

MEDIA RELEASE

WOLLONGONG AGAINST CORRUPTION

Democracy Now Rally and protest 10am 13 September

29 August 2008

Wollongong Against Corruption (WAC) is organising a rally and march through Wollongong on 13 September to demand that residents be given a right to elect a new Council. The rally will assemble at 10am in Lowden Square (opposite Wollongong Railway Station) and march up Crown Street Mall.

Voters across NSW will elect their Council representatives on 13 September. Residents of Wollongong and Shellharbour, however, will be excluded from voting. Both cities have had their democratic rights removed. Whilst other councils in NSW vote in local government elections, the residents of Wollongong and Shellharbour are to be ruled by unelected bureaucrats. The New South Wales Government has installed Administrators to run both Councils until 2012.

According to WAC Secretary Graham Larcombe "The NSW Government was wrong to take away our communities democratic right to vote. This is not the solution. Whatever our political views, it is important that our community insist on our democratic rights".

Wollongong Council was sacked because of corruption associated with the ALP. Shellharbour Council was sacked because the ALP dominated Council was in chaos. "The Labor Government has taken away our right to vote because of corruption and incompetence in the ALP. There is a serious crisis inside the ALP. This is not a problem for the residents of Wollongong and Shellharbour. The ALP should face the voters and not hide behind politically appointed bureaucrats".

The recent Making Community Democracy Conference in Wollongong, organised by WAC and attended by more than 150 people, unanimously passed the following resolution:

"This Conference insists that all communities have democratic rights. We call on the NSW Government to restore the democratic rights of the citizens of Wollongong and Shellharbour. We urge the Minister for Local Government to set election dates in Wollongong and Shellharbour and all other local government areas by no later than March 2009 and to work with newly elected Councils to strengthen democracy and to implement new corruption prevention measures".

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