aligned with them, I didn't feel that with Greg. I do with David. He is very straight forward and a nice guy into the bargain."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS

**BIOG:** GREG BETTS, IRENE WAREING

**Kingmaker**

**Meet the money man behind a power bloc looking to control your council**

**By by Alice Jones, council reporter**

SUCCESSFUL developer Brian Ray has identified himself as one of the money men behind an alliance of candidates looking to form a voting bloc on the Gold Coast City Council. Mr Ray said he had contributed to a fighting fund to meet the campaign expenses of the coalition. He said he was tired of the council not making decisions.

"My interest was to see if there could be a more compatible group that can work together," he said.

"The concept is to try to get a more rational approach to the membership of council."

Soheil Abedian, the man behind the Q1 skyscraper has also admitted contributing to the fund.

\* Report Page 4, Profile and Editorial Page 62

**Caption:** Developer Brian Ray supports 'like-minded' candidates

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS, DEVELOPMENT

**BIOG:** BRIAN RAY

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 25 MAR 2004, Page 004**  
**Ray powers the bloc**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

PROPERTY developer Brian Ray has admitted that he and other businessmen are behind the big budget campaigns of a group of council candidates planning to form a voting bloc on the Gold Coast City Council.

Mr Ray, who until yesterday had not confirmed his involvement in what has been dubbed the David Power 'power bloc', said he had contributed money to a 'concept'.

Soheil Abedian, the head of listed company, the Sunland Group, said he had also given money to a trust fund, which is being made available to certain candidates.

Neither would say how much money they had given or which candidates were involved.

"Yes, we're contributing to the fund but that's all we're doing," said Mr Ray, who is also understood to have donated more than \$40,000 to council candidates in the Tweed.

"We're not responsible for any of the campaign. We simply believe if a more coherent outcome can be achieved for the membership of that council, it will be in the interest of the city."

Asked if there were any mayoral candidates involved in the alliance, Mr Ray said: "It was suggested there wouldn't be any preference for the mayoral candidate. The issue was really about trying to establish a caucus-style of council so that there could be some discussions about issues on a collegiate basis, prior to a decision being made.

"The mayor is just one of those people who votes. He only has one vote."

Candidates believed to be aligned with or had discussions about the bloc include incumbents Ray Hackwood (Division 1), David Power (Division 2), Jan Grew (Division 11), Bob La Castra (Division 8), Ted Shepherd (Division 9) and Sue Robbins (Division 14), and challengers Grant Pforr (Division 3), Brian Rowe (Division 5), Rob Molhoek (Division 4) and Roxanne Scott (Division 6).

It is understood candidates backed by Mr Ray have access to a trust fund being administered by a Gold Coast law firm.

Mr Ray said the idea was to overcome the dysfunctional, illogical decisions made by a council more concerned with personalities than issues.

"My interest was to see if there could be a more compatible group that can work together," said Mr Ray.

"I don't know which candidates have got it. I provided some small amount of money to a concept.

"The concept is to try to get a more rational approach to the membership of council so they act in a more appropriate manner.

"I have contributed. I'm not going to give you that (the amount), not a significant amount of money.

"All those things become transparent (after the election) . . . yes, after you have all made your decisions."

Mr Ray said former Robina Chamber of Commerce president Lionel Barden approached him about the campaign, a claim Mr Barden yesterday denied.

Mr Barden, the managing director of the Innovation Showcase at Gold Coast Airport, said he had not spoken to Mr Ray for about four years.

He said his only involvement in Saturday's election was to hand out how-to-vote cards for councillors Jan Grew and Ted Shepherd.

"I promise on my heart, cross my heart, I have not. I'm telling you the truth," said Mr Barden.

"I haven't had a conversation with Brian. I have been supportive of people like Ted Shepherd and Jan Grew because they have helped me.

"I have heard there are people, who have put money up."

But Mr Ray was adamant that Mr Barden was behind the funding drive.

"Lionel Barden was, as I understood it, the face of the campaign. I'm surprised he's told you that," said Mr Ray. "I wish them well. I hope that's the outcome. I think that will make for a

better result for the city."

Mr Ray said he was approached 'months and months' ago and was one of the first to contribute.

Mr Abedian said he was approached by Mr Ray to make a donation, which he did.

He would not say how much money he had contributed, but said it was not significant.

"Yes, I have been approached. I was supportive of the attitude that they wanted to have a more common view about the decision," said Mr Abedian, who has in the past donated generously to Mayor Baildon and other councillors.

"Brian Ray said a fund has been established to have more sensible approach to the council decisions for the betterment of the city.

"Anything that can bring a common vision to the council, we're happy. Brian told me that it is a good cause to do and (I said) okay I do it.

"I don't even know who the recipients of it are. It was purely a vision."

Veteran councillor David Power, who chairs the city's planning and development (north) committee, yesterday continued to deny involvement in the 'ticket'.

He admitted to having met with Mr Ray prior to Christmas to discuss who on the council was easy to work with.

"I have told you guys over and over again. I have been asked for advice by candidates, by business people and I have given the advice," said Cr Power, who says he is 'good mates' with Mr Barden.

"What they have done from there is their own business.

"I can't remember the last time I spoke to Brian. I'm serious, I think it was before Christmas. He asked me about my opinion about how council was functioning.

"My opinion was it's not functioning properly.

"There were too many people pursuing personal agendas.

"He asked who I have been able to work with and who has been difficult to work with."

When asked whether the 'difficult' councillors he named included Dawn Crichlow and Peter Young, who are both being challenged by big-money campaigners, he said: "I gave him my honest opinions . . . you can assume all you like, that's a private conversation.

"I have no idea what he (Brian Ray) was planning to do . . . I have simply given them my opinion, that's it. What they have done from there is their own business.

Cr Power said he had spoken with Mr Barden about funding a bloc of like-minded councillors.

"I have moaned over a lunch here and there about the way council conducts its business," he said.

"All I know is that the business community - and I'm not talking about developers - the combined chamber of commerce have a resolution on the books that they're going to get political and assist people. That's all I know. I'm aware that some candidates have significant support. You'd have to be blind not to see it."

Former Saint Stephens College principal Brian Rowe, who is running a \$40,000-plus campaign against Peter Young, said friends and family were largely responsible for his funding.

His campaign has included at least four mail-outs to every resident in the division, one of which was a quality production video.

He was yesterday unable to contact his campaign director, real estate agent John Lang, to obtain specific funding details.

Mr Rowe was, however, aware that a trust fund was available to be used by certain candidates but said he did not know the source of those funds.

He said it would not have surprised him to discover that money had been contributed by developers.

"I have money from a trust fund but I'm unsure who's made contributions to any of that," said Mr Rowe.

"That's one of the things I presume John was talking about. He said he can't release names because he has to go back to them and ask if they mind, because of the privacy laws. I have had enough trouble being a candidate, let alone worrying about funding.



"At the time I was considering that (running for council) I knew that we were going to need a budget . . . you don't go in with two and six. I was aware of the fact that there were monies available if I was prepared to run as a candidate.

"The intricacies of where that money was coming from, I'm unaware. Other money has come from family and friends."

Premier Peter Beattie said the Gold Coast City Council would benefit from having a caucus.

"The Gold Coast is the state's second city and it would benefit from more cohesion and more support for the mayor, to be perfectly frank. But I wouldn't want to see one particular person get projects up because of it."

\* Editorial, Page 62

**Caption:** Challengers Grant Pforr, Brian Rowe and Rob Molhoek

Gold Coast developer Soheil Abedian made a 'small' donation after being approached by Mr Ray

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS, DEVELOPMENT

**BIOG:** BRIAN RAY

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 25 MAR 2004, Page 005**  
**Labor Lawlor backs a Lib**

SOUTHPORT Labor MP Peter Lawlor has spent thousands of dollars to publicly support a member of the Liberal Party running for council.

Mr Lawlor would not say how much he spent on the slick Southport mail-out supporting Roxanne Scott.

Ms Scott was the only candidate running against popular councillor Dawn Crichlow, a vocal critic of Mr Lawlor who beat him twice to the Division 6 council seat.

Ms Scott is a paid-up member of the Liberal Party but is running for council as an independent.

Mr Lawlor said he was not aware that Ms Scott was a Liberal member but did not understand why there would be a problem.

"It's not a problem with Dawn, I just think that it's time for a change and Roxanne will do a good job," he said.

"Dawn has campaigned against me at every opportunity, I don't understand why she's getting feral with me supporting someone else.

"What's the big deal? I think Roxanne will do a good job.

"She's not standing as an endorsed Liberal candidate."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, ELECTIONS, POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

**BIOG:** PETER LAWLOR, ROXANNE SCOTT

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 FRI 26 MAR 2004, Page 006**  
**How a plot took shape**  
**By by Alice Jones**

SUE Robbins yesterday named herself, David Power, Ted Shepherd and Bob La Castra as the main players in the election plot to take over the Gold Coast City Council.

The plan began as a vendetta against outspoken councillors Dawn Crichlow and Eddy Sarroff, but grew into a fully-fledged attempt to control the city.

According to Cr Robbins, she, Cr Power and Cr La Castra helped to recruit candidates to run against other sitting councillors.

The revelations came a day after Coast developers Brian Ray and Soheil Abedian told The Bulletin they and other businessmen had contributed to a trust fund to support the campaigns of the bloc candidates.

In a day marked by backflips, conflicting stories and failing memories, a clearer picture emerged of how the plot unfolded.

Initially Cr Robbins and Cr Power stuck to previous claims that they knew nothing about the bloc. But after one of the candidates, Rob Molhoek, told The Bulletin yesterday about the involvement of the two councillors, they 'consulted their diaries' and realised they had attended a meeting with a team of challengers.

Mr Molhoek, who said he had not taken any money from the trust fund, was approached at his campaign launch by Southport Chamber of Commerce president Ian Solomon and real estate agent John Lang, who is acting as campaign director for Division Three candidate Brian Rowe.

"They were wanting to check me out," said Mr Molhoek.

"I spoke to them after the speeches. They said the chambers were concerned about the quality of some of our councillors and I had done a great job and they'd like to support me.

"I said 'With or without you I am running. If the chambers want to contribute there's my fundraising director over there. You need to talk to him'.

"A couple of weeks later I was invited to a meeting at Robina with a bunch of aspiring candidates and a couple of existing candidates."

He said the meeting was attended by Crs Power, Robbins and Shepherd, as well as candidates Grant Pforr, Brian Rowe, Roxanne Scott and Greg Betts.

"There was some discussion about the quality of the council. David Power, Sue Robbins and Ted Shepherd were leading that discussion. There was a bunch of other people in the room.

"The tone of the meeting was 'no commitments, but anything we can do to help you guys, any strategic advice, a briefing of how council runs, some of the frustrations'.

"I got there about 20 minutes late and left for another meeting."

Mr Molhoek said two weeks later he was contacted by a staff member from marketing consultancy Quadrant, to offer advertising services. The services were being funded by the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, it was revealed yesterday.

Mr Molhoek declined the offer.

When The Bulletin contacted Cr Robbins with Mr Molhoek's story, she initially denied having attended the November meeting at Quadrant.

When asked whether she stood by her story she replied: "Yep."

But she contacted The Bulletin yesterday afternoon to express a change of heart.

"I have been over my diary. I thought I did go to a meeting in December, (but) I did go to a meeting in November," said Cr Robbins.

She said because she was asked about a November meeting, and she thought it had been held in December, she did not mention it.

"It all started four years ago when Dawn and Eddy took the unprecedented action of lobbying and campaigning against a sitting candidate. It's an unwritten rule that you don't do that," said Cr Robbins.

"Dawn was handing out how-to-vote cards against Bob La Castra, and Eddy was backing this floodplain guy against Jan Grew.

"So this time what happened was there were a number of councillors who said 'we were really jacked off by Dawn and Eddy doing this to us last time, let's have a look around and see what's going on'.

"There were a few people who came up with different candidates in different areas.

"David Power was talking to a few people, Bob La Castra stumbled across Roxanne Scott.

"In my situation I was doing a lot of work in Division 12 (Peter Drake's division). It was becoming quite a workload for me.

"Paul Gamin said to me 'Who are we going to have in Division 12'. I said 'I don't know, you had better come up with somebody'.

"Greg Betts was found by the Gamins. I gave him some advice.

"Then we got this ring around from Quadrant: 'We want to know the viable people who are the candidates, who are sensible ... we have got some funds. We want to back sensible councillors. Who's your recommendation?' "

Cr Robbins confirmed that Brian Rowe, Grant Pforr, Roxanne Scott, Rob Molhoek and Greg Betts were the chosen group.

"What we did at Quadrant was we sat down and told them the dos and don'ts of running a campaign, the issues that were pertinent to the city; flood mitigation, traffic water. My thoughts on some things differed to Ted's and David's," she said.

"We said to them: 'We talk, we debate in a rational manner, we don't launch into personal attacks, it's bad for the city image, bad for the working environment, it does nothing to get the job done. We want a sensible working group of people'."

When asked why she had been reluctant to reveal their plans Cr Robbins said: "Because you guys would castigate us for it. Because we felt as a group we wouldn't be treated fairly by the Bully. You're always on about a bloc.

"We were there to give a briefing. That's what we gave," she said.

"The thing is, Peter Young was in there just totally mentoring Karen Coates from December onwards. Eddy has proved to be doing that himself at the last election.

"Dawn was there (at the last election) screaming; 'Don't vote for Bob La Castra'.

"None of us have ever done anything like this before."

Cr Robbins said councillors like Cr Crichlow - who has been elected unopposed at the previous two elections - did nothing for the image of the Gold Coast as a city to do business.

Cr Robbins said she knew nothing about the trust fund and had not accepted money from it.

"Greg Betts has rung me on a number of occasions. Roxanne Scott, Bob La Castra's been giving her some advice. Grant Pforr, I've spoken to him on a couple of occasions. Brian Rowe, David Power has given him some advice.

"The key thing we hammered into them is they must at all times ... respect one another, not get in the gutter with personal attacks.

"We're trying to deliver an ethos, a personal ethos into this organisation. It's very embarrassing for this city when it's trying to promote it as a serious place and you've got Dawn on TV chasing chooks around someone's back yard."

When he was contacted by The Bulletin yesterday morning Cr Power also was vague about whether he had attended the meeting at Quadrant.

He replied that he had attended hundreds of meetings and had had 120 phone calls on Wednesday alone.

He could not remember the details of all the meetings he attended.

"Oh God, I don't remember. I met with a number of them (candidates)," said Cr Power.

"Ahhh I don't remember. I remember meeting with Rob and some of the others. They asked for advice.

"I didn't convene any meeting. Perhaps it was convened by the people who are assisting them in their campaigns.

"I can't remember. I have had lots of discussions with lots of people ... I have given advice to lots of people.

"I'm not denying it. The simple fact is I'm not getting any assistance. You seem to want to make it out we're running it. We're not, we have been giving advice.

"The candidates have from day one handled their own campaigns.

"I don't remember whether there was a meeting in November.

"There's a big difference between a team and, as you put in your article, like-minded people who at least show respect for each other. That is the difference between the two concepts." Cr Power said he could not remember if Cr Shepherd attended the meeting that he could not remember attending.

Initially he said Cr Robbins was at the meeting, then he wondered whether she was.

"Sue and I talked to the others, but whether that was at Quadrant I don't recall," he said.

"Without sitting there and looking through my diary I can't be specific."

Later in the day, after the admissions by Cr Robbins, Cr Power called The Bulletin to say he had consulted his diary and he had in fact attended a meeting last November at Quadrant.

"I have looked in my diary. The only thing I can't tell you is whether or not Ted was there, I can't answer that," said Cr Power.

Cr Shepherd confirmed he attended the November meeting.

That, he said, was as far as his involvement with the candidates went.

"I was simply asked to go along to the meeting and give candidates advice on how we ran our campaigns last time," said Cr Shepherd.

"I have no involvement with any fund. I have received no money from any fund. I have no involvement in any slush fund.

"I resent what's in the paper. I'm getting legal opinion, and if it affects my re-election I will be suing your newspaper, end of story."

Cr La Castra, speaking on radio, said The Bulletin story was due to a personal agenda of a journalist.

He denied outright to The Bulletin of having had any involvement in the campaign to recruit candidates, despite Cr Robbins' remarks to the contrary.

"I don't accept donations. That's totally out of order," said Cr La Castra.

"I'm not involved at all. I'm not involved in putting any candidate forward. No, I have never recruited any candidate to run against a councillor."

Businessman Lionel Barden has been identified as the unofficial 'chairman' of the team.

On Wednesday he denied involvement in the fund, saying: "I promise on my heart, cross my heart, I have not."

But yesterday he said he had told the truth but no one had asked him the question: "What was your involvement?"

He said had he been asked that question he would have admitted setting up The Lionel Barden Trust so businessmen could deposit campaign donations to the chosen candidates.

\* Our say \* Page 30

'It all started four years ago . . . with campaigning against sitting candidates'

**Caption:** Southport Chamber of Commerce president Ian Solomon

THE CHAIRMAN

Lionel Barden

THE COUNCILLORS

Sue Robbins

David Power

Ted Shepherd

Bob La Castra

THE CANDIDATES

Grant Pforr (Division 3)

Roxanne Scott (Division 6)

Brian Rowe (Division 5)

Greg Betts (Division 12)

THE MONEY MEN

Brian Ray

Soheil Abedian

The others

**Illus:** Graphic

Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

Fighting for freedom  
Move to thwart bloc

By Alice Jones council reporter

THEY moved swiftly in their fight for freedom.

The council's most outspoken - Dawn Crichlow, Eddy Sarroff and Peter Young - rallied troops in their battle for independence.

The trio said their long-held suspicions had been confirmed - moves were afoot in the business community to gain control of the council's power base.

News of a power bloc had only just broken but by 7am yesterday the councillors had organised a press conference to warn Gold Coast residents of the implications.

They invited the council candidates not involved in the business-backed assault on council and together they urged residents to ask: Whose money is it?

"I'm concerned democracy is under threat. If the bloc becomes a reality it has the potential to hijack the council's independence," said Cr Sarroff.

"There's been much said over the past six weeks about a campaign being driven by big business to form a voting bloc.

"Its intention is to gain a sympathetic ear in council.

"It's been strongly denied over the past weeks but today our worst fears have been confirmed.

"The community needs to know who has contributed to this slush fund, who has received these funds and who they were given to.

"Everyone needs to know: Are there strings attached?

"I call on the candidates to reveal the source of their donations. This needs to be done immediately. This needs to be done today. This needs to be done before Saturday's election."

Cr Dawn Crichlow said she first entered council in 1991 to counter similar power-brokering arrangements which back then threatened the independence of the council.

She warned that if the latest voting bloc was successful it spelled bad news for the Gold Coast.

The trio agreed that the first thing to be wiped by the new power bloc, if it was successful, would be the controversial developer infra-structure charges which forced developers to contribute up to \$14,000 for each block of land sub-divided.

Cr Crichlow said her suspicions began last November when some councillors tried to secure delegated authority for all development applications to be approved in consultation with only the planning chair and the local councillor, instead of the full council.

It was argued, she said, that this would help to clear a backlog of development applications, but she was not so sure.

"That is when this all started," she said.

"We'll go back to the good old bad days of closed meetings, closed planning meetings and delegated authority.

"It's wrong, wrong, wrong. We have to save our city."

Cr Peter Young, who for the past four years has been targeted by a group of Hinterland councillors, says the business-backed push has the potential to strip democracy from the people.

"It's obvious that the developers can afford to pay very significant amounts of money," he said.

"The community is being swamped with marketing material."

The councillors said the new infrastructure charges would finally enable the council to adequately fund better roads, water and public transport.

But without the charges the pressure of development on infrastructure would only get worse, they said.

Yesterday's press conference was also attended by council hopefuls Linda Brown (Division 11), Don Magin (7), Karen Coates (14), Peter Keech (4), John Wayne (2), Guy Jones (9), Jill Peard (9), Susie Douglas (7) and Anne Bennett (3).

The group promoted themselves as being truly independent in their push for election.  
"If the community doesn't have some of us in there fighting for the community I'm frightened the community will not be represented well," said Cr Sarroff.

**Caption:** Dawn Crichlow, Eddy Sarroff and Peter Young lead a press conference yesterday in a last-minute battle for council independence

Councillor Dawn Crichlow urged voters to check out their councillors

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS



**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 27 MAR 2004, Page 013**  
**Three admit to fund**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

THREE of the candidates handpicked to run for council have admitted to drawing more than \$32,000 from the trust fund backed by big business.

Details remain sketchy as to which businessmen, other than developers Brian Ray and Soheil Abedian, have contributed to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, which has been available to anointed candidates for their campaigns.

Three of the four candidates named by councillor Sue Robbins yesterday as being part of an unofficial alliance of 'sensible candidates' told The Bulletin that they had accessed the funds. One of those candidates, Greg Betts, also revealed that he wanted to go public about the alliance at Christmas time.

But he said the idea was quashed by Cr Robbins, who he claimed had 'too much on the line'. "We were never meant to be a power bloc or a power pack or anything like that. We're pretty similar to the Virgin Army, we're like-minded candidates," said Mr Betts, who is contesting Division 12.

Mr Betts said he was always going to run for council and had initially shown interest in running as part of the residents' action group dubbed The Virgin Army.

But former Burleigh councillor Paul Gamin put him in touch with Cr Robbins, who told him of the plans she and colleagues Cr David Power, Ted Shepherd and Bob La Castra had formed.

"Sue contacted me, we spoke, she decided I was worthwhile supporting. She said 'We've got a meeting going ahead, we're going to talk to candidates about the possible support, making us look professional so we had a good chance of getting across the line'.

That was the meeting at marketing consultancy Quadrant. Quadrant said they were going to be looking for funding for candidates 'because there is a big call from residents and businesses in the city that we get a council that's going to be more decisive and not fighting so much and carrying on'.

Mr Betts said after the initial meeting last November he met again with Quadrant to discuss his campaign strategy.

Over the past four months he has drawn down funds from the Lionel Barden trust fund to pay for printing, advertising and other campaign literature.

Mr Betts said he had a personal budget of between \$2000 and \$3000, on top of the \$12,000 he drew from the trust fund. He paid \$8000 to Quadrant for their services.

"I have had money from a trust fund but I don't know who's behind it. I got the money through cheques from a solicitor," said Mr Betts.

"I was told I wouldn't be told or need to know who the backers of the trust were.

"It was being run in the same way as state campaign was being run. I don't know (who's calling the shots), my contact is Quadrant.

"If I wanted something I contacted them."

Brian Rowe, who is contesting Division 5, yesterday told The Bulletin he had sourced money from the fund but did not know how much. His campaign director, Coomera real estate agent John Lang, said Mr Rowe's campaign had received three cheques from the fund for a total of \$20,000.

The other \$40,000 had come from a range of sources, including publicans, business people and developers.

Mr Rowe said he stood by the concept of the trust fund and without it he would not have run for council.

Division 6 candidate Roxanne Scott said yesterday that she had drawn money from the trust fund but could not say how much. Her volunteers could make that information available next week, she said.

Grant Pforr, the division three candidate named by Cr Robbins, said he had not used any of the trust funds. He had largely funded his \$40,000 campaign himself and was waiting to learn

if some businesses and others would contribute.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION,DONATIONS

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
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**Barden's role in power bloc "explained"**

GOLD Coast businessman Lionel **Barden** attempts to explain his role in the power bloc in an e-mail received by the Editor last night.

He writes: Please note I am sad that I had to write this letter. I am dissapointed (sic) in your paper's representation of the facts over the last few days.

Hilights (sic): You wrote I have been 'identified as the unofficial chairman' of the 'power block' (sic).

Not true. I am not official or unofficial chairman of any group of people and I told your reporter that. I have met with some candidates only once a few days ago in the capacity of a consultant.

You wrote: 'On Wednesday, he denied involvement in the fund saying I promise on my heart, cross my heart I have not.'

Not true. The 'I promise on my heart' expression was in answer to a question regarding a meeting with Brian Ray to which I answered honestly that I had not met Brian in probably four years.

On Wednesday I answered all questions put to me honestly.

The facts:

Back on Friday the 26th December your newspaper ran a front-page article on a 'power block' (sic) made up of Wayne Skuthorpe, Don Magin, Guy Jones, Linda Browne, Irene Wareing, Dr. Karen Coates supported by Peter Young and Dawn Critchlow (sic).

Many members of the Combined Chamber of Commerce of which I was one were worried about their policies and the impact on the future direction of the Gold Coast if they were successful.

We discussed at a number of Combined Chamber meetings our involvement in the upcoming Council elections to counter what appeared to be a well funded political machine.

In December I retired from the Robina Chamber presidency as my business interests were all now at Coolangatta. I had no further involvement in the Combined Chamber decisions.

Once the campaign commenced I was invited to a number of meet-the-candidates meetings. I was personally still worried regarding a radical group of candidates and their association with certain incumbents.

I was approached by a number of my former colleagues and friends to put my name to a Trust to which people from a broad business spectrum could donate to support a counter group of like minded candidates who united would make positive and cohesive decisions for the good of the City.

I was asked because:

(1) My involvement in the Cities economic development strategies (2) My support for Council and the City in representation including the Melbourne-Sydney and the two Canberra trips. (3) My business cannot gain from Council decisions even being outside of Council bylaws on Gold Coast Airport property.

(4) I no longer represented any business group. (5) I made no personal investment. I was seen to be neutral.

The Trust fund which your paper provocatively called a slush fund was put in place to diffuse direct donations to candidates, negating the opportunity of implication and influence later.

The candidates were not aware of donation sources and the donours (sic) had no direct access to candidates.

Even I do not know the amount of dollars received until after the election when I sign off on the Trust books for exposure in line with legislation. I do not sign the cheques.

All of the monies are handled by a legal firm and distributed against invoices submitted by professional and commercial companies involved in the production of printing and media etc. There are no slush funds provided to any candidate and this implication that I would be involved in such activity I take as a personal slur.

Your editorial asks 'Why the secrecy'. Well if you had not named two of the people providing

donations the candidates would not know the source of funds. Not even I know all the donours (sic). We wished to keep the funding mechanism as clean as possible to reduce the opportunity of influence. This is still our policy yet we still stand accused.

When we provided this information in detail yesterday your paper decided not to print any of the explanation but only to imply through provocative language and untruths some sinister backroom plotting by so called 'developers' some councillors and myself.

All this and not one word for the duration of the campaign on the other secret power block, also it would appear, well funded. But today your paper donates the whole of page seven to the majority of these people to decry and insult our group.

I have many friends who work at The Bulletin and have campaigned alongside the newspaper on many occasions. I have always defended The Bulletin even when colleagues have considered there was one sided reporting.

I am sorry that I needed to write this letter when we should be working together but your reporting on this occasion is incorrect and unfair.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION, LETTER

**BIOG:** LIONEL BARDEN

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 29 MAR 2004, Page 005**  
**Clarke: We can make it work**  
**By by Peter Gleeson chief reporter**

RON Clarke believes a so-called power bloc of councillors that would make him a 'lame duck' mayor is a myth.

And the Mayor-elect has vowed to get rid of the mayoral robes and wear open-necked shirts 'as much as possible'.

Mr Clarke, who beat Mayor Gary Baildon comfortably in Saturday's poll, said there was no voting bloc and he had spoken to a number of councillors who had denied the existence of the alliance.

"I think the bloc is as much myth as it is fact," he said. "I have spoken to (Division 3 candidate) Grant Pforr and (Division 12 candidate) Greg Betts. They've all got their heart in the right place."

Asked if planning north committee chairman David Power, said to be the architect of the voting bloc, would run the council, he said: "No, I don't think so."

Mr Clarke, 67, spent yesterday celebrating with hundreds of well-wishers and campaign supporters before settling in to watch an AFL game.

Just like Cr Baildon did in 1997 when he wiped the floor with Ray Stevens, Mr Clarke won all 89 booths within the city electorate.

Mr Clarke has proposed a radical reform agenda within the council and despite having just one vote he believes he can deliver.

"When I started in athletics no one had set a world track record in Australia," he said.

"I wouldn't have tackled this unless I knew I could deliver.

"With a cohesive council attacking those (water and traffic) issues, we'll solve them.

"We will solve them for the next 20, 30, 40 years ahead.

"I'd be astonished if I can't deliver."

Mr Clarke said he believed there should two deputy mayors.

"I think there should be one in the north and one in the south," he said.

"You need more representation for those ceremonial things."

But Cr Power, who will run for Deputy Mayor, said two deputies was impossible under the Local Government Act.

"You're only allowed one deputy mayor," said Cr Power.

"I think I know where that idea has come from. That's more an attempt at appeasement than practical management.

"It's impractical.

"When the Mayor is out of town, who's acting mayor, who has priority? That's a really good way to start fights.

"Who has the line of responsibility when the mayor is absent?"

Asked whether this showed Mr Clarke needed more local government training, Cr Power said: "Well, we all do when we first get in. Every one of us is naive about it.

"I guess in my case when I got in in 1991 I spent about eight months beforehand not only reading the Act but all of the relevant Acts that affect us.

"It became patently obvious to me when I first decided to run for council that you are limited by the legislation.

"The Mayor and all councillors have officers there who are meant to give them advice on these sorts of things and Ron will be surrounded by at least seven senior councillors who have been around a long time and know what can and can't be done."

Mr Clarke said his first priority was to make the city safer.

He said he would oppose 3am closing at nightclubs.

"Closing them at 3am when the taxis are changing over will create more mayhem," he said.

"But the violence is nowhere near as bad as what they (Liquor Licensing) were told."

Mr Clarke said his political opponents laughed at his plan for a mobile office.

"The Mayor's job is to get out and be transparent," he said.

Mr Clarke said to fund major infrastructure projects the council must borrow funds.

"It has to be affordable and we can't overborrow," he said.

"At least with a council you know how much income is coming on, unlike other commercial interests. It (borrowing to fund major projects) would be a piece of cake," he said.

Mr Clarke said he believed the council had improved after the weekend election.

"Voters weren't too happy with the performance of the last council," he said.

"People who thought they'd win easily got a shock."

Mr Clarke said the bureaucracy within the council would undergo a financial management audit.

"We're going to go through it with a fine-tooth comb," he said.

"I want to cut out the waste of rate-payers' money.

"I have been told senior officers load up their cars with petrol on Friday night and then on Monday morning and that should not happen.

"They are lucky to have a car over the weekend without using the petrol for private use.

"I am very black and white about perks."

Mr Clarke said the so-called Taj Mahal - the new offices for councillors at Evandale - would be a 'wonderful centre for the disabled and disadvantaged'.

**Caption:** Over the line: former Olympian Ron Clarke celebrates with supporters at Macintosh Island

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Glenn Hampson

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**BIOG:** RON CLARKE

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 29 MAR 2004, Page 008**  
**Dawn of another stint in office**

DAWN Crichlow has just one message for the detractors who poured thousands of dollars into her opponent's campaign: don't try it again.

Cr Crichlow's only challenger, Roxanne Scott, might have been backed by a big-business slush fund but it wasn't enough to stop the pint-sized powerhouse who has reigned over the Southport division since 1991.

"Don't try again," said Cr Crichlow after she gained 54 per cent of the vote in Saturday's council election.

"This was a big-dollars campaign, all to dump Dawn, and it didn't work."

Ms Scott refused to comment yesterday from her Carrara home.

"I don't want to comment, what am I going to say?" said Ms Scott, who obtained 42 per cent of the vote.

Cr Crichlow said she was 'very angry' at the behind-the-scenes power bloc which had endorsed Ms Scott.

"I'm grassroots and I will continue to be a watchdog for the people," said Cr Crichlow, who was amazed to get the nod from both old and young.

"I was getting the vote from guys who came to the booths with rings in their nipples and beer!" she said.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION  
**BIOG:** DAWN CRICHLLOW

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 MON 29 MAR 2004, Page 011**  
**Running the full distance**  
**By Peter Gleeson**

The Gold Coast has a new mayor and, for former running star Ron Clarke, his overwhelming victory has also laid to rest some personal ghosts about going the distance when it counts. Peter Gleeson reports.

WHEN the jury finally came back with its verdict on Ron Clarke's glittering running career, there was always something missing.

It was an Olympic gold medal.

At Tokyo in 1964 he ran third in the 10,000 metres, beaten to the wire by men he had comprehensively licked in lead-up races.

Mexico City, 1968, seemed the ideal chance to make amends.

Yet in the oxygen-starved high altitude environment of Mexico City 1968, the heavily favoured Clarke capitulated to run sixth in the same event.

The critics suggested that while Clarke could run sensational trial times on his own he couldn't cut it when eyeballed by a competitor in a 'big one' like the Olympics.

That was 36 years ago.

Times have changed. And so it appears has Ron Clarke's ability to 'eyeball' an opponent and win - certainly off the track.

At age 67, Mr Clarke has become Gold Coast Mayor.

He comprehensively outpointed Gary Baidon at Saturday's poll, riding to victory on a radical reform agenda to fix the roads, the water supply and crack down on council in-fighting.

For the next four years he will assume the \$138,000 a year position as the mayor of Australia's sixth largest city, donating a quarter of the salary to charity. By beating the long-term incumbent Gary Baidon, Mr Clarke ended a political dynasty tracing back to the late 1980s.

To many in the Baidon camp, Saturday's result was a shock loss.

Cr Baidon had been mayor since 1997 and had romped home in the past two polls.

He was regarded as an honest, hard-working man with a true passion for a city he has watched grow over the past 40 years from a seaside holiday spot to a cosmopolitan, high-energy place to live.

That aura of invincibility had stretched back to his first political victory in 1988 when he was elected as Surfers Paradise alderman.

Lex Bell was mayor at the time and he played a mentoring role to Cr Baidon, who admits he was 'very green' during that first term.

After Mr Bell stepped down as mayor in 1994, Cr Baidon ran for the city's top civic job and won, but was forced back to the polls a year later when the former Gold Coast City and Albert Shires were amalgamated.

Cr Baidon was narrowly beaten by former Albert Shire Mayor Ray Stevens.

Two years later, Mr Stevens was unceremoniously turfed out of office, beaten easily by a re-energised Cr Baidon, who used the campaign to expose a decision by councillors to grant themselves big pay rises.

Mr Stevens believes, even though the Gold Coast mayor only enjoys one vote, that when the electorate wants to take the 'big stick' to the council it takes it out on the mayor.

"That's what happened in 1997 and it happened yesterday," he said.

"The community wanted to blame someone for the traffic and water situation and Gary was the mayor and he copped it.

"It is now up to Ron Clarke to see if he can solve some of those issues."

The ascension of Ron Clarke to the Gold Coast mayoralty can be traced back to a meeting he held with the Gold Coast City Council's planning committee in 1996.

A nervous Mr Clarke gave a presentation to the council on the merits of an eco-tourism project on South Stradbroke Island to be known as Couran Cove.

There was a lukewarm response from a number of councillors - or aldermen as they were then



known - although the local councillor, Alan Rickard, embraced the project with zeal. Mr Clarke then went through the painstaking development application process, finally getting the project off the ground.

But it left him somewhat cheesed off with the local authority.

After getting Couran Cove, now a world class ecotourism precinct, off the ground he set his sights on establishing a magnificent sports facility at Runaway Bay.

More bureaucracy and obstacles emerged within council but again, through perseverance and the unerring help of Cr Rickard, he secured the development approvals to set up the project. It was not until September last year that Mr Clarke announced his intention to run for the Gold Coast mayoralty.

He and wife Helen packed his belongings in Melbourne and moved to the family's plush Runaway Bay home.

It was at the family home study that Mr Clarke, his investment banker campaign manager Gardner Brooke and the man who helped Jim Soorley upset Sallayanne Atkinson in 1991, Graeme Staerk, planned their assault.

There is little doubt that Gary Baidon, certainly in the early days of the campaign, probably under-estimated Mr Clarke's vote-pulling power.

In fact, Mr Clarke, with no local government experience, came from a 15 per cent voting base six months ago to swamp Cr Baidon, commanding 46 per cent of the primary vote.

During the campaign, Cr Baidon tried to concentrate on the positives to come out of his mayoral tenure, emphasising the value for money that ratepayers get for their \$30 a week. But Mr Brooke and Mr Staerk, with a \$300,000 election war chest to spend on advertising, had been doing their research.

They had identified an underlying anger within the community at the council's inability to combat massive growth over the past eight years.

They seized on the council's dithering over water supply and the city's constant battles with traffic flow, despite Cr Baidon's insistence that these were state-controlled roads.

The Clarke team announced daily policy strategies, many of them radical, which Cr Baidon tried to counter by suggesting they were unachievable, and even if they were possible, they would send the city broke.

Three weeks out from the election, the Bulletin published a poll which suggested that Mr Clarke was indeed a serious contender.

He had narrowed the gap to nine percentage points and the momentum was swinging Mr Clarke's way.

Three days out from election day and another Bulletin poll suggested Mr Clarke had narrowed the gap even further. Political pundits were suggesting a cliffhanger.

Around the same time, the Liquor Licensing Division, after a recommendation from the city council and police, announced a controversial plan to pull four nightclubs back from 5am closing to 3am closing.

The rest of the nightclubs would still be able to open until 5am but they would not be allowed to let people in after 3am.

The nightclub industry, a powerful and cashed-up lobby, was livid.

It took out full page advertisements in the Bulletin imploring nightclubbers to kick out Cr Baidon and Surfers Paradise councillor Max Christmas.

They then funded an expensive campaign to text message 75,000 youngsters, asking them to vote for Ron Clarke as mayor and Susie Douglas in Surfers Paradise.

Mr Clarke's campaign heavyweights believe Mr Clarke would probably have won Saturday's election even without the late support from the nightclubs.

"But it was the cream," said a Clarke insider.

The nightclub industry got their way. The political careers of both Cr Baidon and Cr Christmas have ended.

And for Ron Clarke, at an age when most men have retired and are heading for the golf course, it's only just begun.

**Caption:** Gold Coast City mayor-elect Ron Clarke celebrates with wife Helen and supporters after his win on Saturday night. Inset: Clarke at the Melbourne Olympics in 1956.

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Wayne Jones

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**BIOG:** RON CLARKE

**Section:** FOCUS

Three bloc-busters  
Sarroff, Crichlow and Young face hard fight  
By by Alice Jones council reporter

THEY say it's not a bloc but it certainly looks like a bloc.

Gold Coast City Council's old guard has had its ranks bolstered by the arrival of some new 'chums' which take their voting power to nine.

And to borrow Cr Dawn Crichlow's favourite phrase 'eight votes and you can burn the city down'.

Outspoken councillors Crichlow, Eddy Sarroff and Peter Young say the voting bloc means they will have an even tougher job ahead to get decisions through the council.

But they have vowed not to give up.

"I believe the community now has the council on notice," said Cr Sarroff.

"They might have nine votes, they might be nine people who are like-minded, but if there is going to be any decision made not in the public interest, there's some of us there who will make sure that we will expose it."

News broke late last week of a plot by big business and a group of veteran councillors to try to gain control of the council.

Developers Brian Ray and Soheil Abedian said that they and others had contributed funds to a trust to help bolster the campaigns of 'chosen' candidates, deemed to be 'sensible'.

Cr Sue Robbins named herself, Cr David Power, Cr Ted Shepherd and Cr Bob La Castra as being privy to the selection of 'chosen' candidates.

On Saturday, two of the five identified candidates were successful in attaining office, and another one is close to success.

Grant Pforr and Rob Molhoek will represent Divisions 3 and 4, and Greg Betts was last night waiting to hear whether he would make it across the line in Division 12. Roxanne Scott, the bloc's chosen candidate for Division 6, was unsuccessful in toppling Cr Crichlow, even with the help of professional models at the polling booths.

Cr Young, who convincingly beat the bloc's Brian Rowe, said the new voting alliance meant that Mayor-elect Ron Clarke was at risk of being undermined.

"I'm feeling that there's some difficult battles ahead, there's going to be no pulling back from the resolve to fight for the community's interests."

Cr Crichlow said the voting bloc meant she and councillors Sarroff and Young would have to be more vigilant than ever.

Cr David Power claimed there was no 'a development bloc', just a group of 'like-minded people'.

"Those people were supported by the general business community, there were developers, yes, but there were lawyers and butchers and candlestick-makers in there," he said.

"I don't think it will change the philosophies of how we deal with developments."

Mr Abedian, who heads listed developer Sunland, which is building Q1 and Circle on Cavill in Surfers Paradise, said he did not care who was on the council as long as they worked cohesively for the good of the city.

Speaking at Mayor Gary Baidon's post-election party, he said he still did not know whom his money had helped to support, and did not want to know.

"Democracy is something wonderful. It comes at a price to many people but that is the result the people of the Gold Coast have chosen," said Mr Abedian. "Hopefully the city will get the common vision everyone would like to see."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 29 MAR 2004, Page 004**  
**The new boys on the block are ready to roll**  
**By by Ryan Ellem**

THE new boys on the council block, builder Grant Pforr and former high-profile radio manager Rob Molhoek yesterday took a look at their likely new workplace.

With 73.84 per cent of the vote counted in Division 3, Mr Pforr, 46, has 42.93 per cent, well ahead of his nearest opponent, David Childs, who had 25.85 per cent.

In Division 4, Mr Molhoek had an almost unbeatable stronghold, with 42.88 per cent of the primary vote, ahead of Peter Keech (26.28 per cent), husband of Albert Labor MP, Margaret. "Mr Keech had the Labor machine really pushing him, and he was all over us, probably two to one at the polling booths," said Mr Molhoek, the former manager of Gold and Sea FM radio stations.

He said his building company, Permacrete Pty Ltd, would decrease its workload if he won his council seat. "No one can expect to change the world in their first term, but I am probably a step ahead of the others in that I know all of the councillors and the officers," he said.

He and Mr Molhoek were involved in the reported developer-funded power bloc, but after voting closed, he denied he was part of any power bloc.

"I have no affiliation to any political party, and if people are going to call a cohesive council a bloc, well, they can," he said.

Mr Molhoek, who declined financial assistance from the alleged developer-backed group, said he was never told there was to be a power bloc.

"I went to a meeting as a group, and it was suggested that if we had issues to throw at each other, the council chambers was not the right place, that it was not the right image for council.

"I had a coffee with David Power and other aspirants, and the tone of the meeting wasn't about a bloc at all."

He would evaluate his career after his first term, and hinted at throwing his hat in the ring for an even higher political role. He would consider standing for the mayor's job at the next council election in 2008.

**Caption:** Rob Molhoek and Grant Pforr checked out the Gold Coast City Council offices yesterday

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Glenn Hampson

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**BIOG:** ROB MILHOEK, GRANT PFORR

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 TUE 30 MAR 2004, Page 006**  
**All bets are off as Irene threatens to dob in "independent"**

DIVISION 12 candidate Irene **Wareing** will write to the Electoral Commission claiming likely councillor-elect Greg Betts has misled voters about his independence. Ms **Wareing**, who appears to have been beaten by Mr Betts, a Qantas customer service manager, claims her opponent wrongly promoted independence on the campaign trail, despite being linked to a power bloc.

She said Mr Betts was supported by National Party stalwarts Paul and Judy Gamin, and that he admitted to accepting \$12,000 via a solicitor from an 'anonymous' trust fund, to assist campaigning.

An executive member of the Friends of Burleigh, Ms **Wareing** will use the responses from an e-mail reply from Mr Betts, answering queries on his funding and affiliations, which she believed he 'ducked and weaved' on, in her complaint to the Electoral Commission.

"He said he had funded his campaign from himself, friends and businesses," she said. "There was no mention of the Lionel Barden trust fund. If I thought he had won fair and square, I would congratulate him, but I believe he has misled the public."

Mr Betts said his rival, who actually reneged on a preference deal with him after he confirmed his connection with the Gamins, suffered a bad case of 'sore loser' syndrome.

"She can she do what she likes, I don't have any party affiliations," he said.

"As I've said before, I was only ever told (the group) had nothing to do with deals. It was only about getting together candidates with common sense and professionalism.

"When I was given the money I was told it was just from a trust fund and that it wasn't necessary that I needed to know who put money in it.

"I told Friends of Burleigh that I funded my own campaign, with help from friends and businesses.

"I don't even know if the money I received was from the (Lionel Barden) trust fund. I can only assume it was."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION,DONATIONS

**BIOG:** IRENE WAREING,GREG BETTS

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 WED 31 MAR 2004, Page 006**  
**Developing a lobby**  
**By Jenny Rogers**

THE Gold Coast development industry is elated at having a 'pro-development bloc' on the city council.

And industry figures already have issued notice to new Mayor Ron Clarke that they are looking for some help from him.

Urban Development Institute of Australia's Queensland vice-president, Peter Sherrie, told a UDIA breakfast on the Gold Coast yesterday: "You've got a new mayor in place and a new voting bloc that is likely to favour developers, so there is an opportunity there to do some good work with council."

Mr Sherrie said the UDIA had welcomed revelations of a so-called pro-development bloc allegedly led by Cr **David Power**. "Absolutely we are hoping it will help, as long as the developments have been debated thoroughly and all impacts have been addressed," said Mr Sherrie.

"We don't want to see developments blocked unnecessarily. Obviously **David Power** was instrumental in rallying people who were there for the Gold Coast as a region.

"I think we're fairly happy with the result but we will have to wait and see what happens. It will be interesting to see how it goes."

Mr Sherrie said the development industry would be asking Mr Clarke to review the new infrastructure charges on developers and to allow more developments to be dealt with under delegated authority.

"The average infrastructure charges on the Gold Coast have gone from \$4000 a lot to \$17,000 a lot which is an unbelievable increase," said Mr Sherrie.

"UDIA will be calling on Ron Clarke to immediately review these increases and look at implementing them over a number of years so the development industry has the ability to absorb them, as opposed to a large increase in one hit.

"It is making some projects unviable and affecting housing affordability.

"The council needs to work with the development industry and look at phasing them in over a couple of years."

Mr Sherrie said delays in processing applications could be dramatically reduced if more applications were dealt with under delegated authority.

"We are also calling on Ron Clarke to immediately look at the processing of applications," he said. "We need to have more delegated authority powers come down to the senior officers so we don't have to have so many going up through the council, if they are code assessable and don't need a decision before the council.

"It should be able to be handled under delegated authority if you have developments which are in accordance with the strategic plan. We need to start streamlining the process."

Mr Sherrie said the UDIA supported Mr Clarke's proposal for a Surfers Paradise tunnel.

**Library Heading: DEVELOPMENT, GOLD COAST, GOLD COAST COUNCIL**

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 31 MAR 2004, Page 004**  
**Eddy determined to get funds disclosed**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

COUNCILLOR Eddy Sarroff says he is prepared to go it alone to get the State Government to change legislation requiring council candidates to name campaign funding sources prior to election day.

He is expected to put forward a motion at the first meeting of the new council to get backing for his move.

"If I don't get the support of council, I will do it myself," he said.

"I pledge right now that I will lobby the State Government hard on this issue."

Cr Sarroff was angered by denials prior to the election that a developer slush fund existed, only to have the fund confirmed two days prior to Saturday.

Developer Brian Ray revealed he and another high-profile developer, Soheil Abedian had contributed to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

"There's no doubt there are community concerns that have been raised about an election ticket driven and funded by big business," he said.

"This is of major concern to our community. They want this sort of activity transparent and open.

"Voters want and need to know who is funding candidates' campaigns and also that there are no strings attached and there should be no reluctance or resistance to this move."

Cr Sarroff said his motion would make it clear that all donations should be declared, even money taken in before a council candidate had formally nominated.

"As it currently stands, a candidate could take in \$100,000 the day before he nominates and that money does not have to be declared," he said.

"I would also like to see the total cost of the campaign made public, including signage donated."

Cr Sarroff, who easily won his division, said he was disappointed that not all candidates revealed their source of donations prior to the election.

"In the context of what went on prior to this election, to my mind it is crucial we have transparency," he said.

"I want the community assured that there are councillors who will be scrutinising all decisions to make sure they are made in the public interest. That is the job ahead and it is a job and a half."

**Caption:** TRANSPARENCY ...Cr Eddy Sarroff says he wants all donations made known to the public.

**Illus:** Photo

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 03 APR 2004, Page 006**  
**Mayor-elect's deal may see 'bloc' leader as deputy**  
**Power pact for Clarke agenda**  
**By by Peter Gleeson chief reporter**

RON Clarke is working on a deal with David Power which aims at delivering his election commitment to 'big ticket' items.

Mr Clarke, who takes over as mayor this week, had a 90-minute meeting yesterday with Cr Power - his possible deputy.

It is understood that Cr Power told Mr Clarke he would have the support of the majority of councillors.

Because he has only one vote, Mr Clarke needs the majority of his 14 councillors to back his radical reform agenda, which includes a tunnel through Surfers Paradise, a one-year freeze on rates and an upgrade of Hinze Dam to stage three.

Mr Clarke also wants to return councillors to the Nerang HQ and turn the new \$8 million Evandale administration building into a base for the disabled.

Earlier this week, Cr Power pledged his full support to Mr Clarke.

Cr Power last night said his meeting with Mr Clarke had been productive and fruitful.

"I think there will be a lot of harmony in this council among most of the councillors," said Cr Power.

"There is a general consensus that Mr Clarke was elected with a strong citywide mandate and we have to respect that."

Cr Power and developer Brian Ray were the architects of a 'ticket' that included successful candidates Grant Pforr (Division 3), Rob Molhoek (4) and Greg Betts (12). Cr Power also has the backing of experienced councillors such as Jan Grew, Bob La Castra, Ted Shepherd and Sue Robbins.

Key councillors, including councillors Power and Shepherd, met at Cr Grew's home last night for a post-election get-together.

The Bulletin was also told Mr Ray has spoken to Mr Clarke, indicating that 'a group of like-minded councillors' would support his election blueprint.

The Clarke team told Cr Power that if he delivered the eight votes required to implement a reform agenda, Mr Clarke would support Cr Power in any future mayoral campaign - probably in 2008.

Mr Clarke's spokesman, Graeme Staerk, yesterday said they were expecting 'a broad consensus to emerge among the alleged bloc'.

"We believe that the bloc is largely mythology and let's see if it operates that way," he said.

"Ron has been meeting and talking with all councillors before they meet next week.

"He has a 'whole of city' mandate, an overpowering mandate to do a job. It would be silly for people to ignore such a 'whole of city' mandate.

"We think that people will be anxious to be seen to be delivering on his agenda.

"The message was for change."

\* In a lather, Page 30

The major of God's country \*Page 66

Why Gary Baildon lost \*Pages 54-55

First lady of Brisbane Weekend Extra \* Page 81

**Caption:** David Power.....cutting a deal with mayor-elect Ron Clarke

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**BIOG:** RON CLARKE, DAVID POWER



**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1WED 07 APR 2004, Page 004**  
**Power bloc seizes control of council over dinner**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton**

**Notes:**

APOLOGY PUBLISHED 10.4.2004 PAGE 7, CR ROBBINS HAD ALREADY PROVIDED DOCUMENTATION SHOWING HER CAMPAIGN WAS SELF-FUNDED NOT 'BANKROLLED' BY A GROUP OF DEVELOPERS SUPPORTING A VOTING BLOC

THE **power** bloc's control of the Gold Coast City Council has begun. Ringleader David **Power** was anointed Deputy Mayor in a secret ballot last night, sweeping to victory with the support of his 'like-minded' counterparts. Members of the bloc, bankrolled by developers, also wrested control of the city's key committees at a closed-door meeting of the new council over dinner.

Also reportedly up for discussion was an \$11,000 pay rise for all councillors, a suggestion apparently introduced by Mayor Ron Clarke.

In another controversial move, planning north and south committees were merged, with bloc member Cr Ted Shepherd elected chair.

The bloc - spearheaded by veteran councillors **Power**, Sue Robbins, Shepherd, Bob La Castra and Jan Grew - dominated the decision-making process.

Holding the eight-vote majority needed to control the council, the bloc won leadership of all but two of the committees.

Crs **Power**, Robbins and Shepherd are believed to have strongly argued for the planning merge.

Cr Peter Young, who was defeated by Cr Shepherd in the planning committee ballot, described the overall outcome as 'shameful'.

"All the deals were done beforehand," said Cr Young. "This is the most shameful night in the city's history."

Three new committees were formed - a City Infrastructure Assets committee (formerly engineering), an Economic and Cultural Development committee and a Strategic Growth Management committee.

Cr Robbins, former planning south chairwoman, ousted Cr Ray Hackwood to become head of the infrastructure committee while Cr Grew became chairwoman of the economic committee.

Southport stalwart Dawn Crichlow made a bid to become chairwoman of the health and safety committee but was defeated by Cr Hackwood.

As well as becoming second-in-charge of the city, Cr **Power** was elected head of the growth management committee.

Councillors La Castra, Daphne McDonald and Eddy Sarroff retained community, water and finance respectively.

Cr Sarroff, one of the targets of the bloc, said he was 'bitterly disappointed' councillors Young and Crichlow were not given responsibility.

"They are capable and very experienced," he said. "We would have got off on the right foot if responsibilities were shared."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR Eddy Sarroff has demanded that Cr David Power 'come clean' over his alleged involvement in a developer slush fund and 'bloc' of candidates in the March 27 election.

Cr Sarroff said the facts spoke for themselves, with a substantial amount of money put into a slush fund and made available to certain 'hand picked' candidates.

"Cr Power was exposed by his long term friend and ally Cr Sue Robbins just two days before the election," he said.

"This can only be described as secret developer party."

Cr Sarroff said the money was accessed by three candidates, Brian Rowe, Roxanne Scott and Greg Betts - who have all confirmed accepting money from the fund.

**Caption:** Cr Eddy Sarroff

**Illus:** Photo

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 07 APR 2004, Page 003**  
**More Crs needed on Coast: Power**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

THE Gold Coast needs more councillors to cope with the 10,000 people a year who are moving to the area, said Cr David Power, who is expected to be formally elected as deputy mayor tomorrow.

He said council divisions were rapidly rising to population numbers similar to State electorates and that the community, along with council, needed to look at representation.

"The growth will not stop - I know some people do not like that but it is as a result of decisions made 30 years ago," he said. "We need to cope with it."

Cr Power said Brisbane, with a population of 890,000, had 26 councillors and a lord mayor compared with the Gold Coast with around 420,000 people and 14 councillors and a mayor.

"The community needs to start thinking about this over the next few years, as do council and the State Government," he said. "In the past four years our population has grown by 40,000 people."

He blamed council officers for ignoring his advice several years ago on population growth in the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor.

"They under-estimated that growth," he said.

"I don't believe that we have over-development, what we have is a lack of ability to keep up with infrastructure, particularly traffic.

"We are suffering a lag period and are playing catch-up with infrastructure."

Cr Power said if the council had set up a planning partnership with the State Government three years ago, this would not have happened.

"Unfortunately what I was saying was ignored by the senior officers," he said.

"And, yes there are problems, we are having trouble getting pipes in the ground, water reticulation and footpaths.

"Maybe next time they will listen to the silly councillor who knows the area, but may not have engineering qualifications."

Cr Power admitted he had let his own division (Division Two) down while he concentrated on all-of-city planning issues.

Returned by just 600 votes over opponent John Wayne, Cr Power admitted he had been sent a clear message from his electorate.

On other issues Cr Power said:

- \* He did not know who was behind the so called-develop slush fund, other than what he had read in newspapers.
- \* He admitted to talking candidates prior to the election but totally denied any 'power-bloc'.
- \* He believed the CMC would investigate the so called Lionel Barden Trust fund accessed by a number of candidates, not including himself.
- \* Mayor elect Ron Clarke had a mandate to beef up local laws to enforce a stricter code of conduct on councillors.
- \* No voting bloc existed in the past council.

**Caption:** Cr David Power

**Illus:** Photo

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 08 APR 2004, Page 021**  
**Council 'power bloc' moves fast at first meeting**  
**By ALICE JONES**

THEY say it's not a bloc but those who are not in the council's new power group say it was running like a well-oiled machine at Tuesday night's dinner meeting. Councillors arrived at the Gold Coast Arts Centre Panorama Suite just before 6pm for their first meeting as a new council.

As well as dinner, the group had a busy schedule of tasks to work through, the most important of which was to choose a deputy mayor, and who would chair the council's committees. Crs Dawn Crichlow and Peter Young - the only veteran councillors denied committee chair positions - say it soon became obvious that the bloc had already agreed on its plan of attack. They say barely any discussion occurred before the bloc voted to change the committee structure in a plan which left key bloc members in very powerful positions. Meanwhile, the city's five new councillors were left scratching their heads in the wake of the speedy decisions, Crs Young and Crichlow said.

"It was this amazing pre-rehearsed, pre-recorded thing," said Cr Young.

"My fear is what I suspect is going to happen next is the suspension of the infrastructure charges, that's almost a certainty, an increase in delegated planning authority and a serious cutback in the advisory committee structure. My impression is that the bloc is very confident and happy with itself and is doing the bidding of the development industry as they were instructed."

At Tuesday night's meeting it emerged that:

- \* Mayor Ron Clarke had asked CEO Dale Dickson to suspend all works on the Nerang and Evandale council renovations, inspite of \$4.3 million worth of building contracts already being let and another \$6 million contract pending. The council is paying \$22,000 a month to rent office space in another building while the renovations happen. Demolition works, due to begin over the weekend, have been suspended.
- \* Council staff are likely to take industrial action if the accommodation program, to give better working conditions, does not proceed.
- \* Council staff have bets running on how long the new council will last before an administrator is called in.
- \* Crs David Power, Peter Young, Jan Grew and Rob Molhoek contested the deputy mayor's job.
- \* Cr Clarke abstained from voting for deputy mayor and all committee chair jobs.
- \* Councillors agreed to form a taskforce to consider whether councillors should move back to Nerang. It will feature Crs Shepherd, Power, Pforr and Sarroff.
- \* A taskforce has been formed to reconsider the 3am nightclub closing policy. It features Crs Douglas, Hackwod, Molhoek and Shepherd.
- \* Cr Clarke called for a review of the Couran Cove terminal issue
- \* Cr Clarke declined membership of the Surfers Paradise Management Association.
- \* Crs Shepherd, La Castra, Robbins, Grew, Power, Betts, Douglas, Molhoek and Pforr voted to have just one planning committee.

Crs Shepherd and Power did not return the Bulletin's phone calls.

However, Cr Crichlow's response was: "There is an absolute bloc - anything they don't want to go through won't go through. Ron Clarke has now certainly become part of that bloc."

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**Column:** Crossfire

**Pforr fund blow-up**  
**Sarroff calls for resignation over campaign money**  
By by Alice Jones council reporter

EDDY Sarroff has demanded fellow councillor Grant Pforr's resignation over what he said were discrepancies in campaign funding declarations.

Relations have gone from bad to worse at the city council as the veteran councillor says Cr Pforr repeatedly denied receiving funds from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund prior to the election.

Yet his interim financial returns to the council's chief executive officer reveal that his campaign received \$12,500 from the fund, managed by Hickey Lawyers.

Cr Sarroff said that, if Cr Pforr did not resign, he would call in the Crime and Misconduct Commission to investigate.

Mayor Ron Clarke yesterday confirmed that he had asked the council's legal department to outline the ramifications of the claims.

In March, Cr Pforr twice told The Bulletin that he had funded his own campaign, with his wife Elizabeth acting as his campaign manager.

Yet his financial returns show that on January 29 he received \$7500 from Hickey Lawyers and on February 20 he received \$5000 from the law firm.

Cr Sarroff said he was furious at the betrayal by a new councillor, asking what Cr Pforr had to hide.

"The question was asked and asked several times - I'm quite angry," said Cr Sarroff.

"I feel that this is so serious it's a matter for the CMC. I certainly believe that the community will be asking him to step aside, there is no excuse, the question was asked several times."

On March 16, Cr Pforr responded to a Bulletin request for his funding sources in writing.

"In response to it I have funded my own campaign, as I have publicly stated," he wrote. "I do strongly believe in candidates declaring all funds and I've written to several business and friends to help fund my campaign."

On March 26, the day before the election, Cr Pforr denied to The Bulletin any knowledge of the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, which was formed to allow donations for the campaigns of chosen candidates.

In that interview Cr Pforr said he had budgeted \$40,000 of his own money but had probably spent more than that.

"I have financed it myself, I have got several letters out asking for funds," he said. "I have written to the odd developer, to some businessmen, family and friends. They're all saying yes, they'll contribute, but I have been writing the cheques at the moment."

"I have never met Lionel Barden, I have got no money . . . I don't know about the trust fund."

Cr Pforr yesterday was reluctant to comment, saying it was Easter Sunday and he was enjoying the holiday with his family.

"I haven't got any of my notes with me. I was disgusted with the way they carried on," he said of Thursday's council meeting.

"If people are calling for the CMC, go right ahead, I will back a CMC inquiry, I'd be very supportive."

"I didn't know I had money from the Hickey Lawyers Trust Fund."

"I have the community at heart, so do the other 14 councillors."

**Caption:** Extract from a letter sent to Bulletin deputy editor Michael Carroll by Grant Pforr

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION, DONATIONS

**BIOG:** EDDY SARROFF, GRANT PFORR

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 TUE 13 APR 2004, Page 004**  
**Mayor calls Pforr on trust fund story**

MAYOR Ron Clarke telephoned Councillor Grant **Pforr** on Easter Sunday to warn he had asked the city solicitor to investigate his election returns.

Cr Clarke said he made the call to Cr **Pforr** after he was alerted by a phone call from The Bulletin on Sunday regarding anomalies in Cr **Pforr**'s story about financial donations.

But Cr Clarke said yesterday his subsequent call was not in response to The Bulletin's inquiry and he had penned a general memo to the legal department earlier.

Cr Clarke said he did not call any other councillors on the issues.

The financial reports in question related to Cr **Pforr**'s interim donations report.

In his official report he admitted receiving \$12,500 from Hickey Lawyers, which controlled the Lionel Barden Trust Fund set up for business people to donate money to fund councillor campaigns.

But at least twice before the election, Cr **Pforr** denied receiving money from the fund. Cr Clarke said there were legal and moral issues at stake.

"I want to check it out with the city solicitor and see exactly what the situation is," he said.

\* Paying the piper, Page 12

**Library Heading:** DONATIONS,GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**BIOG:** GRANT PFORR,RON CLARKE

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1 TUE 13 APR 2004, Page 012**  
**Paying the piper**  
**By Peter Gleeson**

GRANT **Pfarr** appears to have been caught out.

Cr **Pfarr**'s less than candid response to where he got \$12,500 of a \$50,000 council election campaign war chest is under the microscope.

The wily, veteran councillor Eddy Sarroff is seriously questioning Cr **Pfarr**'s commitment to openness and transparency.

Cr **Pfarr**, who was elected to take over from the retiring Alan Rickard, repeatedly denied receiving funds from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund before the March 27 poll.

The Lionel Barden Trust Fund was bankrolled by developers, including Brian Ray and Soheil Abedian, and it helped a number of like-minded people, including Cr **Pfarr**, Cr Greg Betts and failed candidates Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe.

Despite writing to The Bulletin before the election to say he had funded his own campaign, Cr **Pfarr**'s interim financial declaration on campaign funding showed he had received \$12,500 from the fund, which was managed by Hickey Lawyers.

Cr Sarroff, never one to sit in silence, is hopping mad. He wants Cr **Pfarr** to resign and if he doesn't, Cr Sarroff wants an investigation by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Mayor Ron Clarke has even asked the council's legal department to examine Cr **Pfarr**'s campaign funding.

It's a touchy subject with the new council, which is desperate to project an image of a harmonious, like-minded bunch.

Councillors, particularly the freshmen, are trotting out the line that they don't want to dwell on the council's past, often characterised by in-fighting and back-stabbing.

The new people only want to talk about the positives.

Unfortunately for Cr **Pfarr**, Cr Sarroff is right. Being less than frank about where you get your election funding is not exactly positive, but nevertheless it's certainly in the public interest.

This issue is not about whether these people took the money.

Almost every serious political candidate these days has access to campaign funding from a variety of sources.

Developers putting their hands into their pockets to ensure a certain candidate gets across the line is nothing new.

In fact, after the bickering and factionalism which has dogged this council over the past nine years, a caucus of fresh faces would have been highly appealing to many voters.

But the public deserves to know who is funding who - before the poll.

For Cr **Pfarr** to say before the poll that he and his family and friends had funded his campaign, and then have it revealed after the poll that he did get \$12,500 from a developers' fund, is pretty poor form.

As Cr Sarroff has pointed out, what has Cr **Pfarr** got to hide?

It's just one of a number of issues which needs to be sorted out as quickly as possible by the new council.

Nightclub hours and councillors' salaries are justifiably high on the agenda.

Surfers Paradise nightclubs are going broke as they try to comply with new 3am closing.

At the council election, nightclubbers showed their displeasure with the decision by sending a message to former mayor Gary Baidon and former Surfers Paradise councillor Max Christmas. Both were beaten comfortably.

On pay rises, Cr Clarke has openly supported an increase in the \$70,000 a year salary for councillors.

He's on record as saying that they should probably earn more, suggesting their salaries be pegged at 75 per cent or 80 per cent of a State MP.

This would be a \$10,000 a year pay rise.

It's probably a fair call from the new Mayor. There is compelling evidence to suggest that

most councillors have just as high a workload as a State MP.

Cr Clarke has been a little testy over the way he's been portrayed on the issue of increasing councillors' salaries.

He's apparently not happy he's been implicated in a fresh pay grab.

Come on Ron, lighten up a bit. You've only just started this marathon and there is a long way to go.

Rest assured that in four years time ratepayers will not be judging you on small, legitimate pay rises for your colleagues but on the 'big ticket' items such as improving traffic and water supply.

It will be interesting to see if Deputy Mayor David Power can deliver the votes for Cr Clarke on the big projects.

That is the key to Cr Clarke's term. So forget pay rises.

The main game, the gold medal race for Ron Clarke, is delivering on his raft of radical promises.

**Caption:** New councillor Grant Pforr (left) before the election with fellow hopefuls Brian Rowe and Rob Molhoek. Pforr was less than candid about his campaign contributions.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** DONATIONS, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

**BIOG:** GRANT PFORR



**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 14 APR 2004, Page 003**  
**Pfarr denies he lied about election funds**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

DIVISION three councillor Grant Pfarr took funding from developers despite three times during the election publicly stating he was paying his own campaign. The issue has angered new mayor Ron Clarke who said there was no redress under the Local Government Act.

Cr Clarke said he had ordered a investigation of the entire campaign funding issue and a report, including recommendations would be sent to the Local Government Association. He said while some candidates declared donations prior to the election, there was nothing to make declare everything.

"I favour candidates signing a statutory declaration prior to the election," he said.

"I would also like to see not only donations declared, but also how much is spent on the campaign, and ... the two figures should be the same."

Cr Pfarr's register of campaign donations lodged last week reveals he took two lots of money from the Lionel Barden slush fund administered by Hickey Lawyers. Cr Pfarr admits to fund on January 29 and another \$5000 on February 29.

In media interviews published in the Gold Coast Sun and the Gold Coast Bulletin on February 18 and February 26, Cr Pfarr clearly stated he was funding his own campaign.

Then, on election eve, March 26, Cr Pfarr again declared he was funding his own campaign, despite by this time having taken \$12,500 from the pro-development slush fund.

In addition to taking money from the fund he also took \$10,000 from Fish Developments and \$100 from Oyster Cove developer, Vanwell.

Of Cr Pfarr's declared \$23,150, \$22,500 came from the development industry.

In an interview published in the Gold Coast Sun on February 18, Cr Pfarr said he was funding his own campaign and was 'strongly of the belief that campaign funds should be open and accountable, and the public should know before the election where campaign funds have come from'.

When confronted on the issue on last week he said he had not told lies and he had funded his own campaign.

He refused to comment further.

Cr Eddy Sarroff said all candidates were given ample opportunity to declare their campaign donations before election day.

"The bottom line is that the community had been misled and I am bitterly disappointed," said Cr Sarroff.

"He disclosed that he had not taken any funds and then when he fills out the register our worst fears are confirmed.

"I really don't think a public apology would suffice - it is too serious for that.

"This will leave the public with little faith in this councillor."

Cr Peter Young queried Cr Pfarr's statements about his funding.

Cr Dawn Crichlow said the facts were 'hidden from the people'.

"We still don't know who funded this slush fund in total," she said.

"I don't think the people of the Gold Coast will have much faith in this council."

Cr Pfarr, who won division three vacated by former deputy mayor Alan Rickard, was the fourth candidate to declare taking funds from the Lionel Barden Trust fund.

Roxanne Scott, beaten by Cr Dawn Crichlow, had admitted to the Gold Coast Sun she took \$30,000 (see Page 9).

Cr Greg Betts who won Burleigh from Peter Drake has admitted taking from \$12,000.

Brian Rowe, who was unsuccessful in wresting division five from Cr Peter Young has admitted taking \$20,000.

This accounts for around \$75,000.

Developers Brian Ray and Soheil Abedian have admitted putting money into the fund.

Cr David Power has declared spending \$52,525 on his campaign, the bulk of it (\$47,825)

coming from 'various luncheon tickets'. Other contributors were Minuet Pty Ltd (\$1500); Edgedrift Pty Ltd (\$1000); and XYZ Investments Pty Ltd (\$2200). Surprise last-minute winner Susie Douglas, who took the Surfers Paradise division from Max Christmas, declared campaign funding of \$6878.50, all of it from the nightclubs. She declared \$5000 from Melba's and \$1878.60 for a newspaper ad paid for by the Licensed Venues Association.

NIL returns - councillors who declared they paid their for their own campaigns - were submitted by Mayor Ron Clarke, Ray Hackwood (Div. 1); Daphne McDonald (Div. 13) and Sue Robbins (Div. 14).

\* What they declared, Page 18

'The bottom line is that the community had been misled and I am bitterly disappointed' - Eddy Sarroff

**Caption:** Cr Grant Pforr

**Illus:** Photo

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 14 APR 2004, Page 009**  
**Roxanne hits back on funds**  
By MERILYN MacKENZIE

FAILED Gold Coast City Council candidate Roxanne Scott says she saw nothing wrong with dipping into alleged 'developer' funds from solicitors' trust accounts set up by entrepreneur Lionel Barden to run a slick \$30,000 campaign.

Mrs Scott, a Liberal Party member, also admitted gaining support from both Liberals and Labor as well as sitting councillors in her bid to overthrow veteran Southport campaigner Councillor Dawn Crichlow at the March 27 elections.

"I had support from both Liberal and Labor local members and Dawn said it was a conspiracy, or words to that effect," she said.

An angry Mrs Scott has come clean on donations in a bid to clear her name after what she labelled a dirty and childish campaign aimed at muddying her reputation. The Department of Employment senior adviser said that even though she accepted funding from two solicitors' trust accounts no one ever asked whether she was 'pro-development'.

"I went around a number of people who had previously had issues with Dawn.

"I went to Bob La Castra and he sought some funds for me . . . and later on more funds became available. I was never asked at any time whether I was pro-development, whether I was green, whether I was anything else."

However Cr La Castra denied he sought funding for Mrs Scott saying he 'gave her an idea of the people who might want to help' including the chambers of commerce and that funding may have come 'indirectly' from his advice.

Mrs Scott said she would never have taken money if there had been conditions attached. The money was accessed from a trust fund set up by Lionel Barden through the Chambers of Commerce.

Mr Barden reportedly also helped Mrs Scott and fellow candidates who were accessing the funds with advice on how to run campaigns.

Mrs Scott also denied any knowledge of who had contributed to the solicitors' trust accounts.

"I just received a cheque from a solicitor Tony Hickey (Hickey Lawyers) and another from solicitor Mal Chalmers," she said.

"It was set up that way was so that both the people giving the funds and the people receiving the funds didn't know each other. The reason that they gave the funds, I felt, was they thought that the current council was dysfunctional"

Mrs Scott admitted her decision to run was part of a 'mid-life crisis' but she had not been willing to risk her own funds on an ego trip.

"It has never been mentioned that Dawn declared funds from Meriton (developers of the Sundale site).

"If that is not pro-development I don't know what is."

**Caption:** Roxanne Scott

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 15 APR 2004, Page 001**  
**I confess: the bloc really does exist**  
**We had to stop those greenies**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

DEPUTY Mayor David **Power** has admitted he was involved in creating a **power** bloc on the Gold Coast City Council to prevent the city being taken over by 'extremist green groups'. Cr **Power** says he decided last October to help a business sector-backed push to control the council.

He says he was driven by a fear that environmentalists were gathering their own army of candidates.

Until this week, Cr **Power** has largely denied any involvement in the creation of the voting bloc, which has quickly become apparent in the new council.

\* Continued Page 4

\* From Page 1

Cr **Power** said he did not actively recruit councillors to contest the election, nor did he seek funding on their behalf.

"I was warned back in October what was happening. It wasn't until after that that I decided to make myself freely available to give advice," he said. "I knew that a sitting councillor was trying to get someone to run against me.

"I was also aware that organisations such as Gecko and a few others were actively forming a network to try and get as many candidates up as possible.

"This council shouldn't be about pro-development or pro-green, it should be about pro-balance.

"It was common knowledge mid last year that the extreme environmentalists were going to try and make a move.

"What concerned me when I first heard about what they were up to is we have 37,000 people whose jobs depend on us keeping the straight line. That doesn't mean pro-development but allowing development to occur in line with legislation."

Gecko spokeswoman Lois Levy yesterday denied Cr **Power**'s claims, saying the group was apolitical and would work with the council of the day.

Three days before the March 27 election, developers Brian Ray and Soheil Abedian admitted to The Bulletin that they had put money into the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, to support chosen candidates to contest the election.

These candidates, it emerged, had been recruited and coached by sitting councillors, including Sue Robbins, Ted Shepherd, Bob La Castra and David **Power**.

Grant Pforr and Greg Betts, who were funded by the trust, were successful in gaining seats.

Cr **Power** said he did not go public about the candidates supported by the trust before the election for two reasons.

"It would have seemed like I was running or managing their campaigns and clearly none of us were. They were running their own campaigns on local issues," he said.

"Because some people I had spoken to did not end up taking any support or accessing the services that were available.

"You would be amazed at the breadth of people (who donated money). I had a butcher and a motor mechanic, it wasn't just developers."

Cr **Power** said the group's leader was Chris Morgan of advertising agency Quadrant.

That firm prepared election brochures and publicity material for many of the preferred candidates and in November organised an information night, during which councillors **Power**, Robbins and Shepherd gave advice on campaign strategies.

Cr **Power** said he still did not know who contributed funds to the trust, which was managed by Hickey Lawyers.

He defended the way the money was collected and said the anonymity of both the donors and the candidates ensured there were 'no strings attached'.

"I would have thought having a fund that was dispersed where there was no particular interest in a candidate, where it couldn't come back on that candidate at a later date to say 'I helped you', was in the greater public interest.

"If anyone tried to help my campaign who was less than savoury, or who was in dispute with the council, I told my campaign staff we were not to accept their support."

Cr **Power** defended his involvement and said he believed that the council now featured a core group of people interested in working cohesively and in the best interests of the city.

#### HOW IT UNFOLDED

February 19

The Bulletin reveals David **Power** as one of the **power** bloc players

February, 20

Cr **Power** dismisses the bloc claims as 'conspiracy theories'. "If there's half a million in funds lying around the place could someone let me know, I'd like some too," he said.

"All of the people that are running to the best of my knowledge are completely independent.

"Trying to help candidates in other areas never goes down well with the community, that's why I don't get involved in campaigning for other candidates. I've got enough of my own damn problems."

February 23

Cr **Power** again denies being involved in forming a voting bloc. "Running a factional ticket for the council elections is political suicide."

March 25

Cr **Power** continues to deny involvement in the 'ticket' but admitted to talks with Robina Chamber of Commerce president Lionel Barden about funding a bloc of like-minded councillors.

March 29

Cr **Power** claims there there was not 'a development bloc', just a group of 'like-minded people'.

April 1, 2004

Councillor Eddy Sarroff says the bloc, led by David **Power**, has told councillors they will be 'starved of funds' if they don't vote the bloc's way over key positions on the council. Cr **Power** denies all this absolutely.

**Caption:** David Power

Sue Robbins

Ted Shepherd

Bob La Castra

Jan Grew

Grant Pforr

Greg Betts

Ray Hackwood

Rob Molhoek

**Illus:** Photo

Graphic

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**BIOG:** DAVID POWER

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1THU 15 APR 2004, Page 004**  
**Morgan: We had a brief**

THE man named by Councillor David Power as the king of the bloc yesterday said he was 'just following orders'.

Chris Morgan, of advertising agency Quadrant, denied his leadership tag, saying Lionel Barden signed the cheques.

Mr Morgan said his company was simply employed to perform a service.

He said the suggestion that all money in the trust fund came from developers was not correct.

"I wasn't behind it. I was an independent contractor," said Mr Morgan.

"We are a professional marketing consulting agency. We were employed to do the job.

"Lionel Barden had to give the sign-off on everything, approved everything. He was the trustee.

"The trust was set up in his name; he was the authorising individual. It was administered by Hickeys.

"We were given a brief and we worked to that brief. The brief was to conduct a campaign and assist the individual candidates as required."

Mr Morgan confirmed that Quadrant did work for Roxanne Scott, Greg Betts, Grant Pforr, Brian Rowe and gave strategic advice to Rob Molhoek.

The company also did work for Ted Shepherd but that was in no way linked to the trust fund, said Mr Morgan who has known the Mudgeeraba councillor for many years.

"The whole objective was to prepare a professional campaign.

"Lionel was just basically asked to head up the trust by the individuals concerned."

He did not know whom those people were.

"The implication that it's all developer driven, that's just not correct. I can't give you chapter and verse. It's certainly broad-based community groups, chambers of commerce, developers are definitely in there."

**Library Heading: GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION**  
**BIOG: CHRIS MORGAN**

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1FRI 16 APR 2004, Page 004**  
**Accept umpire's decision and move on, says Clarke**  
**Funds probe clears Pforr**  
**By Alice Jones, council reporter**

COUNCILLOR Grant **Pforr** has been cleared of wrongdoing by the council's solicitors who yesterday found his financial returns were made in line with the law. Mayor Ron Clarke called for councillors to accept the umpire's decision and put an end to personal agendas.

He said it was time for councillors to get on with the job. Cr Clarke had called for an immediate inquiry into councillors' campaign donation returns, in particular Cr **Pforr**'s. That followed revelations that Cr **Pforr** had received \$12,500 from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, sourced from the Gold Coast business community.

Before the election Cr **Pforr** denied on at least two occasions he had taken money from the trust fund, claiming he had funded his own campaign.

But last night, Cr Clarke said the ruling by chief executive officer Dale Dickson and city solicitor David Montgomery was final.

"What can I do? I agree with it," said Cr Clarke, who accepted that, legally, Cr **Pforr** had done as he was required under the Local Government Act.

However, Cr Clarke would not comment on whether Cr **Pforr** had satisfied his moral obligations.

"That's for him. He's got an explanation for it," said Cr Clarke.

"He's got to live with himself, I'm not making a judgment.

"I believe always that people should be upfront with who's supporting them."

The advice given to the Mayor stated that 'at present, within the powers available to council under the Local Government Act, it is my advice that there is no substantive evidence of any description that requires any action by the council'.

The advice relating specifically to Cr **Pforr** advised that 'Cr **Pforr** has lodged an interim return. As such, a final return will be required by Cr **Pforr** within three months of the conclusion of the election'.

Cr **Pforr** declined to comment last night.

"I'm not going to comment to you at all," he said.

"Everything I've said gets taken out of context. I don't think I get a fair go. No comment.

"Until such time as The Bulletin is prepared to print the whole story and the whole truth I'm not going to be talking to any papers."

Cr Eddy Sarroff, who first raised concerns about Cr **Pforr**'s return, said last night that the Paradise Point councillor may not have breached the law but he had breached community trust.

"My view is there was a great deal of concern in the community in relation to the developer-funded slush fund," said Cr Sarroff.

"The question was quite clearly put to the candidates, by The Gold Coast Bulletin, asking them to disclose their campaign donations and Grant **Pforr** chose to mislead the voters before the election by not revealing that funding.

"He was asked at least two times whether he was being funded by that slush fund and he has denied it. "The point that the Mayor makes is he has not breached the Local Government Act, but he has breached the community's trust, he has misled the public, and if the Mayor doesn't ask him to step down the community will."

Cr Clarke called on all councillors to get on with the job.

"There is no place in this council for political point-scoring," he said.

"If there are issues and concerns . . . they must be addressed, without question and without fear or favour.

"If these issues are proved to have no legal grounds, the message is also clear: move forward and work together."

**Caption:** Ron Clarke

Eddy Sarroff

New councillor Grant Pforr, seen with wife Liz, cleared of election funds wrongdoing

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION, DONATIONS,  
INQUIRY

**BIOG:** GRANT PFORR



**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 17 APR 2004, Page 074**  
**Power's passion for politics**  
**By Alice Jones**

He continues to deny any role in a voting bloc designed to control Gold City Council, but there is no doubt David Power is a force to be reckoned with. Alice Jones speaks to the city's new Deputy Mayor.

DAVID Power is a difficult man to describe. Even he finds it tough.

"I can't answer that one," he says after some thought, before going on to say, "I am probably the prime example of what this city is like, beach versus bush. I'm just as at home on a horse in the scrub as I am 10 metres underwater diving.

"I'm a very observant person, contrary to popular belief I can be quite shy - funny about that. "I am excessively, exceptionally loyal, my closest friends are guys I went through school with, even today.

"I can be very forceful and I don't suffer fools gladly.

"The one thing I do hate is injustice, it makes me angry. People accused of things they haven't done, people misrepresented, people trying to do the best they can for the greater good and being demonised for it."

On first meeting, Cr Power comes across as being smooth, confident, polite and very professional.

He is a natural leader, a 41-year-old Sagittarian who enjoys touch football, deep sea diving and spending time with his two sons, Reece, 11, and Travis, 8.

Dig a bit deeper and you discover a more complex person.

Regular dealings with the city's new deputy mayor reveal it is what David Power doesn't say that counts.

Super careful, his guard is rarely down.

Off-the-record and behind closed doors he will reveal with cutting honesty just what he really thinks about some of his colleagues. But if it's on the record he is always cautious.

The only time his guard slips is when the topic turns to his arch-enemy and much-publicised foe Cr Peter Young.

The pair make no secret of their animosity for each other.

Cr Young says it goes back to the 2000 council elections when he unseated Cr Power's mentor, former deputy mayor Col Kleinschmidt. Cr Power denies this.

He accuses Cr Young of having plotted with council aspirant John Wayne to try and unseat him at the recent election.

They were nearly successful.

The close call of the March 27 poll has been a wake-up call for Cr Power.

Although, he is quick to point out, he predicted the race between himself and the graphic designer with the Wild West name would be close.

"I told people weeks before the election, but everyone kept telling me I was stupid, it was going to be me and daylight as it was for every other election," says Cr Power.

"But when you realise that for the last two years I have been tied to this desk and that phone dealing with the planning scheme, it was inevitable I was going to take a big hit.

"Forty per cent of the people who voted in those southern booths, my heartland, have been there less than 12 months."

That's the other thing about Cr Power; he often claims to have known better.

During this one-and-a-half hour interview he notes many issues where he told the experts they were wrong.

He says he told Gold Coast Water officers years ago that the population explosion they predicted for his Coomera/Pimpama division would happen early in 2000, not 2007 as planning predicted.

"I did tell all of our directors about five years ago they had their numbers wrong," he says.

"I was told I didn't know what I was talking about. Surprise, surprise.

"I always knew when the dam burst, it was going to be extraordinary."

The recent election scare has caused Cr Power to reconsider his role in council. He has given up his much-loved chairmanship of the planning and development (north) committee, passing the responsibility to Cr Ted Shepherd, a man Cr Power says can work well with the majority of councillors.

As well as his new deputy mayoral duties, working closely with former Olympic runner Ron Clarke, Cr Power will return to his roots. He wants to get back into his division and reacquaint himself with old contacts and introduce himself to the thousands of new residents who have moved into the area which is the fastest growing in the city.

"There's a lot of people out there who say 'David is too busy doing other things'," he says. Cr Power first entered local government in 1991, then a 28-year-old with long family links to the city's north (he is related on his father's side to Sir Charles Holm). He thought he'd stay for two terms.

Back then Cr Power worked for the family's property maintenance business, which had cleaning contracts for a number of commercial properties.

Previously he had spent many years in the commercial and consumer finance industry, putting to use his degree in accountancy and business management degree.

He moved from Brisbane to the Gold Coast with work in 1987 and bought a seven-acre property at Pimpama.

He became involved in the Multi Function Polis in 1990 and at the behest of local residents he decided to run for council.

"I just wanted to go back to my nice quiet life after that finished but I'd keep having people ask me to run for the Albert Shire," says Cr Power.

"Because it was part-time, I could do both work and be a councillor so I decided to give it a go at the age of 28."

He was successful and became by far the youngest councillor on the then Albert Shire Council which was dominated by men in their 50s, with strong National Party links.

Cr Power enjoyed the company of those men and says they treated him as an equal, in spite of his young age and political naivety.

He has fond memories of his early years in council, and often yearns for the days when councillors respected each other and left the debate in the chamber.

"It was very different, very, very different," he says.

"Yes they were very strong willed people, intelligent and with very clear visions of where they wanted to go.

"I was 28 and the average age of the others was 40s or 50s, yet not one of them ever treated me like I was a kid.

"If you spoke you were given respect, if they disagreed with you they disagreed with your opinion. That's where it was different.

"I had great grounding, great training, you learnt that just because someone disagreed with you they weren't trying to destroy you.

"There was very much the view that once you made a decision collectively you did everything you could to make it work and there certainly wasn't anyone who would deliberately go and mislead or only give half the story just to get a headline.

"When they left the chamber that's where the argument stayed, the camaraderie was very, very good, that's why there was so little turnover in the Albert Shire, it created stability."

Cr Power hopes the latest council - with five newcomers, including the mayor - will mark a return to the good old days.

He has high hopes and so he should, he was instrumental in creating the mix.

Cr Power continues to deny there is a voting bloc, or that he recruited candidates and sourced business-industry funding for their campaigns, but he concedes he helped candidates he believed worthwhile.

It is a murky line between being the instigator, and being the backroom strategist.

In spite of his protestations, many inside and out of the council suspect Cr Power was, and still is, behind the bloc.

Of the new council he says: "I think we have got a damned good bunch of councillors. The new ones in particular, I have had dealings with Rob (Molhoek) going back a few years.

"Grant (Pforr) is one of the most driven people I have ever met, Greg (Betts) I have only met on a couple of occasions but he seems very intelligent, a very nice guy. Susie (Douglas) I don't know very well, but I do know she's always been very passionate about this city.

"I think there's a group of people there who have the ability to debate an issue and leave it in the room and all have a beer afterwards. I just hope that that continues into the future. I hope what we have got now is the forerunner to have harmonious, robust relationships."

While he doesn't say it outright, there's just two small problems remaining with the councillor mix - Peter Young and Dawn Crichlow.

Cr Power admits to helping his good friend Brian Rowe with his big-budget campaign, designed to unseat Cr Young.

The effort was spectacularly unsuccessful, and in spite of the \$60,000-plus budget, Mr Rowe, the former St Stephen's College principal, captured just 35 per cent of the vote, compared to Cr Young's 63 per cent.

Previously unheard of state government staffer Roxanne Scott was the candidate funded to run against Cr Crichlow.

While she was more successful than Mr Rowe, she didn't make it over the line, in spite of the \$30,000 funding from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund and help from both the Labor and Liberal parties.

Of Cr Crichlow's win, Cr Power says: "It was once said to me, 'If Dawn would only use her powers for good she would be the best councillor we have ever seen'.

"Dawn is committed and when she puts her mind to helping someone she does, it's just unfortunate she has to ply this publicity."

When asked if he was upset she was not beaten, he says: "I'm sure she was absolutely devastated I made it across the line."

People who have regular dealings with Cr Power are generally divided - they either love him or hate him.

Many influential people within the business community describe him as the city council's best asset.

Those people not so enamoured with his pro-development leanings, or his methods, are not so glowing in their descriptions.

One thing is definite, Cr Power is a game player.

He is a political animal, who thrives on the behind-the-scenes machinations of a bureaucracy the size of the council.

He admits that in recent years particularly there has been little room in his life for anything but council.

And four years ago he made the ultimate sacrifice - his workload led to the breakdown of his marriage.

He is reluctant to speak about his private life, not wanting to be seen using his personal life for political gain.

Rumours abounded inside and out of the council as to exactly what happened, but he can be coaxed to say only this: "This does take an enormous toll on your private life. Three months after I got into council I got a call at 2am from someone who was inebriated and wanted to complain, 'We've got a homosexual living in the village, what are you going to do about it?' "I said, 'I'm not going to date him if that's what you mean?'"

"That was an eye-opener. That's why in 1995 I took my home number out of the book and made it silent. I used to have people coming up to my place, just driving on to my property and walking up to me wanting a meeting.

"It can be very intrusive."

Add to the workload and intrusions an amalgamation to form the second-largest local authority in the country, and a new planning scheme, and you'll understand why Cr Power's life has been dominated by council for much of the past eight years.

Since dropping his planning committee chairmanship just over a week ago, Cr Power has already noticed a slowdown in telephone calls to his office.

It must have been a tough decision for a man whose true passion is quite obviously town planning and development.

But he says he is confident the new city planning committee, which has amalgamated both the north and south planning committees, in a move which has divided council, is in good hands with Cr Shepherd.

Cr Power says changes have been made to the system to ensure Cr Shepherd is not suffocated by the workload.

"I think as Sue said a couple of weeks ago, sooner or later you have to change," says Cr Power.

"I think it needed fresh blood for planning chair, it needed someone who could work with the majority of councillors.

"Ted has a better ability to work with the majority of councillors. Ted is quite widely recognised, everyone expected him to struggle in his electorate because he's supposedly bombastic.

"I think that change, and all the changes that have occurred, all the senior councillors there seem to be more invigorated, it's given them a new lease on life."

He also believes that working with a new mayor has injected fresh energy into the council. Already, says Cr Power, Mayor Clarke has proven that he is a team player and a communicator.

It was no secret to those who watched the council dealings closely that many of the councillors now aligned with the Power bloc turned on former Mayor Gary Baildon towards the end of the last term.

"I actually believed that Ron was going to win quite some time before the election, I also felt that we needed better communications between the mayor and the councillors," says Cr Power.

"Teamwork, and trying to work together, is critical, it just doesn't work otherwise," he continues.

"It would seem that in the last four years this council has started to stagnate to some degree. I just felt I had an opportunity to try and work with everyone to try and bring the council together.

"My impression of Ron is they are excited, they think they have got someone who really does want to do big things, someone who was prepared to be a team member with them, albeit he's the leader of the team, someone who treats them with respect and equality.

"A lot of us felt we didn't know what Gary was up to, I had comments from ministers at George Street, they made agreements with Gary and then the council wouldn't support the mayor.

"A lot of the time we didn't know what those agreements were. If we can bring that true team feeling in, that to me will make an enormous difference."

Cr Power dismisses the rumours that he is calling the shots and Cr Clarke is just a mere puppet.

"Anyone who thinks that really doesn't know Ron Clarke," he says.

"Ron is a very determined man."

As deputy mayor Cr Power says he plans to be the link between the mayor and the councillors, ensuring that the communication lines are open and free-flowing.

"I want to keep the focus on the greater good," he says.

Cr Power concedes that four years as deputy mayor, under a man who has made it very public he only plans to stay in the top job for one term, puts him in a strong position at the next election.

But Cr Power reveals little about his plans beyond the deputy's job.

"It is something I would have to consider later on in my term," he says.

"I know that a significant number of councillors would, I believe, be supportive, and quite a few would rather see me drop off the face of the earth.

"But first of all I want to get back to my roots with my division, that will make a big difference in my thinking if I can achieve that because I previously had a very, very close relationship with my community."

"It would seem that in the last four years this council has started to stagnate to some degree. I just felt I had an opportunity to try and work with everyone to try and bring the council

together.'

'There was very much the view that once you made a decision collectively you did everything you could to make it work and there certainly wasn't anyone who would deliberately go and mislead or only give half the story just to get a headline.'

**Caption:** Deputy Mayor David Power (left) is looking forward to forging 'harmonious, robust relationships' with members of the Gold Coast's new council, headed up by Ron Clarke

**Illus:** Photo

**BIOG:** DAVID POWER

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1SAT 17 APR 2004, Page 006**  
**Hackwood feels wrath of the bloc**

RAY Hackwood says he is not part of the voting bloc.

In fact, he's already felt the force of its wrath.

He says life at the council headquarters has grown very chilly for him since he was quoted in a newspaper article stating he thought Dawn Crichlow deserved to be chairperson of a council committee.

He now realises that was a fatal mistake in the eyes of the bloc.

He said they had frozen him out since.

It even cost him the chairmanship of his beloved Engineering Services Committee, which will now be chaired by Cr Sue Robbins.

"I have been back benched by the bloc ever since that article," he said. "I was out as chairman of engineering and here I am, the most experienced of all the councillors in engineering, penalised to health.

"It was payback.

"You know when you're in hot water, they don't talk.

He claims that by offering him the chair of the Health Committee, the bloc councillors were 'throwing him a bone'.

Cr Hackwood said he would continue, as he had done for years, to vote independently and in line with what he thought to be for the best of the community.

"Either way I'm not going to be a puppet for anyone," he said.

'It will get hotter in here as it goes on, within a few months we'll have an administrator.'

**Library Heading: GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL**

**BIOG: RAY HACKWOOD**

The Gold Coast Bulletin  
Edition 1SAT 17 APR 2004, Page 006  
Shock for the bloc  
'Voters misled' claims probed  
By by Alice Jones council reporter

QUITE shocking - that's how Local Government Minister Desley Boyle has described claims that some Gold Coast City councillors misled voters in the lead-up to the election. She has assured Gold Coast residents that she takes the allegations concerning the voting bloc and the Lionel Barden Trust Fund 'very seriously' and will ask her staff to investigate. She was responding to a letter sent to her by councillors Dawn Crichlow, Eddy Sarroff and Peter Young, calling on her to investigate the dealings of a voting bloc and its alleged links to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

"My biggest concern is the unfortunate potential that allegations of this nature have to erode ratepayer confidence in local government, not only on the Gold Coast but right throughout Queensland," said Mrs Boyle.

"As concerned as people are, however, it is important to carefully examine the facts of what has occurred.

"The CMC is the appropriate body to consider these claims.

"When we know the facts, I will be asking my department to consider whether any action is necessary under the Local Government Act.

"People's faith in local government is absolutely essential to the ongoing effectiveness of our political system.

"We will now reach some findings based on fact - so people can have confidence in local government."

Crs Crichlow, Sarroff and Young called a news conference yesterday to urge a State Government investigation into the issues surrounding the Gold Coast City Council election. They also issued an ultimatum to some of their colleagues - if you misled the community, step aside - and sent letters to both the Beattie Government and the CMC, outlining perceived breaches of the Local Government Act, contending the community had been misled. The trio argued that, if candidates supported by a business-backed fund had been upfront with voters prior to the March 27 election, the final results would have been different. Their claims are levelled against Crs Grant Pforr, David Power and Bob La Castra, as well as failed candidates Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe - 'the bloc of like-minded councillors and candidates'.

"I don't believe the council can conduct its business running the city efficiently and effectively unless (they) step down immediately and come clean," said Cr Sarroff.

"The community wants to know what they stand for, what they represent and who has funded them; if not, they should step down immediately.

"We are calling on the Local Government Minister to intervene.

"The CMC must investigate. In private enterprise, if you apply for a job and it turns out you have lied to get the job, you would get the sack.

"The community has every right to call for their resignation."

The trio say they will not rest until the 'whole truth' is revealed.

In their letter to Mrs Boyle, penned by Cr Young, they outline the story changes, denials and conflicting stories told by several councillors over the past few months relating to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund (it is understood the inquiry does not relate to Lionel Barden himself nor to the setting up or administering of the fund).

The trio ask the minister to investigate two matters: the alleged misleading of voters and dealings related to trust funds used for political purposes. They quote Section 394 of the Local Government Act 1993 which provides that, during an election period, a person must not print, publish, distribute or broadcast anything that is intended or likely to mislead an elector.

"During the election period considerable speculation existed regarding the existence of a 'ticket' of candidates who had benefited from a highly organised structure that provided considerable political, logistical, financial and marketing support," says their letter to Mrs

Boyle.

"On numerous occasions those candidates suspected of involvement in the 'ticket', and benefiting from the arrangement, repeatedly denied any such circumstance existed." The letter outlines instances when candidates and councillors made conflicting statements in the media.

"We strongly submit that all of these instances, individually and collectively, amount to grossly and deliberately misleading voters," it says. "We are in no doubt whatsoever that, if these denials and misleading statements had not been made, the outcome of the election would have differed.

"This is a very serious and legitimate concern of the community. Consequently we urge your investigation of the matter, and referral to the appropriate agency(ies) for necessary action." The letter goes on to urge the minister to authorise a complete review of any trust funds used for political purposes in the Gold Coast City Council election.

Such a review should identify who donated, the sums donated, when they were made and how they were distributed.

"This will help relieve very considerable public concern about the transparency and independence of council decisions, and particularly the involvement of certain councillors in the decision-making processes."

Cr Crichlow says a 1991 CJC inquiry into the results of the 1988 council election recommended a raft of changes - not introduced - relating to non-disclosure, including one year's jail for guilty councillors.

Cr Crichlow said yesterday that she would support jail for some of her colleagues if a CMC investigation found they had breached the law.

She had already been interviewed by the CMC for two hours and was waiting to hear more.

Cr Crichlow conceded that she had taken developer donations towards her campaign but said the difference was that she made that public prior to the election.

Quotes worthy of consideration

THE extracts (from Gold Coast Publications, The Bulletin and The Sun) sent to Desley Boyle by Councillors Crichlow, Sarroff and Young.

\* Funding their own election campaigns:

Grant Pforr (Division 3) said he was funding his campaign. "I am strongly of the belief that campaign funds should be open and accountable, and the public should know before the election where campaign funds have come from," he said. (Gold Coast Sun February 18)  
Candidate Grant Pforr said he was an independent funding his own campaign. (Gold Coast Bulletin February 26)

Roxanne Scott said she was unaware of such a ticket. "If they want to give me money, they'd better hurry up," she said. (GCB February 26)

Grant Pforr: "I have funded my own campaign . . . I do strongly believe in candidates declaring all funds." (GCB March 26)

\* That they had no knowledge of the existence of trust funds for political purposes:

Cr Power dismissed the claims as 'conspiracy theories' and said he would welcome any funding to help his own campaign. "To the best of my knowledge most people are having problems raising funds. All of the people who are running, to the best of my knowledge, are completely independent." (GCB February 20)

"I can say that I am paying my own campaign funding and there are no slush funds that I know about," he said. (GCB March 25)

**Caption:** Crs Dawn Crichlow, Eddy Sarroff and Peter Young ask for a CMC inquiry

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL ELECTION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPT



**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition 1MON 19 APR 2004, Page 009**  
**Boykambil residents voice fears over Hope Island works**  
**Pfarr: My vote will be honest**  
**By Carly Hennessy**

FLEDGLING councillor Grant **Pfarr** says he will leave the council chambers when voting involves developers who contributed to his campaign fund.

Cr **Pfarr** has become embroiled in controversy after admitting his election campaign was funded partially by developers.

He had denied the claims repeatedly to The Bulletin .

He has admitted to accepting \$10,000 from Fish Developments, which is selling land at a Hope Island canal development.

He has also admitted accepting money from a trust fund set up for a bloc of candidates at the council election.

After a meeting with Boykambil residents yesterday, Cr **Pfarr** told The Bulletin he considered it appropriate to withdraw if he felt there was a conflict of interest.

About 50 residents gathered on The Esplanade to protest the canal development.

The residents fear it will take away their stretch of beach on The Broadwater.

They worry that when the canal opening is completed, it would slash the beach from about 70m long to a mere 18m.

However, Cr **Pfarr** said the alignment of the canal would make the beach 50m long.

Residents expressed delight that Cr **Pfarr** turned up to yesterday's public meeting because they said they felt under-represented on the council.

"He's answered our questions satisfactorily this morning," said resident Doug Davis.

A progress association was being formed to push the concerns of the residents.

For some, the question remains whether Cr **Pfarr** will vote for the community or part of the so-called power bloc.

Mr Davis said he was willing to give Cr **Pfarr** a chance.

"All we can do is wait and see what his performance is like," he said.

"After this morning, if what he said is true, then we shouldn't be worried.

"But we'll definitely be keeping the pressure on him."

Cr **Pfarr** said after the meeting he was keen to represent the community: "I will work with any developer, any business, any community group."

"That's why I'm here today . . . I think I have managed to dispel their concerns," he said.

Cr **Pfarr**'s answer to questions about the so-called voting bloc was that he would be independent.

"If I have received money from a developer (and it comes to a vote) I think I will step away," he said. But Cr Dawn Crichlow questioned some councillors' ability to identify accurately the source of contributions if they had not been declared fully to the electorate.

"How can he leave the room if he doesn't know who gave (the money) to him?" she said.

One funding source in question is the Lionel Barden Trust fund, which was set up with contributions from at least two developers.

The identity of most contributors has not been made public.

On April 8, The Bulletin published an interim report, submitted by Cr **Pfarr**, which identified donations.

The report said he received \$23,150 from six people, including \$12,500 from Hickey Lawyers, which kept the Lionel Barden Trust fund, and \$10,000 from Fish Developments.

Local Government Minister Desley Boyle has promised to investigate the dealings of a voting bloc and its alleged links to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

Esplanade resident Carol Peach said the council needed to distance itself from development.

She said long-term Hope Island residents were trying to come to accept there would be more than 14,000 new neighbours in the next few years.

"We feel the whole island has been raped," she said.

"Residents shouldn't be left on the sidelines because developers want to make lots of money."

**Caption:** Children Katlin Wooden, 3, and Jessica McCann, 3, enjoy time in Boykambil Park on Hope Island (left) while the adults discuss a Hope Island canal development with Cr Grant Pforr (below).

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Michael Batterham

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL DONATIONS

**BIOG:** GRANT PFORR

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 21 APR 2004, Page 007**  
**Young muscled out admits Shepherd**  
By MERILYN MacKENZIE

THE Gold Coast City Council's powerbrokers schemed to prevent Cr Peter Young from gaining control over a city planning committee a senior councillor has admitted. The new City Planning Committee chairman Cr Ted Shepherd admitted the city's planning south and planning north committees were combined to prevent Cr Young from chairing a pivotal committee.

"I thought Peter Young would try and dominate the planning agendas and I thought it is not good for council," said Cr Shepherd.

He said the idea to cut Cr Young from out of the picture by combining the committees was first mentioned to him by the city's Chief Executive Officer Dale Dickson.

"When the idea was given to me - and I think it was Dale who first mentioned about combining the committee - I said OK."

He said when Cr David Power announced he would be running for the deputy mayor's job and vacating the chairmanship of planning north Cr Young had been the obvious choice for that committee.

But Cr Shepherd said fellow councillors were concerned Cr Young didn't have what it took to negotiate with powerful developers.

Cr Young, who has a double arts major, has been a strong advocate for environmentally sustainable development.

However, he also has a long history of angry feuds with the city's new deputy mayor Cr Power over planning approvals for developments in the north of the city.

Cr Young has said Cr Shepherd's admission the decision was political was proof there had never been any logical argument for combining the planning north and south committees.

"This political agenda has taken precedence over the best interests of the city," said Cr Young.

"I also suspect that the influence that these councillors want to exercise will ensure that the number of matters which come before them will be reduced."

Cr Young said council planning bureaucrats had openly told him they did not support the combining of two planning committees into one but they had to comply.

Cr Young said the community wanted greater scrutiny of development applications but increasing the workload for a committee would have the opposite effect.

**Caption:** Cr Ted Shepherd

Cr Peter Young  
Illus: Photo

**The Gold Coast Bulletin**  
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**"Council will not survive 100 days"**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

THE new **Gold Coast City Council** will not survive its first 100 days without intervention by an administrator.

That's the dire prediction of maverick councillors Eddy Sarroff and Dawn Crichlow who claim the council is not acting with the best interests of residents at heart.

They say a voting bloc of so-called 'like-minded' councillors has hijacked the council agenda. Animosity and tensions between the councillors were obvious during yesterday's first meeting of the co-ordination committee, which has all 15 councillors on its membership.

Throughout the two-hour meeting there was much eye-rolling, note-passing, snickering and whispered comments shared by many of the councillors.

When councillors rumoured to make up the voting bloc voted together on a planning matter, Cr Crichlow called out: "That's the bloc."

Cr Robbins accused Crs Crichlow and Sarroff of having taken money from developers.

Finally Cr Jan Grew stood and demanded that Mayor Ron Clarke order Cr Sarroff to apologise for a comment she heard him make.

"I understood the new council was going to be very conscious about conduct and Cr Sarroff has just insulted me quite inappropriately. I would ask him to apologise," she said.

Cr Sarroff said: "This is a waste of time. It's been happening left, right and centre. I don't have anything to say."

Cr Grew said: "I believe when another councillor says to me, 'At least I make sense' that is a direct insult and I request an apology. Cr Crichlow has just said 'It's the truth'. This is not appropriate.

"If we are to go into this new four-year term as a dignified council this sort of play-acting, shenanigans and rudeness has got to stop.

"It's not adult, not grown up and it's quite wrong. I ask for an apology from both of them."

Cr Sarroff made a vague sort of apology but Cr Crichlow said she had nothing to apologise for.

The actions of the council are being watched closely by both the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Local Government Minister Desley Boyle, following complaints by councillors and the public. A CMC spokesman said a complaint lodged by Cr Dawn Crichlow was being assessed to decide whether it fell within the CMC's jurisdiction.

Cr Sarroff said he wanted to give the ministers and the CMC time to investigate but felt that until councillors put aside personal differences the council would not operate effectively.

"If councillors' loyalties are going to be to each other rather than the community then we shouldn't last 100 days," he said.

Cr Crichlow agreed.

"The bloc has taken control. I think they will appoint an administrator," she said.

"So many people have sent e-mails, written submissions to the minister, she must step in.

"I have no problem with a few insults. We used to have a lot of fun but now it's personal. It's not working, it's out of control."

Mayor Ron Clarke said the council had nothing to fear and he was confident that once a new Code of Conduct 'with teeth' was introduced there would be no more problems.

"There's no reason why the council shouldn't last," he said.

**Library Heading: GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL**

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 28 APR 2004, Page 009**  
**'D-Day' nearing for council bloc**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

D-DAY - the D stands for Donation - is Monday, June 28.

That's the day Gold Coast ratepayers will know exactly who donated money via a slush fund to the group of so-called 'like minded' individuals in the March 27 Gold Coast City Council election.

It's also a date by which Cr Eddy Sarroff is predicting an administrator will be called in to run council affairs.

Right now, those behind the trust funds are not talking.

When the Gold Coast Sun asked entrepreneur Lionel Barden - who put his name on a trust fund administered through Hickey Lawyers - who were the colleagues and friends that asked him to put his name to a Trust Fund, Mr Barden declined to comment.

He has also declined to comment on who put funds into the account.

The Sun also asked solicitor Mal Chambers, whose firm has also been named by unsuccessful candidate Roxanne Scott, questions about his trust fund.

"Mr Chalmers is not at liberty to discuss this issue," said a spokesman for the Palm Beach solicitor.

Developer Brian Ray has admitted to putting funds into the Lionel Barden Trust Fund and also alleged that money was dropped into the account by another developer, Soheil Abedian. The push for the 'like minded' candidates came from various Gold Coast Chambers of Commerce, including Nerang, Southport, Robina and the northern chamber at Paradise Point, which were concerned by the lack of new major projects and slow approval processes taken by council.

Ian Solomon from Southport chamber and Bob Janssen from Nerang defended the concept of 'like minded' candidates.

Both attended the inaugural meeting of the new Gold Coast City Council when councillors were sworn in.

"If we had our time over again I think we would have done things differently," said Mr Solomon.

Those who have admitted taking funds, estimated at around \$75,000 from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund (Mr Barden is a former president of the Robina chamber), include new councillors Grant Pforr and Greg Betts and unelected candidates Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe.

Mr Betts declared taking \$12,000 prior to the election.

However, despite consistently telling the media prior to the March 27 poll that he was funding his own campaign, Cr Pforr admitted in his register of campaign donations, a requirement of the Local Government Act, 10 days after the election that he took money from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

He also admitted to taking \$10,000 off developer, John Fish.

The register of campaign donations reveals that Cr Pforr took the funds from the Lionel Barden slush fund on January 29 and February 29, respectively two months and one month before the election.

Under Section 430 the Local Government Act 'third party' gifts have to be declared before the end of three months to the chief executive office of the council involved.

Secrecy involving both the funds, who donated them, and the subsequent denials that a 'bloc' of like-minded individuals existed, and that a 'slush fund' was in existence, seem certain to hound the new council for months to come.

The Crime and Misconduct Commission is investigating the issue following complaints from Crs Eddy Sarroff, Dawn Crichlow and Peter Young.

"They will not make 100 days - they have taken a lot of dirty money," said Cr Sarroff during a break in Friday's council meeting.

"If I do not have a job I will survive - and my wife (Leanne Sarroff, who is expecting the couple's fourth child) will be the happiest person on Earth," he said.

``I feel very uncomfortable when they are voting.

``It (this council) will not last 100 days because the councillors are loyal to each other and not the community."`

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainSAT 01 MAY 2004, Page 003**  
**Bloc flexes muscles on \$140m cuts**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

THE Gold Coast City Council bloc flexed its muscles yesterday to cut development charges in a major industrial area after boycott threats from developers.

A motion, backed by Deputy Mayor David Power, to discount \$140 million worth of infrastructure costs was successful, despite opposition from Mayor Ron Clarke and his 'green sheriff', Peter Young.

Gold Coast Water director Shaun Cox told councillors that the reduction would not cost the council money.

What was being proposed was a reduction of the infrastructure planned for the area.

This follows an investigation which found that local businesses used less water than had been estimated.

Councillors were told that under the old infrastructure charges system, developers in the area had paid \$53,000 in charges per hectare. It jumped to \$126,000 per hectare but the council yesterday dropped it back to \$79,000 per hectare.

Mr Cox said the proposal would lead to a significant reduction in water use by the businesses of 20 megalitres

a day. The reduction in charges followed strong lobbying of Cr Power by industrial businesses operating in the Yatala estate.

They told Cr Power that the city council's new charges, struck following extensive community consultation, made the area unviable and uncompetitive when compared with industrial estates in Brisbane, Ipswich, Beaudesert and Logan.

Cr Power warned the council that the anticipated 35,000 jobs that would be created in the 3000ha estate would be lost to the city if the council did not heed the developers' calls.

But councillors Young and Eddy Sarroff feared that if council bureaucrats had 'got it wrong' and under-estimated the future water and sewerage demands of the area, residents would be left to foot the bill to upgrade the infrastructure.

Cr Young called for no change to be made until an independent analysis had been undertaken.

"We are dealing here with a proposal to reduce very significantly the requirement for contributions for infrastructure through various part so the city," he said.

"I don't want it to be interpreted that I am discrediting the officers.

"The charges were established after extensive community consultation. If they are going to be changed we should go back to the community, go back to the ratepayers."

Cr Power claimed councillors Young and Sarroff had committed themselves to a position before they had read the report.

"We had councillors Young and Sarroff committing themselves . . . in spite of the fact that we have overwhelming evidence from the officers that it's defensible, it's provable and it's fair," he said.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL APPLICATION, DEVELOPMENT

**Gold Coast Sun**  
**Edition 1 - GC Sun NorthWED 05 MAY 2004, Page 007**  
**Integrity was put at risk, says Chamber**  
By MURRAY HUBBARD

SOME Gold Coast Chambers of Commerce put their integrity at risk by becoming involved in the council election, said Tony White, president of the Northern Chamber.

Mr White, president of the Paradise Point-based chamber, said he was approached by Western Chambers and Nerang Chamber President, Bob Janssen to get involved in a campaign to unseat Mayor Gary Baildon and Cr Peter Young.

"I knew what was going on with this bloc but decided against going in with it," he said.

"Our Chamber did not support the so called like-minded candidates - our job is to look after business, not be involved in politics."

Mr Janssen said the Gold Coast Combined Chambers met and decided individual chambers could decide to become involved in the campaign or stay out.

"The reason we opposed Peter Young was we are looking at a great infrastructure of nature-based tourism.

"Because of our fight over the rainforest interpretive centre and other matters... it was in our interests to find a candidate to support our point of view.

"And we did that. Not only was Tony invited, they were all invited."

Mr Janssen said the chambers decided they would not interfere with what other chambers were doing.

He said the Western Chambers had an eco-tourism forum late last year that was assisted by a \$6000 donation from a philanthropic fund set up by Ron Clarke.

"We also applied to the council for funding and during council debate Gary (Baildon) said, 'Should we be supporting a fringe element group of this type', referring to the Western Chambers.

"That went over like a lead balloon... did he think that we, in the western area of the city, don't count.

"He offended 1000 business people.

"Plus the fact the chambers were not much in favour of the light rail... we saw it as a waste of money and that sort of money could be better spent.

"It was not to get Gary... it was time for a change.

Mr Janssen said when candidates were approached it was with questions on issues.

"We were not dealing with a person as such, but with a policy of that person.

"We are a lobby group, lobbying for a cause and if we say we are apolitical, then we are ineffective."

Mr Janssen said the Western Chambers had been working on the 'quiet alternative' proposal for the past two and a half years and next Tuesday would release plans for how to promote the Gold Coast and how to promote eco-tourism or nature-based tourism.

"The result could be thousands of jobs, and that's what we have been working on for two and a half years.

"That's why we are opposed to the philosophies put out by Cr Young.

"That's why the Western Chambers became involved. We needed people to make decisions."

The Northern Chamber has several players from the recent election as members.

They include Mayor Cr Ron Clarke, Cr Rob Molhoek, Cr Grant Pforr and Anne Bennett who stood against Cr Pforr in the race to replace former deputy mayor, Alan Rickard.

Mr White said he was approached by Bob Janssen from the Nerang Chamber of Commerce who allegedly stated they were anti Crs Baildon and Young.

"We were dead against it - I blatantly refused, as did our committee," he said.

"We are not here to play politics, there was no way we would be involved."

Mr White said he had 'had a go' at Southport Chamber of Commerce President, Ian Solomon and Mr Janssen.

"I told them they were putting the chambers' integrity at risk," he said.

"We have to be above this stuff - not get involved."



Mr White said he did not have a problem with individuals who were chamber members getting involved in political campaigns, but they should be independent.

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainWED 05 MAY 2004, Page 010**  
**Residents pay for poison pen stunt**  
**By by Alice Jones council reporter**

NEWSLETTERS funded by ratepayers are being used as publicity tools by some councillors. Crs David Power, Ted Shepherd, Bob La Castra and Sue Robbins have used their latest council newsletters to criticise the media attention given to their actions before and after the recent elections.

They have denied the existence of a power bloc in council and say the media speculation was 'creative writing' rather than fact.

Cr Power, who has a reputation for 'Bulletin bashing' via his newsletter, told residents that The Gold Coast Bulletin incorrectly claimed councillors had voted themselves a \$10,000 pay rise.

"Well it is the start of a new term and already we see The Gold Coast Bulletin up to its usual tactics," wrote Cr Power.

"Let me state unequivocally and absolutely that this is a total fabrication. The only thing that council has voted on is for a report to be brought forward in an attempt to take the responsibility of setting our own pay out of our own hands.

"The second example of the intentions of The Gold Coast Bulletin saw the headlines on Thursday, 15 April, 2004 claiming that I had 'confessed to a bloc' and 'we had to stop the greenies'. Once again a total fabrication.

"As for a bloc that would blindly stampede regardless of the reason, it is simply the creation of minds that have an agenda that does not necessarily coincide with the best outcomes for our city."

Cr Bob La Castra included a segment in his newsletter titled 'Recent Media Fact or Fiction'. He said he was not, and has not, been involved in any voting bloc or 'power bloc' in council. "No bloc has ever existed in my seven years as councillor, and no bloc exists today," he wrote.

"Eighty per cent of councillors work very well together, ninety per cent of the time.

"I believe that in this, my third term, this council under new Mayor Ron Clarke has the ingredients to be the most united council that I have experienced.

"I believe the council can do great things to move this city forward, despite a minority of detractors within, and the constant media reports."

What Cr La Castra failed to tell his residents was that colleague Cr Sue Robbins and failed council candidate Roxanne Scott both told the media he was involved in a business-backed push to gain control of the council.

Cr Robbins told The Bulletin that Cr La Castra had 'found' Mrs Scott to run against Cr Dawn Crichlow in Division Six.

Following the election, Mrs Scott told a reporter that Cr La Castra had helped her to source funding, via the trust, for her high-profile and expensive campaign. Cr La Castra denied, and continues to deny, any involvement.

In his newsletter, Cr Ted Shepherd said his new role as city planning committee chairman was like a state parliamentarian being made head of a ministry.

"Same job, same person, just more responsibilities," he wrote.

He dismissed suggestions of a council voting bloc as 'media hype'. "Let me assure you that this is totally untrue," he wrote.

"As we all saw in the lead-up to the election, the media, public and business people were calling on council to become more united in its dealing with city issues and to stop the bickering.

"They suggested that voters should consider voting for candidates who could work together as a team in the interests of progressing our wonderful city.

"In my opinion, the electors of the city have spoken.

"You have elected your chosen councillors and now expect us to get on with the job.

"No bickering, no in-fighting, no lack of direction or decision-making."

Cr Sue Robbins, who initially denied helping candidates funded by the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, told residents the recent election campaign was the 'dirtiest' she had ever experienced. Cr Robbins, who changed her story two days before the election and admitted coaching new Cr Greg Betts, wrote 'many lies were told, especially during the last week of the election campaign'.

"A great deal of miss information (sic) was distributed throughout the media and via my opposition, some of which has been referred to my solicitor," she wrote.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainFRI 01 OCT 2004, Page 005**  
**Cracks in council power bloc**  
**By by Peter Gleeson chief reporter**

CRACKS are surfacing in the so-called 'power bloc', which has ostracised two of its founding members, councillors Rob Molhoek and Greg Betts.

The bloc met for drinks last week, but members did not invite the Burleigh-based Cr Betts. His Parkwood colleague Cr Molhoek, is also on the outer after suggesting that his colleagues, Cr David Power and Cr Jan Grew, should not be flying business class on council duties. The bloc is led by the Deputy Mayor Cr Power, and comprises Cr Grew, Cr Ted Shepherd, Cr Grant Pforr and Cr Bob La Castra.

Cr Sue Robbins and Cr Ray Hackwood are often persuaded to vote with the bloc but say they are not part of any formal alignment.

Cr Molhoek, who was elected to the finance committee chair despite being a first-term councillor, said yesterday he was not part of any group and was determined to 'walk down the middle of all this'.

"I think there are two blocs. Dawn (Crichlow), Eddy (Saroff) and Peter (Young) are the mini bloc," he said.

"I want to look at every issue on its merits and I want to stay out of an alignment with any group."

Before the city council election, The Bulletin revealed that developer Brian Ray and other businessmen were behind the big-budget campaigns of a group of council candidates planning to form a voting bloc. A trust fund was set up and administered by a Gold Coast law firm, dispensing tens of thousands of dollars to candidates.

Cr Molhoek said the factionalism within the council was 'clearly a result of old feelings among councillors'.

**Caption:** Rob Molhoek

Greg Betts

**Illus:** Photo

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - Main WED 01 DEC 2004, Page 024**  
**Dawn calls for CMC probe on exemption**  
**Sunland under fire over rate discount**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

THE Crime and Misconduct Commission has been asked to investigate the city council after it gave one of the Gold Coast's biggest development companies a rates discount of almost \$14,000, under unusual circumstances.

The Sunland Group was given a \$13,800 discount on its rates bill, even though it paid the \$86,000 fee late, after Mayor Ron Clarke intervened on Sunland's behalf.

Under council rules, rate discounts are not given unless the bill is paid on time.

Cr Dawn Crichlow fired off a letter to the CMC this week asking for the matter to be looked into, claiming it was unethical.

"It is a massive precedent, I've never seen anything like this," she said yesterday.

"It shouldn't have happened."

Last week, councillors agreed that due to 'exceptional circumstances', the company, headed by Soheil Abedian, should be granted a rates reprieve for Circle on Cavill, under construction in Surfers Paradise.

The discount amounted to \$13,822 in Sunland's case.

Council officers had previously ordered the giant developer, responsible for Q1, to pay the extra 10 per cent, fearing an exception would open the floodgates.

Sunland appealed four times but was rejected because its \$86,045 rates bill had been paid nearly a month late.

Sunland then contacted Cr Clarke's office, and the Mayor requested the developer be given the discount.

Cr Clarke said he had not intervened to try to obtain a discount for any other ratepayers, but Sunland's case was exceptional.

"It was partly our fault because we delivered the notice to the wrong place," he said.

"These people have paid something like 12,000 bills on time in the last four years, so it was one of those exceptions we felt was fair enough."

Mr Abedian said it was not the money, but the principle.

"We moved from Level 18 to Level 14, and it was sent to that level, even though the address had been changed with the council," he said.

"It's not the money. It would cost us that much in time to fight it. It's the principle."

He said he intended to give the sum back to the council and ask it be donated to a charity.

In their report on the matter, officers urged councillors to make Sunland pay.

"If council was to open up the ability for allowance of discount (when rates were paid late), the precedent . . . would negate the incentive for the ratepayer to pay their rates on time," it read.

In January, the rates notice for Circle on Cavill was sent to Sunland's business address, rather than its postal address, and the developers did not realise the bill was outstanding.

Finance chairman Cr Rob Molhoek said Sunland was a great corporate citizen which had paid thousands of rates bills on time and gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to charity each year.

"When they realised they hadn't paid this one, they drew up the cheque that very day," he said.

He said the case was not the only exemption because he had organised for an elderly lady to get a \$86.44 discount despite paying her bill late.

**Caption:** Soheil Abedian

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL RATES, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, SUNLAND GROUP

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainTHU 02 DEC 2004, Page 005**  
**Lambs silent on 'no conflict' calls**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

COUNCILLORS who were backed by developers during the March election campaign have not been declaring a conflict of interest at meetings.

Since May, in the planning committee alone, rookie councillors Greg Betts and Grant **Pforr** have voted on several occasions without announcing they have a potential conflict.

Although the pair received money from the Lionel Barden Trust fund, they have not put up their hands when matters involving developers who contributed to the fund have arisen.

When questioned by The Bulletin about the matter, Cr **Pforr** said: "I don't have time for this."

Cr **Pforr** said he was not aware which developers contributed to the fund, even though their names have been widely published.

He said he always declared his interest when matters arose regarding developer John Fish, who donated \$10,000 to his campaign.

In April, Cr **Pforr** told The Bulletin he planned to step away when voting involved any developer who contributed to his campaign fund, but during planning meetings, neither Cr **Pforr** nor Cr Betts have declared an interest when voting on matters involving the Sunland Group, Villa World and several Stockland developments.

All three developers contributed to the fund, which supported the campaigns of councillors Betts and **Pforr** and failed candidates Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe.

Cr Peter Young said it was important that councillors raised the issue of contributions on every occasion so their position was clear.

"It's up to them whether it's a conflict . . ." he said.

He raised the issue at a recent council meeting when councillors voted on whether one of the fund contributors, the Sunland Group, should receive a rates discount.

Cr **Pforr** remained silent, while Cr Betts decided not to vote and left the room.

His exit should have left the vote deadlocked at 6-6, but Cr **Pforr** and Deputy Mayor David Power reversed their stance, voting the discount be allowed.

Cr **Pforr** later said he was not aware that the Sunland Group had contributed to the fund.

Cr Betts said he was aware of the contribution and decided not to vote 'to play it safe'.

Contributions to the fund were made by Great Southern Land, the Ray Group, Greg Phillips, the Sunland Group, Phil Sullivan Island Quays, Fish Developments, Devine, Rapcivic, the Roche Group, Villa World, the Ingles Group, Blue Sky Capital and Stockland Developments.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL DONATIONS

Chip and the bloc  
Mayor's voting figures say it all  
By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter

MAYOR Ron Clarke and other councillors have insisted for months that there is no developer bloc.

But, unfortunately for the Mayor, his very own figures speak for themselves.

An analysis of voting patterns, compiled by Cr Clarke's research assistant, yesterday revealed that members of the so-called bloc vote together up to 99 per cent of the time.

"I guess I've got egg on my face," said Cr Clarke yesterday. "But it still shows two extremes - I've confirmed that there is a chip."

In his Bulletin column on Saturday, Cr Clarke claimed councillors Peter Young, Eddy Sarroff and Dawn Crichlow 'voted together as a team almost without exception'.

"I have taken the trouble to research council resolutions . . . who did, most consistently, vote with whom?" he wrote. "Surprise, surprise! The winners by far were the three esteemed councillors, who shouted so loudly about the supposed bloc.

"No other combination of councillors came close to agreeing with each other with anywhere near the same regularity."

But Cr Clarke's figures, which he asked The Bulletin to analyse, contradict those claims.

They do show that Young, Sarroff and Crichlow - named 'the chip off the bloc' by Cr Clarke - vote together regularly, up to 87 per cent of the time. However, that voting pattern pales in comparison with the other bloc's.

Since the March elections, when a voting division has been called, Deputy Mayor David Power, Cr Jan Grew, Cr Ted Shepherd, Cr Bob La Castra, Cr Grant Pforr and Cr Ray Hackwood have voted together up to 99 per cent of the time.

Some councillors, such as Cr La Castra and Cr Hackwood, vote together as often as 99 per cent of the time, while Cr Grew and Cr Power vote together 97 per cent of the time.

Cr Greg Betts, whose campaign took donations from the Lionel Barden Fund which resulted in accusations of a developer bloc, has strayed slightly from the pack, voting with bloc members from 78 to 84 per cent of the time.

Cr Clarke yesterday admitted he had made a mistake with the voting patterns because he had not allowed for factors such as absenteeism.

The Mayor voted with bloc members from 80 to 89 per cent of the time, with 'chip' members from 41 to 50 per cent of the time, and with splinters (the most neutral councillors, Rob Molhoek, Daphne McDonald and Susie Douglas) from 60 to 76 per cent of the time.

In compiling the figures, every councillor was paired with each of their colleagues, and the number of times each pair voted the same way were added up.

Percentages were calculated for each pairing, with absentees taken into account.

The statistics only referred to the occasions when councillors called for a division on a particular vote (there were 125 divisions in total). More often than not during council meetings, a division is not called and the individual votes are not recorded.

Cr Power said he rarely discussed voting issues with other councillors prior to meetings and claimed the voting pattern merely showed he shared similar philosophies with a group of his colleagues. It was 'unfortunate' that the voting patterns of other council resolutions had not been recorded.

"If the figures showed the general vote, it would give a completely different picture," he said.

"Divisions are usually called on contentious issues. It's probably on the big issues that people start to crystallise a (group) philosophy rather than running with their individual philosophy."

Cr Young also said he rarely talked with Cr Crichlow and Cr Sarroff regarding votes, but said he was not surprised by the figures, although they were limited. "Ron Clarke believes that if you keep saying, 'there is no bloc', it will disappear," he said. "But this is the real thing."

Since taking over the city, Cr Clarke has consistently claimed that the only alliance in council

was 'the chip'.

In October, he told a Robina Chamber of Commerce breakfast that the bloc was an invention of the media.

"It's a pity because councillors like Power, Shepherd, Grew, Robbins (since deceased), La Castra - these people are independent thinkers," he said. Later that day he told The Bulletin 'the only bloc in there is the bloc of three'.

'I guess I've got egg on my face . . . but it still shows two extremes - I've confirmed that there is a chip'

**Illus:** Graphic

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL COUNCILLORS



**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news THU 11 AUG 2005, Page 013**  
**Protesters accuse council of steamrolling**  
**By Tuck Thompson**

**\* THE RESIDENTS**

HOPE Island's land use plan restricts buildings to three storeys and density to 25 dwellings per hectare.

Yet advertisements have been running that claim 45 dwellings per hectare and buildings up to 10 storeys are "anticipated" for approval by the Gold Coast City Council.

Community groups, from Beenleigh to the NSW border, are concerned that plans are being rammed through the pro-development council.

With more than 1000 members, the Hope Island Residents and Traders organisation is one of the largest on the Coast.

Spokeswoman Tracey Hawkins said the group felt betrayed by their councillor's perceived subservience to developers.

"It will be years before the next council election. How much damage can these guys do to the Gold Coast in the meantime?," she asked.

Cr Grant Pforr received \$10,000 from Hope Island developer John Fish and \$35,000 from a developer fund before his election last year.

When Ms Hawkins asked Cr Pforr if he was representing the people who elected him, he sent her a curt reply. "I take great offence to what I consider a negative and inaccurate inference in your letter regarding my ethics and honesty," he wrote.

Cr Pforr said council could not control what people advertise or put in their applications.

He said council was urging a "traditional urban design" for Hope Island and a "clear and transparent process" would be followed.

He pledged to abstain from voting on Mr Fish's application, which he said was one of 15 put forward.

Ms Hawkins runs a store in the Marina Shopping Village and gains new customers with each home constructed. But she sees overdevelopment as a threat to the quality of life.

Hope Island is expected to grow from 5000 to 20,000 residents -- but residents are concerned the changes would push the population to 30,000.

**Caption:** LIVING on Hope . . . store owner Tracey Hawkins is campaigning against overdevelopment on Hope Island.

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** James Robertson

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, GOLD COAST, BUILDINGS, HOUSING HOME UNITS

**Column:** News Extra

**Section:** NEWS

**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news THU 11 AUG 2005, Page 001**  
**Developers infiltrate council**  
**By Greg Stolz and Tuck Thompson**

**COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE**

- \* SECRET POLL FUND FOR LIKE-MINDED CANDIDATES
- \* HEIGHT AND DENSITY REGULATIONS RELAXED
- \* CORRUPTION CLAIMS REFERRED TO THE CMC

PROPERTY developers who donated to the election campaigns of some Gold Coast councillors are accused of benefiting from council decisions worth millions of dollars. The Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission is investigating claims that concessions are being given to, or sought by, developers who donated to last year's Gold Coast council election.

The donations included cash to a secret fund which bankrolled campaigns of "like-minded" councillors.

Concessions such as height and density relaxations, rates discounts, favourable appeal settlements, and moves to wind back infrastructure charges have created widespread anger among Gold Coast community groups who believe the council has been hijacked by pro-development forces.

Former Criminal Justice Commission chairman Max Bingham -- head of a 1991 public inquiry into developer donations to the Gold Coast council -- said yesterday that it was probably time for another full-scale inquiry.

"You would have to be very sceptical and cynical about the motivations of the developers," Sir Max said.

"These things, like police corruption, tend to be cyclical and and I would not be surprised if it wasn't time for another inquiry. Human nature doesn't change and the temptations now (for developers to curry favour with councillors) are probably even greater."

Cr Dawn Crichlow, who has served on the council for 15 years, said she had witnessed preferential treatment for developers.

"Decisions are not being made in the best interest of the public," Cr Crichlow said.

"Councillors are not operating independently."

The CMC is investigating election campaign donations and the voting patterns of councillors since the election.

Helensvale Residents Association president Phil Gray said a full inquiry was the only way to expose the truth.

"People are not anti-development. What they don't want is poorly regulated development that favours the few," Mr Gray said.

Councillors who shared in \$150,000 in campaign donations from the so-called Common Sense Fund -- headed by Gold Coast Liberal Party figure Lionel Barden -- have not been declaring a conflict when voting on development applications.

The identities of fund donors have been made public since the election.

The CMC is looking into the fund and allegations it deceptively financed a "highly organised and well-supported team" of pro-development councillors.

But Local Government Minister Desley Boyle is defying the call for a public inquiry like the one that led to the sacking of the neighbouring Tweed Shire Council in NSW. The Tweed council was replaced by an administrator after a push by developers to wrest control of the council.

Ms Boyle has referred allegations of misconduct and corruption against the council to the CMC.

She said yesterday that continuing community concern had prompted her to write to the CMC to ask that the investigation be "both thorough and timely".

"I will act on the recommendations of the CMC," she said.

The bulk of the allegations are contained in a 32-page dossier compiled by self-styled independent councillor Peter Young. Ms Boyle sent the dossier to the CMC last month.

Cr Young said there were strong similarities between the Tweed and Gold Coast election campaigns that warranted a public inquiry.

"What has happened at the Gold Coast City Council is the total pre-occupation by certain councillors with the creation of a power bloc within the council designed to ensure their perpetual re-election," Cr Young says.

"The public had no idea they were electing so-called like-minded candidates who were sharing a common ticket and who, if voted in, would end up controlling the council."

**Caption:** Aerial view of the Gold Coast.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TOWN PLANNING,  
HOUSING HOME UNITS, BUILDINGS

**Section:** NEWS

**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news THU 11 AUG 2005, Page 013**  
**CMC probes controversial trust fund**  
**By Tuck Thompson and Greg Stolz**

**COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE**

**\* THE CASE**

THE Crime and Misconduct Commission has been given a 32-page document detailing preferential treatment for Gold Coast developers and a scheme to undermine the fair election of councillors.

A dossier compiled by Councillor Peter Young alleges a "highly organised and well-supported team" had been established to wrest control of the council.

The fund was administered by Gold Coast law firm Hickey Lawyers, whose former senior solicitor, Paul Brinsmead, was a strategist of Tweed Directions, a controversial scheme that supported pro-development councillors at Tweed Heads. A public inquiry resulted in the Tweed Council being sacked in May.

Mr Brinsmead denied any involvement with the Gold Coast trust and said the inquiry had been politically motivated. He said he was a strategist for Tweed Directions.

In the Gold Coast dossier, referred by Local Government Minister Desley Boyle to the CMC, Cr Young alleges a secret and de facto political organisation was established to provide "implicit and explicit" benefits to developers in return for campaign funds.

Documents obtained by The Courier-Mail and being examined by the CMC highlight almost 20 cases of favourable decisions being granted to or sought by developers who donated to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, or of councillors failing to disclose a conflict.

They include a \$13,882 rates discount given to a company associated with Soheil Abedian, developer of the world's tallest apartment tower, Q1, in Surfers Paradise.

The discount, championed by Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke, was given against the recommendation of council officers. Councillors who accessed the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, to which Mr Abedian donated \$10,000, did not declare a conflict and voted in favour of the discount.

Mr Abedian declined to comment.

Councillor Dawn Crichlow, who attended the meeting, said she had never seen anything like it in 15 years on council.

"The Mayor came in -- he had never been to finance before -- and said these people are going to give a presentation on why they should get a relaxation on their rates," she said.

Two companies that also donated to the trust fund -- Devine Pty Ltd and Down Lane Pty that is associated with developer Graeme Ingles -- both received council approvals for housing estates with significantly increased densities.

In both cases, councillors whose campaigns were financed by the fund did not declare a conflict of interest.

Neither did Deputy Mayor David Power, who received \$9000 from Down Lane.

Neither company could be contacted for comment.

Allegations of close relationships between developers and Cr Power -- who has declared his intention to stand for the mayoralty in 2008 -- are also being examined by the CMC.

**TOMORROW**

Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke defends his council and rejects claims of a pro-development bloc

**Caption:** Aerial view of the Gold Coast.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, GOLD COAST, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, BUILDINGS, FUNDS, COMPANIES

**Column:** News Extra

**Section:** NEWS

Dossier lists litany of election handouts

By Greg Stolz and Tuck Thompson

\* THE FUND

A FUND that bankrolled four pro-development candidates for last year's Gold Coast Council election was organised by Liberal Party figure Lionel Barden.

From December 2003 to April 2004, 14 developers and development companies contributed \$150,000 in \$10,000 and \$20,000 increments to the so-called Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

The fund was managed by Hickey Lawyers.

Mr Paul Brinsmead, then a solicitor with the firm, was a key strategist for the now-sacked Tweed Shire Council, but denies a role in the Gold Coast trust.

A dossier given to the CMC alleges pro-development councillors David Power, Sue Robbins, Ted Shepherd and Bob La Castra secretly recruited candidates prior to the 2004 election to organise a larger pro-development bloc.

All have denied they recruited the candidates.

Cr Power said he had advised trust fund-backed council candidates that they should be "independent in their processes and independent in their voting because that's what their community was looking for".

The hand-selected candidates, dubbed the "Common Sense" team, included Roxanne Scott, Grant Pforr, Greg Betts and Brian Rowe. While Ms Scott and Mr Rowe were not elected, councillors Pforr and Betts have denied they are part of any bloc.

No members of the pro-development bloc of the old council -- Mr Power, Mr La Castra, Mr Shepherd, Ms Robbins, Jan Grew, Daphne McDonald or Ray Hackwood -- were challenged by the newcomers.

"The four candidates met secretly with existing councillors, each other, and professional staff. All aspects of their campaigns were managed, including photography, proofing, advertising, mail-outs, printing and campaign content," stated the dossier, prepared by Councillor Peter Young.

Election gift returns show Mr Rowe received \$35,000 from the trust fund, Mr Pforr \$34,914, Ms Scott \$28,673 and Mr Betts \$28,987.

Developers also made direct contributions to the candidates. Mr Rowe received another \$50,400 and Mr Pforr another \$11,100. Mr Power received \$29,600 plus \$58,000 from "luncheon tickets".

The pro-development candidates advertised themselves as independents and denied knowledge of a slush fund.

The candidates were accused of deceiving voters by camouflaging the source of their campaigns

and ties to each other and an overarching scheme.

In the build-up to the 2004 election, developers were approached by standing councillors and advised their concerns would be "looked after" if the right people were elected. Mr Pforr and Mr Betts were elected.

One analysis, compiled using figures supplied by Mayor Ron Clarke, showed pro-development councillors voted together up to 99 per cent of the time.

"A review of Gold Coast City Council records will clearly reveal numerous instances of generous treatment to certain developers," Cr Young said in the dossier.

WHERE THE MONEY WENT

Developers/Businesses

Direct donations to councillors:

Fish Developments \$10,000 to Grant Pforr

Ingles Group \$9000 to David Power

Ingles Group \$5000 to Dawn Crichlow

Austcorp Group \$5000 to David Power

MFS Group \$5000 to Rob Molhoek\*

Cater Group \$5000 to Peter Young  
Meriton Group \$5000 to Dawn Crichlow  
A.M.Rudd \$15,000 to Ted Shepherd  
Maxvista Pty Ltd \$5000 to Ted Shepherd  
\*Councillor not alligned with "The Bloc", the "Independents "  
or "The Minority".

Fund contributing developers

Donations from December 23, 2003 to April 8, 2004

\$10,000 Great Southern Land Robina  
\$10,000 Ray Group Pty Ltd Robina  
\$10,000 Gregory Phillips Nerang  
\$10,000 Sunland Group Ltd Surfers Paradise  
\$10,000 Phil Sullivan Island Quays  
\$10,000 Fish Developments Pty Ltd (trustee), Sanctuary Cove  
\$10,000 Devine Ltd 18 Eagle St, Brisbane  
\$10,000 Rapcivic Contractors Pty Ltd Surfers Paradise  
\$10,000 Roche Group Pty Ltd Double Bay, NSW  
\$20,000 Gregory Phillips Nerang  
\$10,000 Villa World Ltd GCMC  
\$10,000 Ingles Group Surfers Paradise  
\$10,000 Blue Sky Capital Pty Ltd address unknown  
\$10,000 Stockland Development Pty Ltd Queen St, Brisbane  
\$150,000 from 14 gift-givers

Lionel Barden Trust Fund

Lionel Barden, a friend of some of the prodevelopment councillors, established a \$150,000 trust fund to help the newcomers.

The fund was managed by Hickey Lawyers of the Gold Coast. Paul Brinsmead, a solicitor with the firm, was a key strategist for the sacked Tweed Shire Council. He denies involvement in the fund.

\$28,673 \$35,000 \$34,914 \$28,987

Independants

Roxanne Scott Brian Rowe Grant Pfoor Greg Betts

Not Elected Elected

"The Minority"

Young, Crishlow, Sarroff and Douglas often vote together on issues: Robbins is new to the board.

Gold Coast City Council

Mayor Ron Clarke

"The Bloc" Councillors labelled part of a pro-development bloc

Deputy Mayor David Power

Councillor Ray Hackwood

Councillor Ted Shepherd

Councillor Greg Betts

Councillor Jan Grew

Councillor Daphne McDonald

Councillor Robert La Castra

**Caption:** Graph showing WHERE THE MONEY WENT. Lionel Barden, Grant Pfoor, Greg Betts, Councillor Dawn Crichlow, Councillor Peter Young, Councillor Susie Douglas, Councillor Eddy Sarroff, Councillor Chris Robbins, Mayor Ron Clarke, Deputy Mayor David Power, Councillor Ray Hackwood, Councillor Ted Shepherd, Councillor Greg Betts, Councillor Jan Grew, Councillor Daphne McDonald, Councillor Robert La Castra.

**Illus:** Photo

Table

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, GOLD COAST, ELECTIONS LOCAL AUTHORITIES, FUNDS

**Column:** News Extra  
**Section:** NEWS

Courier Mail  
Edition 1 - First with the news THU 11 AUG 2005, Page 014  
Councillor denies conflict of interest  
By Greg Stolz

\* RECIPIENTS

A GOLD Coast councillor whose election campaign was bankrolled by a secret trust fund sees "no problem" in voting on development applications made by donors to the fund. Greg Betts, who received almost \$30,000 from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, has voted on at least nine applications by developers who donated to the fund, according to a dossier being examined by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Cr Betts said he had believed he could make unbiased decisions despite knowing the identities of the fund's donors.

"A conflict of interest can only be decided by the person involved," he said. "If you're comfortable that you can make an unbiased decision, then you don't have a conflict of interest."

Cr Betts said he had been offered election campaign funds direct from developers but "didn't want to be seen to be taking money from a developer".

He saw the Lionel Barden Trust Fund as a way to access campaign money "at arms length".

"I don't have a conflict of interest unless it involves someone who I personally know and I don't know any developers personally," Cr Betts said.

He said he would continue to vote on applications by trust fund donors "unless I feel I can't make an unbiased decision".

"I will be in there making decisions because that's my job."

Cr Grant Pforr, who received almost \$35,000 from the trust fund, admitted to voting for applications by fund contributors.

But he said he exercised his judgment when voting on development applications and did not believe there was a conflict.

"It's up to individual councillors if they want to vote," he said. "When I feel there is a conflict I walk out."

Millionaire Hope Island developer John Fish, who gave \$10,000 to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, also made a direct \$10,000 donation to Cr Pforr's campaign.

Cr Pforr said he would not vote on any of Mr Fish's development applications.

Asked about the so-called "power bloc" of pro-development councillors allegedly established with the help of the fund, Cr Betts said: "In the majority of cases, we probably do vote as a group."

But he said this was because self-styled independent councillors Peter Young, Dawn Crichlow and Eddy Sarroff "always vote against whatever the recommendation is".

"They're always throwing stones at the rest of us," he said.

"They kick up a stink to get publicity and we're too busy doing our jobs to respond."

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, GOLD COAST, ELECTIONS LOCAL AUTHORITIES, FUNDS

**Column:** News Extra

**Section:** NEWS



**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news FRI 12 AUG 2005, Page 007**  
**Cashed up candidates victims of 'confusion'**  
**By Greg Stolz**

GOLD Coast Mayor Ron Clarke has defended his council against corruption allegations and has denied the existence of a pro-development bloc.

But he said councillors who accessed a developer-backed "Common Sense Trust Fund" which bankrolled the 2004 election campaigns of "like-minded" candidates should have been more upfront about the funding.

Cr Clarke said allegations that councillors were in the pockets of developers were "quite serious" but was confident the council would be cleared by the Crime and Misconduct Commission investigation now under way.

During last year's election campaign, trust fund-backed candidates, including present councillors Greg Betts and Grant Pforr, claimed they were independent candidates and were not being backed by developers.

Cr Clarke said the candidates had been "a bit confused". He said councillors had a right not to declare the source of their funding until after the election but should not have prevaricated when questioned by the media.

"Some people said they were getting it (developer funding) and some said they weren't getting it and that was wrong," he said.

Despite the Tweed Shire Council recently being sacked over a developer-backed plot to wrest control of the northern NSW council, Cr Clarke insisted the scenarios were "not similar at all" because Tweed councillors ran as pro and anti-development teams.

Figures compiled by Cr Clarke's office late last year revealed members of an alleged pro-development bloc of councillors voted together up to 99 per cent of the time.

But he said there was no pro-development bloc on the council -- only a "chip" of "two or three councillors who always vote together".

He was referring to self-styled independent councillors Peter Young, Dawn Crichlow and Eddy Sarroff, who have been agitating for a public inquiry into allegations the council had been hijacked by pro-development forces.

"There's no way the bloc votes together, if you're talking about a bloc. Individuals vote all over the place and that's as it should be," he said.

Cr Clarke said if the council was ruled by pro-development forces, moves to ramp up development infrastructure charges would have been defeated.

The council was involved in more than 250 Planning and Environment Court fights with developers, Cr Clarke said.

**Caption:** DEFENSIVE . . . Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, GOLD COAST, ELECTIONS LOCAL AUTHORITIES, MAYORS, FUNDS

**BIOG:** RON CLARKE

**Section:** NEWS

**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news FRI 12 AUG 2005, Page 001**  
**Dinner scam funded polls**  
**By Greg Stolz, Tuck Thompson and Renee Viellaris**

A GOLD Coast councillor has been accused of selling tickets to fundraising dinners that had already been eaten in a bid to hide donations received from developers. The funding loophole had allegedly allowed tens of thousands of dollars in campaign funds to be raised from developers without declaring the source of the funds.

Claims that election fundraiser tickets are being sold to developers after events are over are being investigated as part of a Crime and Misconduct Commission probe into the council.

Local Government Minister Desley Boyle -- who has been resisting mounting calls for a public inquiry -- yesterday conceded an inquiry might be needed to allay community concerns. "The public concern is just tremendous," she told ABC Radio.

"They are of the view, many of them . . . that their councillors are on the take."

Ms Boyle said that because of the public disquiet, she had written to the CMC to ask at what point a public inquiry might be appropriate.

"It is a matter for them and, while I do understand the wish of the people of the Gold Coast to hear what's going on, at the same time, you don't generally investigate . . . in a public place," she said, adding she would sack the 15-member council if corruption or misconduct was uncovered.

Backing calls for a public inquiry, University of Queensland political scientist Dr Paul Reynolds said developers had Gold Coast councillors "by the balls".

The comments came as The Courier-Mail learned councillors have been circumventing election gift laws by selling tables of tickets for fundraising lunches and dinners to developers. But the donations do not have to be declared because tickets are being sold for under \$200, below the threshold required for declaration.

Two councillors yesterday denied any wrongdoing in their administration of the fundraising. Deputy Mayor David Power -- the alleged leader of a pro-development bloc on the Gold Coast council -- said he raised \$58,000 at a single fundraising luncheon during last year's election campaign.

Cr Power, who has announced plans to run for the mayoralty in 2008, said "hundreds" of people attended the lunch at the Windaroo Golf Club.

"There weren't just developers there -- we had cane farmers and Main Roads gangers and people from all walks of life," he said. "It was bloody huge. I was quite surprised at the numbers that were there."

Cr Power said the luncheon takings were topped up by raffle ticket sales.

In his interim election gift return, Cr Power stated he received \$47,825 from the sale of "various luncheon tickets" and 79 people contributed to his campaign. In his final return, the luncheon ticket sales figure rose to \$58,000, with the number of donors up to 486.

"Interim returns are so you can get your accounts all up to scratch," Cr Power said.

"Remember, under the (Local Government) Act, I didn't even have to declare the luncheon tickets -- I just did it to be open. My campaign manager told me it was all done in accordance with the Act."

Cr Ted Shepherd -- who heads the council's powerful planning committee -- has already begun fundraising for his 2008 campaign using a similar tactic. He held a wine-tasting night at a Gold Coast Hinterland hotel in May which he said raised about \$14,000.

The CMC is examining a dossier alleging the event raised much more than that but Cr Shepherd said he had launched legal action over the claim.

"I pride myself on being squeaky clean," he said.

Cr Shepherd said developer Graham Ingles -- who invested almost \$25,000 in the 2004 election -- bought 20 tickets to the wine tasting.

Cr Shepherd said he was holding fundraisers so he would not have to rely on developer donations at the next election. More reports, Page 7

Editorial, Leahy's View, Page 20

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, GOLD COAST,  
FUNDS, CRIME QLD FRAUD, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION  
**Section:** NEWS

**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news FRI 12 AUG 2005, Page 007**  
**Expert urges inquiry into links**  
**By Tuck Thompson and Greg Stolz**

A FULL public inquiry should be held to break the nexus between developers and councillors on the Gold Coast "once and for all", an academic said yesterday.

Ken Wiltshire from the University of Queensland said there were too many loopholes in the system and an inquiry would be "useful".

Professor Wiltshire said the loopholes, such as the sale of luncheon tickets, allowed candidates to "camouflage" donations.

"It is not being accountable and it is not being transparent," he said. Professor Wiltshire is an expert in public administration and gave evidence at a 1991 Criminal Justice Commission inquiry into the Gold Coast council.

Meanwhile, Graham Staerk, the architect of the Tweed Shire campaign that resulted in the council being sacked, said he was aware of a pro-development bloc on the Gold Coast Council. Mr Staerk, who in May ran Ron Clark's successful Gold Coast election campaign, also called for an inquiry into the council.

But he denied that he or Mr Clark were part of the bloc.

Mr Staerk said it was a co-incidence that Tweed strategist Paul Brinsmead was a solicitor for Hickey Lawyers, which managed a slush fund for pro-development candidates on the Gold Coast.

Mr Staerk said Gold Coast councillors who professed independence during last year's campaign "had a millstone" around their necks since then because they did not make their agendas known to voters.

"In doing that, they were badly advised," said Mr Staerk, a political planner, spin-doctor and former chief-of-staff for Brisbane Mayor Jim Soorley.

While not illegal, the deception had caused valid "disquiet" in the community, he said.

Gold Coast councillor Peter Young has given a 32-page dossier to the Crime and Misconduct Commission alleging a council takeover plot funded by a developer slush fund.

Mr Staerk said the law should be changed to require candidates at all levels of government to declare contributions before an election so voters "would not be buying a pig in a poke".

Careful consideration should also be given to whether campaigns should be run by third-party organisations, such as the Tweed Directions, the campaign he helped mastermind, he said.

It would be better to have them run by parties, so agendas would be clear, he said.

Mr Staerk said there were differences between Tweed and the Gold Coast campaigns. Voters knew Tweed candidates were part of a managed slate and had a pro-development agenda, he said.

His assessment contradicts the inquiry report, which found Tweed Directions was secretive and corrupted the electoral process.

Greg Hallam, the executive director of the Local Government Association of Queensland, said a mandatory code of conduct was the best way to hold councillors accountable.

Disclosing campaign contributions before election might be worthwhile, but would need to include state and federal candidates, Mr Hallam said. "The ballot box is still the ultimate sanction," he said.

**Caption:** Graham Staerk

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL UNDER SIEGE, GOLD COAST, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, INQUIRIES, FUNDS

**Section:** NEWS

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - Main FRI 12 AUG 2005, Page 005**  
**Power slams 'guerilla campaign'**  
**By by Peter Gleeson chief reporter**

AN angry and fired-up Deputy Mayor David Power has launched an extraordinary attack on council critics, claiming City Hall is being subjected to an 'insidious guerilla campaign' which is undermining decision-making.

Cr Power told 200 people at a developers' luncheon that the council would be cleared of allegations of corruption now being investigated by the Criminal Misconduct Commission (CMC).

He also said when the council was exonerated, he would seek action against councillors Eddy Sarroff, Peter Young and Dawn Crichlow for allegedly bringing the council into disrepute.

"They are the ones who want to take us back into an era of mediocrity," Cr Power told the Urban Development Institute of Australia lunch.

"It (the claim of corruption) is rubbish. The CMC needs to come out and say that there has been nothing done wrong, which they will.

"All councillors have complied with the Local Government Act.

"The suggestion that you would sell your soul for a \$1500 electoral donation is sheer fantasy.

"You need a minimum of 15 people for a (development) application to be handled corruptly.

"That's eight councillors and seven officers and anyone who thinks you can achieve that is, quite frankly, living in a fantasyland under today's regulations.

"One way or the other, the outcome will be the same. The councillors will be found to have done nothing wrong."

Cr Power, who has publicly indicated that he will run for mayor in 2008, said he was 'very confident' the council would not be sacked.

He also said the people making the complaints to the Government were failed candidates.

Members of the so-called bloc 'regularly' voted against each other, he said.

"Cr Bob La Castra and I, who are supposed to be joined at the hip, took diametrically opposed positions on a development application at Yatala only this week and it happens on a regular basis."

Cr Power admitted that ongoing probes and State Government scrutiny were 'swamping' council agendas and hindering decision making.

But the Deputy Mayor claimed the relationship between the Beattie Government and council was the best it had been since the 1995 amalgamation.

He said the councillors who had stood up and said 'enough is enough' had been vilified and demonised over the past 12 months.

"We don't want traffic jams, foul air, sewerage problems . . . the next five years are going to be fundamental to this city.

"Watch this space. Court actions are coming against Cr Young. I know one councillor served court papers on Cr Young in the last two days and I will be serving him next week."

Another member of the so-called bloc at yesterday's luncheon, Cr Grant Pforr, said the latest allegations of corruption were destabilising and unsettling.

**Caption:** David Power has hit out a critics of the council

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Michael Ross

**Library Heading:** CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION

**BIOG:** DAVID POWER

**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the news SAT 13 AUG 2005, Page 006**  
**Resident wants the lowdown on height**  
**By Tuck Thompson**

MIAMI resident Mike Ingram says he's tired of the Gold Coast City Council bending rules to benefit high-rise developers.

The desktop publisher calls his towering neighbours "water guzzlers".

He said throughout his neighbourhood, buildings were creeping higher despite height restrictions.

Seven-storey units jump to 10 and the council approves the changes, he said.

"They say it's OK, he improved the property," Mr Ingram said.

He has also had a difficult time accepting political dishonesty.

He attended a Gold Coast Council pre-election meeting last year at which he stood up and asked Cr Greg Betts, then a candidate, who was funding his campaign.

Cr Betts, who received nearly \$30,000 in funding from developers, told the meeting the money came from his family, Mr Ingram said, even though this wasn't the case.

"Even after the election, he still denied it. He was the last to admit it," Mr Ingram said.

Cr Betts told a local newspaper he was getting campaign funding from businesses, then acknowledged it was from developers.

Community organisations from Beenleigh to Burleigh Heads have protested about a secret pro-development bloc in the Gold Coast Council to Local Government Minister Desley Boyle.

Ms Boyle urged the Crime and Misconduct Commission to investigate.

However, Mr Ingram fears faith in the council's integrity won't be restored without a public inquiry.

"We don't want things swept under the carpet," he said.

"The Government doesn't want another inquiry, but it's the only way to know what went on."

**Caption:** TOO high . . . unhappy Gold Coast resident Mike Ingram says this building was supposed to be six storeys.

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Adam Head

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, BUILDINGS, HOUSING  
HOME UNITS, COMPANIES

**Section:** NEWS

**Coast planners bullied: ex-officer**  
**By Tuck Thompson and Greg Stolz**

PRO-development Gold Coast councillors are bullying planning staff to make recommendations favourable to developers, an ex-council officer said yesterday. The former development assessment officer, who left the council recently because of low morale, said staff frequently came under political pressure.

"It was obvious that if developers did not get the result they wanted from the officers, they would go see the (pro-development) councillors," said the officer, who now works in the private sector.

"The councillors would then put pressure on the DA supervisors, who would often negotiate the developer's outcome against the officer's recommendation. The full officer recommendations are never even making it to council, but are being watered down."

Councillors Peter Young, Dawn Crichlow and Eddy Sarroff said the pro-development agenda of a bloc of councillors included badgering and intimidating staff.

"I have seen officers just crumble," Cr Young said. "After they've been shouted down in meetings, they tend to just become subservient."

Cr Sarroff said soon after last year's election, in which a pro-development bloc of councillors swept to power, attempts were made to remove a \$250,000 infrastructure condition imposed on one developer.

"The condition had been recommended by an officer but certain councillors sought to have it removed," Cr Sarroff said.

"There is a culture of intimidation in the council when it comes to the officers. Their hands are being cuffed."

Cr Crichlow said minority councillors were also victims of a bullying culture. She cited the case of Cr Susie Douglas, who exposed a sexual harassment scandal at the council earlier this year.

Senior council bureaucrat Greg Young, seen as being close to pro-development councillors, was sacked after being found guilty of sending sexually-charged letters to women.

Earlier this week, a bloc of councillors voted for an independent investigation to determine whether the source of confidential information leaked to the media concerning the "love letters" scandal should be prosecuted.

Cr Crichlow said Cr Douglas was bullied for her role in exposing the scandal.

"They had her in tears behind closed doors, too gutless to do it in open council," Cr Crichlow said.

"It's bully boy tactics, something shocking."

Meanwhile, a stand-off is brewing between Local Government Minister Desley Boyle and the Crime and Misconduct Commission over calls for a public inquiry into the Gold Coast council.

Ms Boyle wrote to CMC chairman Robert Needham yesterday asking him to make a public statement on the progress of commission investigations into the council.

However, a commission spokeswoman said the CMC did not provide timelines or details on its investigations.

Ms Boyle said it was "really important" the CMC make a statement to secure public confidence. The Courier-Mail reveals on Monday how the Gold Coast City Council is providing green space to its citizens.

**Caption:** COUNCIL under siege . . . Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, BUILDINGS, HOUSING HOME UNITS, COMPANIES

**Section:** NEWS

**Bloc brawling could end council**  
**Mayor blasts misconduct allegations**  
By by Peter Gleeson chief reporter

MAYOR Ron Clarke is still maintaining there is no pro-development voting bloc within the Gold Coast City Council.

This is despite figures compiled within his own office which show that some councillors identified as being part of 'the bloc' voted along similar lines for 99 per cent of the time.

Stung this week by suggestions of council misconduct, Cr Clarke said maverick councillors Dawn Crichlow, Eddy Sarroff and Peter Young - a group he has referred to as 'the chip' - were behind much of the dirt dished out.

He said the irony was that 'the chip' voted together within the chamber 'almost all the time'.

"A bloc to me is where you've got an unofficial party who meet together secretly and say 'no matter what, we will vote together'," said Cr Clarke.

"These are people who say 'even though I might disagree with this, I will vote with it and next time I expect you to vote for me'.

"That is a bloc. That is not what happens at this council."

The Mayor said an 'evil' political agenda was behind the latest accusations that the council was corrupt.

Local Government Minister Desley Boyle said if a Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) probe into the council found evidence of corruption, the council would be sacked. The CMC is probing links between donations to a trust fund - later named the Lionel Barden Trust Fund - which was set up to help the campaigns of some council candidates at the last election.

Cr Clarke said the allegations centred on donations made by 'very respected members of the community'.

He said these had included contributions from companies associated with prominent developers Soheil Abedian and Jim Raptis.

He said he believed it was wrong to make any inferences about the donations.

Cr Clarke said those making accusations 'should be brought to task' if the CMC dismissed their claims.

"They are evil allegations if they are not proven correct," he said.

Cr Clarke said the council had become the victim of a 'political agenda which is out there and which is beyond me'.

"I haven't been in the council enough to see who's on whose side in regard to politics," he said.

"I am keen to keep politics out of local government. There is no need for it."

Cr Sarroff said yesterday public confidence in the council had hit rock bottom.

"There are decisions being made which are against the public interest and I find it disappointing that the Mayor is pointing the finger at us.

"He's a hostage of the bloc. You need strong leadership at times like this."

Twelve months ago, Cr Sarroff lifted the lid on the closed door deal-making and secret meetings that he claimed now took place among bloc members.

The councillor said the public needed to know who was controlling their council - and claimed it was not Mayor Ron Clarke.

"It's the bloc that effectively formed the majority," he said.

"They're certainly running the show."

He said the public council meet-ings were a farce as the decisions had always been determined before-hand in closed-door meetings between the bloc and the Mayor.

"It's during these discussions before council that the numbers are worked out," he said.

"The decisions are made before the council meeting - it doesn't mat-ter what argument you can put up. You can argue until you are blue in the face, it doesn't matter."



The Bulletin's former council reporter, Alice Gorman, revealed the secret funding of the bloc, winning a Walkley Award - Australian journalism's highest accolade.

The campaign being waged to have the Gold Coast City Council sacked is the dirtiest in 30 years, says the state's top local government official.

Local Government Association of Queensland executive director Greg Hallam said he had been in public office for 30 years and had seen nothing like it.

"It's the nastiest campaign I've seen in 30 years," said Mr Hallam.

"It is well-organised, sophisticated, with a lot of heavy hitters working behind the scenes." Mr Hallam said the CMC's investigation into allegations of corruption was the right way to tackle the issue.

"If the claims are substantiated, we believe the law should be upheld and those found guilty should be appropriately dealt with," said Mr Hallam.

"But, we also believe equally that those who have thrown the mud for political purposes should face the same penalties if the claims cannot be substantiated."

Mr Hallam said some 'funny logic' was being used to prop up certain allegations.

"The Minister, Ms Boyle, is being sensible and reasonable and the appropriate body such as the CMC is there to look at the allegations," he said. "Our role is not to defend the council but inject some sense into the argument."

Cr Grant Pforr, who took election donations from developers as part of the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, said he had nothing to hide.

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainMON 15 AUG 2005, Page 006**  
**Rookie Rob calls for contentious council to be canned**

AN administrator would do a better job than the 'bitter and squabbling' councillors who were more focused on their rivalries than fixing the region's problems, rookie council representative Cr Rob Molhoek has claimed.

In a spray at virtually every one of his council colleagues yesterday, the mayoral hopeful said most had 'lost sight' of why they were elected.

Cr Molhoek said the council should be sacked and a fresh council elected.

However, he said the Gold Coast would be better off if the State Government chose to put an administrator in place instead.

"A lot of long-term grudges have got in the way of good business sense," he said.

"I'm very disappointed that individual councillors are so entrenched in this sort of ongoing rivalry and their bitterness with each other that it has affected their judgment.

"Frankly the best thing is for the whole lot to be sacked. We need a fresh council."

His comments came as the Crime and Misconduct Commission's investigations into the council heated up after almost 18 months of allegations, innuendo and infighting.

Cr Molhoek said there were 'too many personalities' within the council and accused Cr Dawn Crichlow of seeking publicity to the detriment of the council.

"Dawn loves the limelight, she loves to present herself as a great bastion of the people . . . but it comes at the expense of the city," he said.

Also under fire were Crs David Power, Bob La Castra and Jan Grew, who were living with 'past battles and frustrations' which had seen their judgment 'go out the window'.

An angry Cr Crichlow said she was not a publicity hunter and only spoke out in the public interest when contacted by media.

"There's no use him spitting the dummy about it - everything that has come out is in the public interest," she said.

"And as you can see, it's all unravelling the way The Bulletin started it all in March, 2004."

Cr Power said Cr Molhoek's driving motivation was to set himself apart as an independent because of his ambition to be mayor.

Jim Soorley

During his time as Brisbane Lord Mayor, Mr Soorley was known as a firebrand but also was recognised for getting things done in the capital city.

Since resigning last year, he has already turned his focus to the Gold Coast, taking up a key position on Mayor Ron Clarke's growth management advisory board.

**The Australian**  
**Edition 1 - All-round Country TUE 16 AUG 2005, Page 006**  
**Poll gift advice appears to vary**  
**By Greg Roberts**

GOLD Coast nightclubs were told that up to \$20,000 worth of undisclosed donations given to Olympian Ron Clarke for his campaign to be elected Gold Coast mayor should have been declared under state laws.

Instructions given to the Licensed Venues Association last year by council chief executive Dale Dickson appear to be inconsistent with his later statements to The Australian and advice to Gold Coast City councillors.

The Australian reported in May that Mr Clarke failed to disclose up to \$20,000 in in-kind donations from the nightclubs. The assistance came in the form of newspaper advertisements and thousands of SMS text messages sent to club members urging a vote against incumbent mayor Gary Baidon, whom Mr Clarke narrowly defeated in the election.

At the time, Mr Dickson wrote to The Australian and city councillors, saying the assistance did not constitute gifts for electoral purposes and did not have to be declared under the Local Government Act.

But in a letter to Gold Coast Licensed Venues Association chairman Jim Bell last August, Mr Dickson said the anti-Baidon campaign was "clearly expenditure for a political purpose", which had to be declared. Mr Dickson instructed Mr Bell to lodge a return "without delay" or risk a \$1500 fine.

Mr Dickson insisted yesterday that the clubs' expenditure did not constitute an electoral gift for Mr Clarke. "The expenditure by the LVA was expenditure incurred in its own right in its advertising campaign against the former mayor," he said. "There is no discrepancy."

But Mr Bell said last night he found it odd that Susie Douglas, another councillor who received assistance from the clubs similar to that provided to Mr Clarke, had been required to declare it.

"There appears to be an obvious inconsistency here," Mr Bell said. "We paid for it. We were open about it. Ron Clarke should have declared it."

The apparent discrepancy arose because at least seven of the 15 councillors and several developers were served last Friday with notices by the state's Crime and Misconduct Commission to provide information to assist its investigation into the embattled council. Councillors who received the notices include Grant Pforr and Greg Betts, whose campaigns for last year's elections were bankrolled by the Common Sense Trust, a secret developers' fund set up by Liberal identity Lionel Barden and the late Brian Ray.

Deputy Mayor David Power, who sold a property for more than \$1 million to a developer who donated \$9000 to his campaign, also received a notice.

The notices require the presentation of documents including correspondence between councillors and developers, bank statements and election campaign committee minutes. The CMC is investigating claims that some councillors consistently voted in favour of developers who donated to their campaigns, without declaring a potential conflict of interest. Local Government Minister Desley Boyle has threatened to sack the council if the CMC makes adverse findings against councillors.

The CMC is also examining an admission by Mr Clarke that he did not disclose up to \$40,000 worth of in-kind donations to his campaign by Darlington Park Raceway owner Tony Stephens.

Mr Clarke declined yesterday to say if he had been issued with a notice. "What I receive from the CMC is up to the CMC to disclose," he said. "Otherwise, it is a private matter."

**Section:** LOCAL

**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the newsFRI 19 AUG 2005, Page 011**  
**Club cash cloaked in secrecy**  
**By Greg Stolz**

THE Gold Coast City Council has secretly committed \$7.5 million to build a rowing course at a Coomera watersports centre closely associated with a councillor and his family.

The decision was made behind closed doors last month without the endorsement of Rowing Queensland. The Coast already has two rowing courses.

Council insiders and community leaders have questioned the expense amid accusations that the Coomera Watersports Club has become a private plaything for northern Gold Coast councillor Grant Pforr.

Cr Pforr, who is under investigation by the Crime and Misconduct Commission over developer donations to his 2004 election campaign, is chairman of the non-profit watersports club board and his wife Liz is the honorary chief executive officer.

Mrs Pforr has admitted receiving \$2400 for organising a club fundraiser last November with Olympic rower James Tomkins as guest-of-honour.

Cr Pforr's father is reportedly caretaker at the club and his son is employed as a rowing instructor.

The council committed the money to the Coomera Lake rowing facility in a closed session of the health and community services committee last month. Cr Pforr does not sit on the committee but council minutes show he attended the meeting as a visitor.

Area councillor and deputy mayor David Power, who has poured about \$150,000 of discretionary divisional funds into the watersports club, was also an observer at the meeting. Health and community services committee chairman Bob La Castra defended the decision, saying Cr Pforr had "done a tremendous job" establishing the watersports club.

"What he's done, virtually single-handedly to get this thing up and running, is quite unbelievable," Cr La Castra said.

Rowing Queensland CEO Greg Howell said while the Coomera Lake facility looked attractive, his organisation could not endorse it because it was studying options for a new southeast Queensland rowing facility.

Mr Howell also said he had had concerns about the watersports club's management structure. Paradise Point Residents Action Group president Darani Cumming said the community "had no idea" the council was planning to spend \$7.5 million to upgrade Coomera Lake.

"It's a hell of a lot of money and we knew nothing about it," she said.

The CMC is expected to release a public statement today after concerns raised by Local Government Minister Desley Boyle about the progress of its investigation.

**Library Heading:** INQUIRIES, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, GOLD COAST, FUNDS, AMUSEMENT CENTRES

**BIOG:** GRANT PFORR, LIZ PFORR

**Section:** NEWS

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainTUE 23 AUG 2005, Page 003**  
**Heat on as second poll fund bared**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton**

PRESSURE grew yesterday for an open inquiry into the Gold Coast City Council, with revelations a second trust fund was used during last year's local government poll. Councillors called for a full investigation after The Bulletin discovered the trust account and its donations had not been properly disclosed to the relevant authorities. The account, set up by Southport solicitor Mal Chalmers, distributed three separate payments to failed Division 6 candidate Roxanne Scott, also a recipient of the developer-backed Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

Ms Scott was given a cash donation of \$4368, on top of two in-kind donations totalling \$632, which she listed on her gifts return and attributed to Mr Chalmers.

However, Mr Chalmers failed to lodge a third-party return listing the original donor of the money.

Cr Peter Young, the whistleblower whose dossier on the council is being investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission, said the lack of disclosure of the Chalmers trust account was a 'clear breach' of the Local Government Act.

Mr Chalmers said he did not realise a third-party return was necessary.

"It was a client of mine - I can't tell you who," he said.

Local Government Association executive director Greg Hallam said anyone who set up a trust account was obliged to lodge a return listing all its donors.

When The Bulletin alerted chief executive officer Dale Dickson's office about the omission yesterday, Mr Chalmers was contacted and told to lodge a return.

"We have taken the matter up with the solicitor concerned," said a council spokesman. "The (Local Government) Act does have disclosure periods . . . there is a penalty."

However, Cr Dawn Crichlow said Mr Dickson's office should have realised the trust account had not been properly declared in June last year, when Ms Scott altered her original return to show Mr Chalmers was not a personal donor.

"Surely the bells should have rung then that more details were needed, not 18 months later when The Bulletin uncovers it," said Cr Crichlow.

The donor to Ms Scott was still unknown yesterday.

The latest revelations came as tempers reached boiling point at the council's full meeting, with Cr Young evicted by Mayor Ron Clarke.

Cr Young had tried to persuade his colleagues to urge Local Government Minister Desley Boyle to launch a wide-ranging public inquiry.

When Cr Clarke refused to let him speak and gagged debate, Cr Young did not sit down, and was ejected from the meeting after a series of procedural motions.

Mr Dickson intervened in the row to stop Cr Young debating, but later admitted he had been wrong.

**Caption:** Cr Peter Young...a 'clear breach' of Act

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, INQUIRY

Boyle eyes loophole

Concern that political donations can be moved without disclosure

By Fiona Hamilton council reporter

THE Queensland Government will move to close a glaring loophole in its legislation which may allow political donations to be moved through trust accounts without disclosure. Local Government Minister Desley Boyle yesterday said she would investigate why the donors of money in solicitor trust accounts, which was diverted to political candidates, were not always required to be fully disclosed.

"We're looking to the CMC (Crime and Misconduct Commission) and its investigation for ways to improve the electoral provisions of the Local Government Act," said Ms Boyle.

"However, if the CMC does not make recommendations we will reform the Act to close loopholes brought to our attention."

The development came after The Gold Coast Bulletin revealed on Tuesday that a second trust account was used in last year's local government elections.

Southport solicitor Mal Chalmers, who organised the account, yesterday threatened legal action against The Bulletin over the report.

Mr Chalmers' trust account distributed three separate payments - a cash donation of \$4368 and two in-kind donations totalling \$632 - to failed Southport candidate Roxanne Scott.

Only Ms Scott lodged a return about the trust account.

When initially contacted by The Bulletin, the council declared Mr Chalmers needed to file a return.

However, chief executive officer Dale Dickson changed his mind on Tuesday following perusal of the Local Government Act.

As a result, Ms Scott's donor has still not been identified.

On Monday, Mr Chalmers said he was not aware a third party return was needed.

"It was a client of mine - I can't tell you who," he said at the time.

Solicitor Colin Greatorix, acting for Mr Chalmers, said in a letter threatening legal action yesterday: "The funds in question were received by Mr Chalmers from one client and my opinion is that there is no obligation at law upon him to lodge a third party return in relation thereto as he was acting as agent for the principal donor."

Tony Davis, the manager of the council's chief executive office, said there appeared to be a loophole in the Act which he had referred to the Department of Local Government.

Under the Local Government Act, only 'prescribed gifts' must be declared in a third party gift return.

Mr Davis said that, if the funds were in a solicitor's trust account for another purpose originally, but later used politically, they were not classified as a gift, and therefore did not require a return.

"When somebody is holding money in a trust account for another purpose and that money is then directed to a candidate for a political purpose, it doesn't need to be disclosed," said Mr Davis.

"The money is being held in the normal course of business, so does not constitute a gift to the solicitor, and therefore does not warrant a third party return.

"The Act is silent on this aspect," he said.

Cr Peter Young, whose dossier on his council colleagues is being considered by the CMC, said the loophole was 'ridiculous' and needed to be closed.

"This just goes to the core of the issue of transparency when it comes to political donations," said Cr Young.

"The people in the community have a right to know who is behind Roxanne Scott.

"I'm sure that's the intention of the Local Government Act."

Ms Scott yesterday said she could not understand why the account was being investigated - before hanging up the phone.

**Library Heading:** DONATIONS, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION,  
PARLIAMENT ACT, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainSAT 27 AUG 2005, Page 004**  
**CMC probes Mayor**  
**Papers served over Clarke's election donations**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

MAYOR-maker Graham Staerk was yesterday served with documents from the Crime and Misconduct Commission, requesting extensive information about Ron Clarke's election campaign.

The move increases speculation that the Gold Coast Mayor is under just as much CMC scrutiny as the embattled council bloc.

Mr Staerk confirmed he met with investigators yesterday and was provided with 'discovery documents' relating to all the matters surrounding Cr Clarke's election.

"The documents indicate they (the CMC) have equal interest in the Mayor's campaign as they do in the campaign of the so-called bloc," said Mr Staerk.

Mr Staerk was told he would be formally interviewed later.

The latest move came after The Bulletin revealed members of the council bloc and prominent developers, including Soheil Abedian, had been served with CMC papers demanding details about the controversial Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

The CMC is investigating allegations Cr Clarke failed to declare up to \$20,000 of in-kind donations from the Licensed Venues Association for last year's council election campaign. They took the form of newspaper advertisements and thousands of SMS text messages to nightclub members, urging a vote against incumbent Gary Baidon.

Cr Clarke did not receive funding from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund but is also under investigation over his failure to declare up to \$40,000 worth of in-kind donations by Darlington Park Raceway.

Mr Staerk, the political spin doctor who helped Cr Clarke topple Mr Baidon, had nothing to do with the bloc and is not under investigation by the CMC.

But he said he gave the investigator 'key direction' about the formulation of the bloc, and players involved.

He said the CMC documents requested information about Cr Clarke's nomination and election, and any information about gifts, donations or in-kind benefits Cr Clarke might have received.

He was also asked for bank account details and details of the Mayor's expenditure on his campaign.

Mr Staerk said he was confident Cr Clarke would be cleared.

"He wasn't part of the bloc, he took no developer donations at all, and he disclosed everything to the best of his knowledge," he said.

He also said the Mayor immediately changed his gift return when he was made aware he should have declared donations from Darlington Park.

"There was no need for him to declare the nightclub donations, he didn't ask for their campaign, he didn't guide or direct them. It was a matter for the licensed venues to disclose, not him. Ron doesn't deserve any censure even if you draw the longest bow," said Mr Staerk. Cr Clarke said he was not surprised Mr Staerk had been served by the CMC.

"I'm glad that they're doing a thorough job, that's what is necessary to get rid of all these allegations," he said.

\* Sudden interest, Page 49

\* Love in the office, Page 57

**Caption:** Tammy Semionov with an unwanted SMS message during last year's council election

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, DONATIONS



**Courier Mail**  
**Edition 1 - First with the newsTUE 30 AUG 2005, Page 004**  
**Ex-planners clean up on Coast deals**  
**By Michael Corkill**

A COMPANY, run by two Gold Coast City Council planning officers and a former employee, is set to make \$800,000 from land deals made possible under controversial changes to the town plan.

The trio have won council approval to build a unit complex on land at Robina where units were previously not permitted. And they have another property down the road.

News of the unit approval has sparked outrage from residents of the exclusive Gallery Estate where land overlooking the Robina Woods Golf Course fetches up to \$600,000.

It also prompted an internal council investigation into the approval process, in which a senior planning officer relaxed setback guidelines to allow the project to go ahead.

Angry landholder Kent Bayley said he bought a block at the Gallery Estate from the Great Southern Land Development Group in late 2003 on the understanding that there would be only one development per property.

However Mr Bayley said by the time he settled the land zoning had changed under the new town plan to Residential Choice, or high-density development suitable for "affordable housing for low-income households".

"The council has gone to enormous lengths to plan the Gallery with the developer while at the same time its planners were planning to rezone the area," he said.

Planning director Warren Rowe said he was unaware of the unit approval until Thursday and had asked for a full investigation.

"We have in place a very high standard of assessment and I expect nothing less in this place because of the sensitivities of council officers being involved," he said.

Resident John Brogan said the first he knew of the unit project was when a real estate agent targeted builders with offers to sell the land, with development approval, for \$780,000.

The property was bought for \$372,000 in September by ATL Investments Pty Ltd.

Two of the directors of that company are employed as planning officers by the council while the other is believed to be a former council planning officer turned planning consultant.

One of the directors is on leave. The other two did not return calls. A spokeswoman for a Gold Coast planning consultancy which lists the consultant as a director said he no longer worked there.

Area councillor Jan Grew said she had ordered that any further development applications regarding the Gallery Estate come to a council planning committee for consideration by councillors, rather than by officers.

She said the council was looking at creating an overlay map for the area which would designate it as one dwelling per lot.

**Caption:** TIGHTER reign . . . Gold Coast Councillor Jan Grew.

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** TOWN PLANNING, GOLD COAST, LAND, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, COMPANIES

**Section:** NEWS

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - Main TUE 30 AUG 2005, Page 005**  
**A CMC 'please explain' for the Mayor**

THE Crime and Misconduct Commission is investigating a statutory declaration that questions Mayor Ron Clarke's campaign spending.

The Bulletin understands the submission, sent to the CMC earlier this year, compares Cr Clarke's advertising expenditure with that of other candidates.

Former mayor Gary Baildon's campaign cost \$208,000 in the six weeks before last year's election.

Cr Clarke, whose push for mayor began months earlier and involved intensive advertising, told The Bulletin he spent just over \$237,000 over his whole campaign.

Before last year's poll, he provided a statutory declaration that his total costs on advertising, public relations, billboards, posters, hall hire, printing, postage and magnetic signs had come to \$198,853.51.

He yesterday refused to release a breakdown of his expenses, citing the CMC inquiry.

The latest development came after The Bulletin revealed CMC investigators asked him to provide detailed information on his expenditure.

Also yesterday, he said he would write to the CMC questioning why investigators had only asked particular councillors for details on their election campaign finances. He said the investigation should apply to all.

The Mayor's CMC approach came even though he refused to accept a general business motion by Cr Peter Young because it was related to the investigation into the council.

Cr Clarke said the motion, which called on him to write to the State Government in support of a public inquiry, would 'interfere' in the process.

**Library Heading: CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION**

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainWED 31 AUG 2005, Page 005**  
**Axe to fall if deceit proved**  
**By by Carly Hennessy**

LOCAL Government Minister Desley Boyle has backed the sacking of the council if the Crime and Misconduct Commission finds enough dirt to substantiate allegations of misconduct and corruption.

Ms Boyle indicated she would fully support any findings the CMC made.

She said the public had lost confidence in the council, which had been dogged by corruption claims since the local government elections last year.

Ms Boyle said the inquiry had a big job ahead of it, with many allegations and 'pieces of paper' to sift through.

"Certainly it is the CMC's job to determine whether there has been corrupt practice, whether there is misconduct," she said.

"If those things are proven, then yes, the council will have to go.

"I absolutely undertake to follow through recommendations of the CMC in the final report."

Ms Boyle said yesterday the work of the council would still continue while the inquiry was held.

But she said it was a shame the allegations had caused a loss of confidence.

Asked how she felt about the Gold Coast council, she said: "It is all over the place.

"I am really worried for the council, for those who have been doing the right thing.

"I am worried all of the good work which was going on in the Gold Coast City Council is being overshadowed."

The minister was due yesterday to address the annual conference of the Local Government Association of Queensland.

She took the opportunity to speak to the 157 Queensland councils on the issue of integrity and accountability.

"Transparency is the word, there should be nothing to make (the community) think that decisions are being made behind closed doors," she said.

Ms Boyle said the department would consider drafting guidelines to help councils make better, more public decisions. She also flagged the idea that if a councillor voted against a planning recommendation, it should be recorded on the spot exactly why they rejected that particular recommendation.

Residents' groups unhappy with decisions would only gain fuel for their fight if the development application process was not seen to be completely public, she said.

The minister also warned against councillors meeting privately with planners, saying it was not perceived well in the community.

"There are community concerns, especially in the growth areas," she said.

She praised the Gold Coast City Council for making all its decisions available on the web, with councillor's voting patterns recorded.

The theme of transparency was included in Premier Peter Beattie's pep talk to councillors, urging integrity to be their watchword.

"All people in public life have got to be very careful of what they do," he said.

He called it the 'post-Fitzgerald inquiry' era, when councillors and politicians had to make transparent decisions.

"We all have to live by it, to stick by these rules," he said.

"Otherwise it can shake the trust of (our) constituents."

**Caption:** Local Government Minister Desley Boyle

Above: Gold Coast councillor Peter Young

Below: Deputy Mayor David Power

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainTHU 01 SEP 2005, Page 006**  
**Donor's land in change of use**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

PLANNING committee chairman Ted Shepherd met council officers and discussed changes to the planning scheme which affected one of his election donors.

Following Cr Shepherd's intervention, the designation for land owned by ACH Ltd, which donated \$1000 to his election campaign last year, was changed.

The changes had been requested by the developer but were at odds with the original recommendations of council officers.

Weeks later, Cr Shepherd declared a 'material personal interest' when the matter was considered and approved by the council.

The revelations came one day after a public inquiry into the council was announced to investigate allegations stretching back to the elections in March last year. The Crime and Misconduct Commission inquiry will focus on whether councillors misled voters and failed to declare election gifts and material personal interests.

The extraordinary step came after 18 months of infighting and innuendo, culminating in a dossier of allegations sent by Cr Peter Young to Queensland's Local Government Minister, Desley Boyle.

Some councillors have voted in favour of developers who donated to their election campaigns, without declaring a potential conflict of interest.

The CMC is also examining the developer-backed Lionel Barden Trust Fund, revealed by The Bulletin before the last election, which bankrolled candidates' campaigns.

Cr Shepherd yesterday said he intervened in the ACH Ltd matter because council officers had made an error over the land designation.

He said he did not take part in debate over whether the developer's submission for changes in the local area plan should be approved.

"Surely that is due process," he said.

Early in July, the council's strategic growth management committee met to discuss several submissions for changes to the planning scheme.

Council officers wrote that they considered several applications by ACH Limited, for changes to its land use on Siganto Drive at Helensvale, inappropriate. They included a request for uses such as a motel to be included within the precinct, the expansion of commercial zoning onto an adjoining site, and the removal of residential designations on one side of the road.

Officers wrote the changes were 'not desirable' and inconsistent with the area.

The item was deferred by Cr Chris Robbins and Cr Shepherd for further investigation.

The amended agenda reads: "A meeting was subsequently held with Councillor Shephard (sic) on 7 July 2005 to investigate the recommendation and whether it was appropriate."

Cr Shepherd yesterday said he pointed out to officers that they had made errors in their land designation.

"When it came to the error I did not believe I had a conflict in asking for it to be assessed," he said.

Cr Shepherd said he raised the potential error at the committee meeting but needed to meet officers to explain it.

"There's nothing wrong with that."

When the report was next considered by the committee, its recommendations had been revised 'in light of the meeting'.

The expanded land uses onto the adjoining site were approved and officers wrote a motel was 'considered an appropriate use within the precinct'. "I am entitled to get a briefing and talk to council officers about errors on the plans," said Cr Shepherd.

He said he declared a conflict of interest when the matter was considered by the full council because it was not appropriate for him to vote on changes to the planning scheme which involved a donor.

**Caption:** Cr Ted Shepherd

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** ELECTION DONATIONS

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainTHU 01 SEP 2005, Page 006**  
**Mayor disputes his own return amendments**

AT first, Mayor Ron Clarke declared his election campaign was completely self-funded. Then, earlier this year, he was forced to admit he received in-kind donations of up to \$40,000 from Darlington Park Raceway.

And yesterday, the saga over the Mayor's funding continued when he disputed his own amended return.

Cr Clarke now claims he declared up to \$40,000 from the raceway only because it was the amount owner Tony Stephens - who has since died - said he spent on the campaign.

The Mayor said he now believed that the amount spent by Darlington Park on his campaign was far less.

"I declared what Tony Stephens said to (Cr) Eddy Sarroff," said Cr Clarke.

"I didn't want to argue with Tony, I tried to phone him (to ask) and he didn't answer."

The issue is the subject of a Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) investigation after Mr Stephens was caught on tape discussing the in-kind donations, which allegedly took the form of trailers displaying large billboards, labour, petrol and assorted costs.

Cr Clarke said he had gone into great detail on the costs of his campaign after he received a request for information from the CMC, and now believed that the amount he needed to declare from Darlington Park was not substantial.

When asked why he declared up to \$40,000, he said: "Because I didn't bother to check it, I just thought if Tony Stephens thinks that, I'll put it in."

Despite the claimed discrepancy, Cr Clarke said he was not going back on his amended return.

"As long as I've declared more, I don't think anyone can object," he said.

**Caption:** Mayor Ron Clarke has disputed the amendments he made on his election campaign return

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** ELECTION DONATIONS, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION

**BIOG:** RON CLARKE

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainTHU 01 SEP 2005, Page 007**  
**Feuding factions concur on probe**

FOR practically the first time since the election, the council's warring factions - the bloc and the chip - are finally in agreement.

Councillors from both sides of the fence were yesterday quick to welcome the announcement of a public inquiry into their activities stretching back more than 18 months.

But their beliefs - or hopes - on what the outcome of the public inquiry would be, were very different.

Chip councillors, who have pushed for an inquiry for more than a year, said they hoped the inquiry would lead to retribution in the form of prosecutions.

However, bloc councillors under scrutiny over allegations of links to developers, declared the inquiry would clear their names once and for all.

They said it would end the climate of allegations and innuendo that had been in place since the local government elections last March.

Cr Greg Betts, a recipient of the developer-backed Lionel Barden Trust Fund, said he had nothing to fear.

"I haven't misled the public so there's nothing to worry about," he said. "I never lied to anyone . . . this is just one of those things we have to deal with, get over with and move on."

Cr Grant Pforr, who also received money from the fund, said he was not concerned as he had always complied with the local law on electoral provisions.

"I just hope it's (the inquiry) nice and open to all the councillors, I hope it is wide-reaching and looks into all councillors - I hope it doesn't just address the odd few."

Cr Pforr was accused of denying he was funded by developers before the election, but said his comments were taken out of context.

"I did fund my own campaign from October, right through until late February until I started receiving funding," he said.

"I wasn't legally obliged to speak to the Bulletin, I can't see how they (the CMC) can hang their hat on that."

Chip member Cr Eddy Sarroff, who has consistently pushed for an inquiry into the council since the election, said a lot of his colleagues were 'putting on a brave face'.

"It's pretty clear out there that there is little confidence in this council," he said.

"It's not in the public interest for these issues to continue, they have to be resolved."

And what about the council splinter?

Cr Rob Molhoek, who often sits on the fence between factions, said he would accept the CMC's recommendations, even if they led to the council's sacking.

"We have to trust the system of government," he said.

Cr Chris Robbins said a 'political agenda' was the only reason for an inquiry.

She claimed the Beattie Government wanted to wrest control of southeast Queensland, and taking the helm of the Gold Coast council was an important part of that agenda.

**Caption:** Clockwise from top left: councillors Greg Betts, Grant Pforr, Eddy Sarroff and Ron Molhoek

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainSAT 03 SEP 2005, Page 016**  
**Loose lips may sink bloc's ship**  
**By Fiona Hamilton**

After more than 18 months of rumblings and angst, the Crime and Misconduct Commission this week announced a public inquiry to probe allegations of misconduct stretching back to the last election. Council reporter Fiona Hamilton takes a look at how it all unfolded. It began, as so many dramas do, with one tippie too many.

Early last year, a Gold Coast businessman, particularly chuffed with the decision to set up a trust fund with the aim of wresting control of the city council, headed out to celebrate with some well-connected pals.

He had a few drinks too many, and as the alcohol flowed, so did the conversation.

Before long, he had well and truly spilled the beans on the developer-backed Lionel Barden Trust Fund.

While he struggled to remember whom he had told the next day, it was too late.

The word had already spread through the business community.

What had been previously dismissed as a conspiracy theory was suddenly the most contentious issue leading into the local government elections.

The plot was finally uncovered after some extended digging by The Gold Coast Bulletin, resulting in a coveted Walkley Award for then council reporter Alice Gorman.

The late developer Brian Ray blew the whistle on the affair, telling Gorman he and other businessmen had contributed to a trust fund to support the campaigns of so-called 'like minded' candidates.

Big business had approached those whom they saw as sensible candidates with similar agendas, who they believed would not bring the city into disrepute.

Grant Pforr, Greg Betts, Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe were the chosen few, their campaigns backed by developers to the tune of almost \$130,000.

Incumbent councillors David Power, Ted Shepherd and the late Sue Robbins were on hand to give advice.

The existence of the alliance caused a furore, particularly as it was uncovered only due to persistence by The Bulletin rather than disclosure by those involved.

Candidates were accused of concealing their donors, while incumbent councillors came under fire for denying a ticket and dismissing rumours of an alliance as 'conspiracy theories'.

However the revelations, just days before the March election, ultimately did not affect the ballot box.

Pforr and Betts rode into power along with their councillor advisers, and their incumbent allies including councillors Bob La Castra and Jan Grew.

In the circumstances, it was no surprise the group was labelled a bloc, but the image was shrugged off by the councillors as a media beat-up.

Little did they know just how many woes their 'like-minded alliance' would eventually bring.

Fast forward to August 2005 and the city council is in turmoil, under the most intense scrutiny in its history.

The CMC has announced a public inquiry to investigate whether councillors misled voters, failed to declare election gifts and voted despite material personal interests.

Public confidence is at an all-time low, after 18 months of bitter in-fighting and allegations which unravelled as the bloc was accused of pushing through its agenda.

The tenure of the bloc has jumped from controversy to controversy, with its members accused of sidelining colleagues who did not agree with their agenda.

Mayor Ron Clarke's inconsistent reign has seen some of the most controversial scenes in the council's history, with councillors and pensioners alike ejected from meetings.

That's on top of the notorious incident in which the Mayor poked arch-rival Cr Peter Young, and the councillors' decision to grant themselves a pay rise.

The decision to separate the public from councillors, using a soundproof piece of glass nicknamed the cone of silence, did not help the council's image.



Before councillors had been in office a year, Local Government Minister Desley Boyle was receiving daily complaints about their behaviour from a concerned public. However, beyond the histrionics and theatre, the source of the councillors' biggest dramas remained one and the same: the development industry, the source of many of their campaigns. In November The Bulletin revealed developer-backed councillors were not declaring a conflict of interest when dealing with matters which affected their donors. Bloc councillors pushed through the sale of the Surfers Paradise Transit Centre despite numerous angry scenes at one of the region's biggest public protests in years, with residents dismayed at the loss of the asset. The CMC was asked to investigate a rates discount given to prominent developer Soheil Abedian in unusual circumstances. The focus was well and truly placed on the council when national and state media belatedly jumped on the bandwagon, but the train had already left the station. Ms Boyle expressed serious concerns after The Bulletin revealed Cr Young had handed her a dossier alleging systemic problems within the council, particularly regarding links to developers. Just a few weeks later, CMC investigators served bloc members, developers and other business people with links to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, demanding detailed documents of election finances and other matters. Cr Clarke, under separate scrutiny over up to \$70,000 worth of in-kind donations he allegedly received, was also served. The numerous referrals to the CMC, case after case of bitter in-fighting and consistent accusation the council was pro-development had well and truly taken their toll.

The CMC's announcement of a public inquiry was due in no small part to more than a year of complaints, lobbying and investigation by Cr Young and allies Dawn Crichlow and Eddy Sarroff, with help from a few key community groups.

From the beginning of the new council's term, Cr Crichlow has called for the scalp of her colleagues whom she believed misled the public and concealed their developer links. She emphatically believed that the council bloc wrested control from day one.

"Prior to us even being sworn in, the bloc was leading the city," she claimed.

"We had a meeting at the arts centre, where David (Power) was elected Deputy Mayor, and it was obvious there was a bloc.

"They'd already decided who was going to get what committees, and they'd decided they wanted a pay rise. Everything has just spiralled from there."

The meeting was also a turning point for Cr Young.

"It was apparent to me that everything had already been worked out, they weren't open to new ideas," he said.

However, he said the issue of warring factions within the council was not as critical as its 'unhealthy' culture, where he claimed 'development is king'.

"There is a really unhealthy culture in the city in the terms of the way the community is treated, I believe badly, in terms of the council acknowledging its concerns," he said.

"Whereas those with vested interests are just knelt before as if they were gods . . . I'm trying to keep the bastards honest."

The Mayor shrugged off such allegations and said it was 'chic' to be anti-development.

He said the focus on the council bloc and related controversies had marred the good work his administration had achieved.

"It's been beaten up and beaten up and beaten up," he said.

Cr Clarke blamed the council's situation on councillors Young, Sarroff and Crichlow and community groups that he said were led by failed candidates.

"For 18 months they've been trying to imbalance the council, they have been putting the council and councillors down at every opportunity," he said.

"They think they are the chosen ones and if people disagree with them, then they must have been bribed or have a hidden agenda, but they haven't got the font of all wisdom, they don't always know what's best."

Deputy Mayor David Power, presumed leader of the bloc, agreed. He claimed statistics would reveal the council was tougher on developers more often than not, and said councillors rarely rejected the recommendations of planning officers.

He strenuously denied any accusations of collusion between his council counterparts.

"The number of times we have discussed an agenda item before it is dealt with by a committee, I could count on one hand," he said.

He claims the accusation the like-minded alliance misled voters by not declaring themselves completely was an unfair one.

"I never denied meeting with candidates - I gave advice to the business community there were people worth getting behind.

"There was never a ticket, there was never going to be a ticket, I always said that," he said.

Cr Power claimed an 'insidious' and 'superbly organised' campaign had been waged against a majority of councillors during the past 18 months, resulting in the public inquiry.

"The inquiry will show the level of fabrication and manipulation that this hardcore group have had on this city . . . it will spend a few million dollars to prove that this has been hysteria generated by three councillors and failed candidates," he said.

"The malcontent in the council and their failed supporters can't get their head around the fact that it is possible for a group of people to support each other and still be independent."

But the denials of a bloc do not wash with finance chairman Cr Rob Molhoek, who often sits on the fence between the council's factions.

"The statistics confirm that there is a bloc, the behaviour of my colleagues indicate they are pretty closely aligned, and I think it's a shame," he said.

"They certainly stick together, there's no doubt about that.

"The whole way they have targeted Susie Douglas is a great example of their persistence."

Cr Douglas has had ongoing problems with several colleagues since the heated arguments over the transit centre, and her later decision to blow the whistle on the sexual harassment case involving a senior bureaucrat.

She yesterday said she had no doubt there was a bloc.

"The transit centre was a dose of reality for me," she said.

"Up until then I simply thought you could win on your strong argument, or on research, or the fact that you represented the area, but I realised that no matter what I was going to do, no one was going to change their mind.

"The bloc had their agenda and their was no let-up."

Cr Power rejected the criticism, and said Cr Douglas simply 'couldn't put a good enough argument across'.

He said councillors voted in terms of the public interest, not their loyalties to each other.

"Cr Douglas should look at some of the wins she has had, such as the budget approvals on capital works which weren't even on the list but were slotted in," he said. "If she expects to win every argument, she's in the wrong job."

Cr Power said he expected bloc councillors would be vindicated at the public inquiry.

**Caption:** Councillors Eddy Sarroff, Peter Young and Dawn Crichlow

Mayor Ron Clarke (left) and council CEO Dale Dickson

Cr Susie Douglas

David Power expects bloc councillors to be vindicated at the public inquiry

**Illus:** Photo

**IllusBy:** Michael Ross

**Library Heading:** CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, INQUIRY, ELECTION

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - Main FRI 09 SEP 2005, Page 002**  
**Council denies CMC 'link' to projects axe**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

CITY councillors were yesterday accused of changing their stance on development matters since the Crime and Misconduct Commission announced its public inquiry. Councillors rejected six development applications on Tuesday at the first planning meeting to be held since last week's announcement of an inquiry.

Over the previous six months, a total of just 14 development applications were refused by the same committee, which meets weekly.

Cr Peter Young said it was worth noting there had been a spate of development rejections following the launch of an inquiry into allegations that the council was influenced by developers.

"The arguments they were relying on to refuse those applications on Tuesday are pretty slender," said Cr Young.

"If we applied them across the board then there wouldn't be a single house coming up on the Gold Coast."

Planning chairman Cr Ted Shepherd said the increases in refusals were 'purely coincidental' as the committee had followed officer recommendations.

"I am getting sick and tired of Peter Young's negative attitude, which is just to score headlines."

The council's public relations machine has also swung into action in the aftermath of the CMC's announcement; in the seven days since the launch of the inquiry, the council's media strategists sent almost three times the normal number of press releases.

Almost all contained glowing endorsements of council decisions or council events.

Cr Young claimed media releases were being pumped out 'by the truckload' in an attempt to gain a 'favourable image' in the community.

"It's costing the community huge amounts so I hope they are enjoying them," said Cr Young.

"It's getting to the point where we get a press release if (Mayor) Ron Clarke parts his hair differently."

Callers to the city council were also greeted with messages of reassurance when they were placed on hold last week.

A message by chief executive officer Dale Dickson assured residents that, despite the CMC probe, business was continuing as usual.

The council had planned to run radio advertisements spruiking the same message, but decided against it at the last minute. However, in a case of the one that got away, at least one advertisement was heard on a community radio station.

At Tuesday's planning committee, councillors refused a childcare centre, church, 50-lot subdivision, 42-lot subdivision, 10-lot subdivision and 16-lot subdivision.

However they approved a development at Runaway Bay at almost four times the allowable height under the planning scheme, and more than twice the density.

Cr Young said the refusals were 'very minor'.

Cr Shepherd said they were examples of the system working.

"They were the recommendations of officers, professional people who are not being influenced by councillors," he said.

"This wasn't pre-arranged, the process has brought those applications before council."

The total of refusals over the past six months does not include refusals under the old planning scheme, because developers can reapply under the new scheme.

**Library Heading: COUNCIL, DEVELOPMENT, INQUIRY**

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainSAT 10 SEP 2005, Page 003**  
**Candidate's secret backers**  
**Developers Rix outed as poll donors**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

FAILED candidate Roxanne Scott's mystery backers have finally been revealed, more than 18 months after the council elections.

Developers Norm and Greg Rix were yesterday outed as the donors behind a \$5000 contribution to Ms Scott - dished out through a solicitor's trust account.

The disclosure came only after The Bulletin revealed the existence of the trust account two weeks ago.

Greg Rix said his father Norm donated the money through the trust account because he wanted to remain anonymous for fear of a 'backlash' if Ms Scott were unsuccessful.

He said his father also valued the anonymity afforded by a trust account because he did not want every 'Tom, Dick and Harry' approaching him for donations.

The account, organised by solicitor Mal Chalmers, distributed three separate payments to Ms Scott - who ran for Southport but was defeated by incumbent councillor Dawn Crichlow.

Only Ms Scott lodged a gift return, which detailed a cash donation of \$4368 and two in-kind donations totalling \$632 from the trust account, but did not name the original donor.

The Bulletin's reporting on the issue uncovered a loophole in the Local Government Act, whereby the donors of money in solicitor trust accounts, which was diverted to political candidates, did not always have to be fully disclosed.

Local Government Minister Desley Boyle has since promised to close the loophole.

It was only after The Bulletin raised the issue of disclosure that the council requested Mr Chalmers reveal the original donor.

Ms Scott's amended return, viewed yesterday, showed the \$5000 donation came from Family Assets Pty Ltd.

A company search revealed the Rix father-and-son team were behind the company.

Ms Scott refused to comment.

The Rix family is behind three developments at Coomera - the Palms, Coomera Grand and Crystal Creek - and were also responsible for Ashmore City shopping centre.

Mr Rix said his father had meetings with Ms Scott before the election and offered her advice.

"He saw in her a very good candidate, he made the decision to help her," he said.

He said developers often received a backlash from successful candidates if they backed the loser.

**Caption:** Greg Rix

Roxanne Scott

**Illus:** Photo

**Library Heading:** COUNCIL ELECTION, DONATIONS, CANDIDATE

**BIOG:** GREG RIX, ROXANNE SCOTT

'Plot' for control of council

By Greg Roberts

LEADING property developer Brian Ray held clandestine meetings with a Gold Coast city councillor to devise plans for pro-developer councillors to win control of Australia's second-biggest local government authority.

Investigators from Queensland's Crime and Misconduct Commission were told this week by council employees that councillor Sue Robbins and Ray were key players in the establishment of the Common Sense Trust, which bankrolled the campaigns of pro-developer candidates in last year's council elections.

Robbins met Ray before the poll to work on an election strategy and did not keep records, telling associates of the need for confidentiality because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Pro-developer councillors won a majority on the council in the subsequent elections. Robbins died of a heart attack last November. Ray was killed in an alpine plane crash last month.

The CMC announced last week a public inquiry into allegations of an improper relationship between developers and Gold Coast councillors.

The CMC has asked Ray's companies to provide any documentation they have relating to the Common Sense Trust. Ray's son, Tony Ray, said he had no direct knowledge of Brian Ray's involvement in the election campaign, but he doubted his father would have wanted it kept secret.

"I have always known Brian to be open in regard to matters of this kind," Mr Ray said.

As part of the inquiry, the CMC is examining allegations that Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke failed to declare up to \$70,000 in "in-kind" donations.

CMC investigators have been told that Mr Clarke usually votes with pro-developer councillors. But the mayor had no involvement with the Common Sense Trust, and no knowledge of the pre-election moves of Ray, who donated \$10,000 to the fund, and other developers to win control.

However, the CMC has been told that, along with Robbins, deputy mayor David Power -- who has been anointed by Mr Clarke as his successor -- was involved in negotiations to set up the trust under the direction of businessman Lionel Barden.

Mr Power is regarded as the leader of the bloc, the term given to the pro-developer majority of councillors. The CMC is investigating the sale of a property by Mr Power for \$1.1 million to a company owned by Graeme Ingles, who also donated \$10,000 to the Common Sense Trust.

Mr Power yesterday declined to comment on his role in setting up the trust. "The inquiry will deal with these matters," he said.

As the inquiry progressed, a row erupted between councillors over a decision by the council to fund the legal expenses of its members appearing before it.

Councillor Eddy Sarroff opposed the move. "It is not the role of a council to pick up the legal tab of councillors; it's outrageous" Mr Sarroff said.

Councillor Dawn Crichlow said: "This is an appalling abuse of ratepayers' funds."

But Mr Power said the payment of legal expenses was justified as councillors had complied with laws and had not been charged with anything. "Is it reasonable for councillors who have been subjected to media-driven hysteria to be severely financially penalised, to satisfy the media and a number of malcontent councillors and failed candidates?" he said.

**Section:** LOCAL

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainMON 12 SEP 2005, Page 003**  
**Council 'I spy' fury**  
**Row erupts after Pforr admits covertly taping meeting**  
**By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter**

CITY councillors are turning to subterfuge and secret spying as paranoia about the Crime and Misconduct Commission's public inquiry reaches new heights.

Cr Grant Pforr has been accused of running a 'Big Brother dictatorship' after he had a public community meeting secretly taped.

Cr Pforr yesterday confirmed he had someone tape the Paradise Point Residents Action Group meeting for him, claiming organisers were spreading 'misinformation' about him and a proposed development in the area. "I had it taped, yes . . . I wasn't invited, I had someone tape it," he said.

President Jan Evans said she was appalled that Cr Pforr had gone to such lengths, saying organisers had no idea the meeting was being taped.

"To do it so underhandedly is like a dictatorship with secret police," said Ms Evans.

"Big Brother is watching us - this is the Gold Coast for heaven's sake.

"Where are we coming to when you can't go to a public meeting and talk without being recorded."

Cr Pforr distributed a transcript of the meeting to councillors on Friday, pointing out specific paragraphs where past president Darani Cumming reportedly urged residents to write to the CMC if they had concerns about the council. He refused to reveal who his spy was.

Cr Pforr wanted Mayor Ron Clarke to write to the CMC and Local Government Minister Desley Boyle about the comments but his motion was rejected after Cr Peter Young raised concerns.

Cr Young said the taping was a 'shameful revelation' which had embarrassed the council.

"This is an embarrassing enlightenment of the nature of relations between some councillors and the community they are supposed to be representing," he said.

Cr Pforr said he would have a JP verify the tape's authenticity before sending it to the CMC himself.

"I just want to make sure I get the other side of the story across," he said.

The action group's September 3 meeting was called to discuss a development proposed by Sydney-based developer Marsim for Paradise Point.

Cr Pforr has been at odds with the action group since it was formed last December to protest against the development, which involves nearly 500 dwellings including high-rise apartments and villas.

Residents fear local infrastructure won't cope with the density.

Cr Pforr said he had the meeting taped because the action group had been spreading misinformation about the development.

"There's an element out there that I believe is very organised, but they are not really representing people's true feelings out there in Paradise Point," he said.

"They are harassing residents and upsetting elderly people."

Ms Evans said the action group was concerned about the impact of the Marsim development in terms of density, height and public access.

"This would seem to be an attempt by Grant to question our credibility by inferring we are doing improper things," she said.

She said Ms Cumming was merely pointing out to residents that the CMC public inquiry, announced two weeks ago, gave them an opportunity to express their concerns.

Ms Cumming is overseas.

**Library Heading:** CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION, INQUIRY, COUNCIL MEETING

Chamber boss used  
\$5200 from fund  
**COUNCIL IN THE FIRING LINE**  
By by Fiona Hamilton council reporter

CHAMBER of Commerce powerbroker Bob **Janssen** received \$5200 from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund for negative campaign material he compiled on councillor Peter Young. Mr **Janssen** yesterday said his campaign against the councillor was supported by late councillor Sue Robbins and Deputy Mayor David Power.

He said councillors Bob La Castra and Ted Shepherd did information checks for his pamphlet, which was circulated in Cr Young's electorate.

Mr **Janssen** said the pamphlet was checked by Hickey Lawyers, the legal firm which organised the trust account, before it was distributed.

"I received a cheque for \$5200 from the Lionel Barden Trust Fund for layout, printing and distribution," he said.

Mr **Janssen** was Nerang Chamber of Commerce president and chairman of the Western Chambers of Commerce at the time, and an avid supporter of Brian Rowe, the trust fund recipient defeated by Cr Young.

Mr **Janssen's** revelations showed, for the first time, the extent of Chamber of Commerce involvement in the like-minded alliance of council candidates.

They came as Cr Power, in an interview with The Gold Coast Bulletin, made several admissions about his involvement in the fund.

Cr Power revealed:

- \* He contacted Lionel Barden and asked Mr Barden to put his name to the election fund.

- \* He and Cr Robbins were responsible for involving late developer Brian Ray.

- \* He phoned developers and businesses to solicit funds for the trust.

The Crime and Misconduct Commission public inquiry, due to kick off on October 10, was spawned from 18 months of furore after councillors and candidates were accused of misleading the community over the trust.

Investigations by The Gold Coast Bulletin have uncovered the widespread Chamber of Commerce involvement in the engineering of the so-called council bloc, with CMC investigators preparing to interview major players. They have also interviewed members of the media and sought copies of all electoral advertising from The Gold Coast Bulletin.

Mr **Janssen** yesterday revealed chambers of commerce were heavily involved in the push to have pro-business, balanced candidates elected at the 2004 poll.

He said 'radical fundamentalist greenies' needed to be thwarted.

"We were very concerned about the grip the Greens were getting. We had discovered all these green candidates standing," he said.

"We knew there was some serious money available for candidates who were sensible."

Mr **Janssen** said he spoke with councillors Robbins and Power about putting out a pamphlet in Division 4 to counter a publication about Cr Young's achievements, claiming he was a 'conduit' to the green movement.

"It wasn't dirty, it dealt with his ability to do his job."

Two mail-outs were organised in the week prior to the election, although the second was stopped after intervention by Mr Rowe.

"I had no idea Lionel was involved (in the trust fund) until I got the cheque," said Mr **Janssen**.

Cr La Castra said Mr **Janssen** clarified some facts with him. "I just made sure I only gave him information I knew to be correct," said Cr La Castra.

Cr Power said he did not recall the pamphlet as he saw a 'tonne of material' in the lead-up to the election.

Cr Shepherd said: "I can't deny it, but I can't recall it."

Cr Young was surprised to learn the trust funded the pamphlet he described as 'unbelievable

gutter stuff.

"This just goes further to demonstrate the level of organisation and desperation that was attempted to put in place (a majority of councillors)," he said.

\* Editorial, Page 46

**Caption:** Chamber chief Bob Janssen speaks out about his involvement in council activities

**Illus:** Photo



**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
**Edition B - MainSAT 01 OCT 2005, Page 031**  
**THE BLOC**  
**By Fiona Hamilton**

More than 18 months after a like-minded alliance rode in to power at the city council, the Crime and Misconduct Commission's public inquiry into their election campaigns, and actions since, begins in just 10 days. Council reporter Fiona Hamilton takes a fresh look at the council controversy, and extracts some frank admissions from the major players THEY came together on November 13, 2003, gathering at the Islander Resort, Surfers Paradise.

Tom Tate, president of the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce, convened the meeting. David Power, now Deputy Mayor, arrived late.

They were joined by Ian Solomon, past president of the Southport Chamber of Commerce, and John Lang, the Coomera real estate agent who acted as campaign manager for failed candidate Brian Rowe.

Bob Janssen, president of the Nerang Chamber of Commerce at the time, was also along for the ride.

It was a long lunch among would-be powerbrokers, and it would have lasting implications for the city.

Almost two years down the track, the major players involved in the Lionel Barden Trust Fund are preparing for the Crime and Misconduct Commission's public inquiry, which kicks off on October 10.

Central to the CMC's investigation has been the establishment of the developer-backed fund, before the last election, and accusations those involved misled the public by being less than candid about its existence.

But while the Lionel Barden Trust Fund has been talked about for more than 18 months, the true picture of its genesis, and reasons for its establishment, are yet to fully emerge.

In a frank and open interview with The Bulletin this week, Cr Power, leader of the so-called council bloc, makes some surprising admissions about the development of the trust fund.

Power told The Bulletin he actively sought money for the trust and approached key players in an attempt, he says, not to wrest control, but to build a better council. And for the first time, a Gold Coast Bulletin investigation has uncovered the extent of Chamber of Commerce involvement in the engineering of the like-minded alliance.

Solomon recalls the Islander meeting well.

The group of business leaders, and Power, had gathered to discuss the 'terrible state of affairs' within the council, with business satisfaction at an all-time low.

"The city's image was constantly damaged by the lack of articulate decision making, and we were sick of it," said Solomon. "We concluded we should support pro-business, sensible candidates.

"It was borne from sheer frustration with the previous council, not this Machiavellian powerplay by a pro-development power bloc . . . there wasn't a developer in the room." According to Solomon, it was his suggestion that a pool of monies be used to deliver a group of 'like-minded candidates'.

\* Continued next page

\* From Page 31

"We talked about who should be trustee, and I suggested Lionel (Barden - then Robina Chamber of Commerce president).

"I feel terrible about it because he's become the whipping boy, his reputation has been completely, and unfairly, sullied.

"That meeting was the root of where it all started . . . and Lionel wasn't even there."

According to Tate, the 'totally unofficial' alliance boiled down to 'no more deadlocks', and having 'professional, infrastructure-focused' people in council.

"If they were like-minded and had the progress of the city at heart, then we could look to

support them - that's what we decided.

"We tried to analyse divisions, and who would support who.

"From that point I focused on Division 7 and let the cards fall where they did."

**Janssen** said all the chambers of commerce throughout the city knew there was 'serious money' available for candidates who were pro-business and sensible.

"We all knew about it, we were pushing for it . . . we never knew where the money came from though, we didn't need to know," he said.

"We had discovered all these green candidates standing in various places . . . it would have been the death knell for the city if the radical fundamentalists got in.

"This all goes back to the loss of the Skyrail, the mess with the Tugun bypass, the raising of the Hinze Dam and the Harbour Study.

"We needed to get balanced and sensible people into council."

Power had already been speaking to business and community leaders throughout the city, 'sounding them out'.

"How they thought council was going, what the problems were," he said. "And it was pretty obvious they wanted some unity, they wanted a clear direction and some dignity back in there.

"While we're dealing with water issues and the traffic is starting to choke up, we're getting national television for people throwing agendas or chasing chooks or wanting to change the colour of a building."

Cr Dawn Crichlow made headlines when she wanted a building's bright yellow paint toned down, and when she went into a bat for a resident who wanted to keep chickens in his yard. Cr Eddy Sarroff caused a stir when he threw an agenda at then mayor Gary Baildon, hitting him in the chest.

"What we wanted to do was just find people who were professional people to deal with," said Power.

In a sense, the Islander meeting sealed the deal. Power went away secure in the knowledge he had the backing of business groups.

It was from there the plan to install like-minded, pro-business candidates took shape. A few short weeks later, candidates Greg Betts, Rob Molhoek, Grant Pforr, Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe gathered together at advertising agency Quadrant's Robina office to be briefed by Power, Cr Ted Shepherd and Cr Sue Robbins, who died in November last year.

Crs Power and Robbins had been busy. After 'months and months and months' of negative feedback about the council, according to Power, the pair had taken their election strategy to the next step.

"There was no hiding that we were out there asking questions about what people thought we were up to and how we should improve it," said Power.

"The reason there is a perception that the trust fund was hidden is because there's a perception that there was an attempt to form a bloc.

"There was no attempt to form a bloc, there was an attempt to just get people who could work professionally."

He said none of the candidates was recruited.

"What we did was just check out the existing candidates to see who were reasonable people, nice people and intelligent people - we came up with a list, started spreading that around, talking to business leaders."

Following the Islander meeting, Power phoned prominent developer Brian Ray, who had already expressed concern about goings-on at the council.

Ray, who died in a plane crash in Mt Hotham in July, eventually blew the whistle on the trust fund in the lead-up to the election.

"I . . . asked him if he'd come and talk to Sue and I, that was never a secret either," said Power.

"Brian had no development interests at that time in the city, he was independent in that respect, he was simply a ratepayer."

Over coffee at Varsity Lakes, the trio agreed a centralised trust fund was the best way to go, to ensure candidates were at arm's length from their donors.

Power then approached Barden to put his name to it.

"... because I felt that Sue and I being involved really didn't allow that independence from an emotional point of view.

"I didn't believe that anyone should feel that they were beholden to me or to Sue, and that it needed to have someone who had no vested interest in physical outcomes to organise and control it.

"To to his credit he said yes and he's been vilified for that, for exercising his democratic right."

From there, the movement had momentum.

Chris Morgan, of Quadrant, was recruited to do advertising work for the candidates who, bar Molhoek, ultimately received a total of almost \$130,000 from the trust towards their campaigns.

"Brian suggested Tony Hickey - he trusted him," said Power.

"One of the reasons he suggested a lawyer's trust fund is because... everything has to be accountable, nothing can be hidden."

Following the first meeting at the Quadrant office, Power said he and Robbins, along with Ray and others, started looking for support.

"We certainly approached businesses for support, no question about it, never denied it," said Power.

"I certainly spoke to Soheil (Abedian, of Sunland), Villaworld, the marine industry, members of the chambers of commerce... it was broad ranging. Whether that was funding or whether it was asking them if they could provide booth workers... from there it was up to them."

For the candidates, following the first meeting at Quadrant, campaigning continued as normal.

"It was so ad hoc at times, I'm thinking 'what's going on here?'" said Betts.

"They were offering us the possibility of funding and putting across a professional campaign."

According to Morgan, it was left to the discretion of individual candidates to employ Quadrant.

"Candidates Pforr, Scott and Betts... did so for the duration of the election campaign," he said.

He said Mr Barden's involvement was sought so the trust was headed by a 'professional and well-credentialled' business figure.

"It was always recognised that the existence of the trust would become public... this was hardly the action of individuals determined to maintain secrecy at all costs," he said. "If secrecy was an objective, it would hardly have been named the Lionel Barden Trust Fund nor administered by a prominent Gold Coast law firm."

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\* Molhoek, who ultimately did not take money from the trust, was approached by Lang, Rowe and Solomon, to attend the first Quadrant meeting.

"The chambers were really getting behind this thing, they told me they were working to put together a group of like-minded candidates," said Molhoek.

"It was about getting good people into council... on the first hearing I felt reasonably comfortable with it."

He believes the whole saga began with 'the best of intentions'.

"I don't for one minute think that Chris Morgan and David Power set out to try to build some sort of pseudo political party or alliance... I still fundamentally think their intentions were right and honourable," he said

Following the first meeting, according to Molhoek, the 'wheels came off'.

His campaign director was having trouble getting funding from the trust and Molhoek felt the group was having problems getting business support.

"About a month before the election, we weren't getting any answers, my campaign team said 'forget about it'.

"When Sue Robbins and David Power denied the (Quadrant) meeting (to The Bulletin in the week before the election), then checked their diaries and remembered it, I gagged a bit.

"What disturbed me were the denials, there's not a lot of integrity in that."

Accusations that candidates and councillors misled the community by denying their involvement in the fund are a key aspect of the CMC's investigation.

However, Power insisted he was never misleading in his answers to questions, claiming instead that the wrong questions were asked.

"I told (The Bulletin) I was giving advice to businesses regarding candidates, that's it," he said.

"Now the money wasn't available to me and (The Bulletin) kept asking me was I being supported, and that's the key, and that's what I answered truthfully.

"I gave a direct answer to a direct question, why offer an answer to a question that wasn't asked?"

Betts said the notion of a bloc was never discussed when the group met. "They impressed upon us at the time, right from the beginning - we are not a team, we are not trying to bring together a group.

"What we're trying to do is just get better quality people in council and help move the city forward."

According to Power, he and Robbins had pushed forward candidates 'we believed we could work with in a professional manner'.

"One of the things we continually insisted upon . . . was that they maintain their independence, and they will all confirm that."

Candidates were told a range of businesses were to be approached, not just developers.

Power claims he talked to players within the 'marine industry, IT, (and) education' industries.

"I spoke to all sorts of people over that 12 weeks," he said.

But when it came down to it, only developers contributed to the trust fund, to the tune of \$150,000.

Power explains that other forms of support, such as booth workers, were forthcoming from organisations other than developers, but did not have to be declared under the Local Government Act.

"Certain industry groups, when the media started to focus on this, ran for the hills," he said.

"Because some industry groups are very good at complaining but they're not very good at standing up and being counted."

When questioned over the trust fund and the business-backed push, Power seemed non-plussed, claiming he could not see what all the fuss was about.

While the business dissatisfaction was a compelling reason to take action, Power claimed he and Robbins sought out candidates because their council rivals were doing exactly the same thing.

"What's disappointing is there's been a complete disregard for the fact that we were in a reactionary position, we were actually reacting to someone or people that were trying to form a bloc and a ticket.

"We found out Dawn (Crichlow) and Peter (Young) were advising a series of candidates . . . we were aware they'd had meetings."

He says the group of rookie candidates, all associated with the Concerned Ratepayers Group, confirmed their intentions on Boxing Day, announcing their alliance on the front page of The Bulletin.

"You had a group of people we knew had formed, we knew what their intentions were, compared to a group of people that simply wanted extra councillors in there who were just reasonable people to deal with and, I guess, professional and polite in their dealings," he said. Power said he just can not understand what all the fuss is about.

"The fact that it's a trust fund, big deal, every political organisation in the country uses them.

"I'm not sure what the fuss is about, other than the fact that we've got a group of candidates who are now all in charge of so-called community groups.

"If we look at the complaints that have been made to the CMC I'll bet you 90 per cent of them come from (them)," said Power, referring to Citizens of Democracy, the Ratepayers

Association, Friends of Burleigh, Helensvale Residents Association and Coomera Valley Progress Association.

'We concluded we should support pro-business, sensible candidates'

**Caption:** Gold Coast citizens protest against the existence of a bloc

**Illus:** Photo

**Section:** FOCUS

**Gold Coast Bulletin**  
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**Betts: I wouldn't do it again**  
**By FIONA HAMILTON**

WHEN it comes to local developers, Burleigh councillor Greg **Betts** (pictured right) is hardly a walking encyclopedia.

Asked about the big names who contributed to the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, of which he was a recipient, **Betts** screws up his face and thinks carefully.

"I have met Jim Raptis . . . I only found out recently Raptis was involved. Apparently he's got some company that was one of the donors, is that right?"

He has never met Soheil Abedian and shrugs when other developers are mentioned.

"I don't even know who half those companies are, and I would definitely not know who the actual personalities are.

"I did meet John Ingle, at the UDIA ball."

Does he mean Graeme Ingles of the Ingles Group, which gave \$10,000 to the fund?

"Oh Graeme, yes, you can see I know him well."

**Betts** hardly fits into the image of a developer friendly powerbroker, concerned only with controlling the council.

He is affable, softly spoken, and, while he speaks his mind, does not seek confrontation.

When he stands up in council, **Betts** is more likely to be seeking clarification than to start an argument.

More than anything else, he seems more perplexed about the storm his developer funding, and subsequent association with the so-called council bloc, has created.

"It wasn't like it was some developer-friendly group of people who wanted to come in and give over the city, it was far from it," said **Betts**. "It was impressed upon us, right from the beginning, we are not a team. What we're trying to do is just get better quality people in council and help to move the city forward.

"We're making lots of decisions, and some of them aren't popular, but in our opinion they're decisions that need to be made."

If it wasn't for the Lionel Barden Trust Fund, **Betts** - as an individual councillor - may have had a fairly quiet 18 months.

Sure, the unisex toilets on the Burleigh foreshore caused a bit of a ruckus locally, and the issue of the stormwater drain on the beach created a bit of a storm.

But, far and away the most criticism **Betts** has faced during his time in council has been over his actions as a candidate.

His name is inextricably linked to Lionel Barden's developer-backed fund which also bankrolled Cr Grant Pforr and failed candidates Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe.

If **Betts** could have his time again, he would steer well and truly clear of the first meeting which saw the formation of the council's 'like-minded alliance'.

"I don't think I've done anything wrong - it's just the way it's turned out, it would have been better not to be involved," said **Betts**. "The reality of it is it's become a big mess."

He says his 'heart sank' when he realised after the election the only donors to the trust fund were developers.

"Developer was a dirty word here in Burleigh - that's why, when I heard that the trust fund was a cross-section of businesses, and it was at arm's length - I thought, I can go along with that." Instead, **Betts** is now embroiled in an investigation by the Crime and Misconduct Commission, preparing to appear at a public inquiry into the council in just over a week's time. While one of the key issues being investigated by the CMC is whether voters were misled at the last election, **Betts** continues to deny the existence of a council bloc, and emphatically rules out any wrongdoing on his part.

When asked before the election whether he was funded by developers, **Betts** says he told residents he and his wife had spent thousands, with help from friends and businesses.

Ultimately, he received almost \$29,000 from the trust fund.

"I'd been told a cross-section of businesses (before the election), and that was all I can say,"

he said.

"If you say down the track - you were being funded by developers - well, if I didn't know that at the time, how can I tell anyone?"

"I'd been flying under the radar but I was never going to lie to anyone."

"I was happy that no one had picked up on my being part of this so-called bloc."

"Why should I have the focus put on me when others were doing similar things?"

**Betts** says he did not intend to mislead the public, but was 'careful' in the way he answered questions.

"I've always tried to be honest in the way I've answered questions . . . OK, maybe not as in-depth as what I probably could have been, but how much do you have to say?"

**Ilus:** Photo

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