

North Sydney Sun

News update: 17 December 2021

Ian Mutton throws his hat in the ring for mayor

Independent councillor-elect Ian Mutton has thrown his hat into the contest for mayor, announcing himself as a "third way" choice for councillors who want to move on beyond the Team Jilly vs Real Independents era.

The mayor position will be decided by a vote of 10 councillors at a January 10 meeting. Nominally, the successful candidate will require six votes. If two candidates tie at five, it will be decided by a draw from a hat.

Although Team Jilly's Jilly Gibson and the Real Independents' Zoe Baker are the putative candidates, neither of them have sufficient votes to be assured of victory and will reply on support from others.

The Real Independents' representation on Council appears set to fall from three to two, while Team Jilly has only two and possibly three if Cammeraygal no 2 candidate Hugo Bauer can get enough preferences to overtake the Sustainable Australia Party's Georgia Lamb.

This means Gibson and Baker have to appeal to at least three and preferably four of independents Ian Mutton and James Spenceley, Labor's Godfrey Santer and Shannon Welch and the Sustainable Australia Party's William Bourke and Georgia Lamb, should she be elected.

Mutton believes that this centre group of six now have a chance to end the era of conflict between Team Jilly and the Real Independents, which has now endured in some form for the best part of a decade.

In a note to likely councillors, he wrote: "During this term Councillors will be called upon to push back against the State Government's relentless attack on our open green space; freeway/tunnel plans that, if allowed to stand, will vastly increase the amount of traffic on our streets; complete the Olympic Pool; review its property portfolio; and set budgets and funding plans."

"It will be a challenging time. North Sydney has, over the past decade, had a Council divided by two factions - the Council has at times, been dysfunctional with litigation between councillors and the council and enquiries involving councillors spent more than \$1m over the last decade. We councillors simply can't continue to go on repeating the past. The factions need to disengage. How? We need a circuit breaker. I can provide that circuit breaker. I will be a candidate for mayor and if elected I will follow practices intended to ensure procedural fairness. I will retire from the position of Mayor after one year leaving it to my fellow councillors to elect a Mayor to take council forward."

The final make-up of the council will be known by the middle of next week and horse trading has already begun between candidates for mayor to sure up support from the middle.