Media summary 2016

Jo Coghlan, Dr
Interview with Jo Coghlan, Australian Politics, Southern Cross University, about the news Cabinet has agreed to a plan that abolishing the so-called 'reach rule', which prohibits any one company broadcasting to more than 70% of the country and for companies to own radio television and newspapers in a single market. Coghlan explains that the rules were introduced to guarantee local content. Coghlan says that changes to the licencing fees can go into local news reporting, but the financial aspects are not being well articulated because funding is being cut to the ABC and SBS. Coghlan says the prospect of Newscorp buying Channel Ten and Channel Nine merging with Fairfax is not desirable, becomes it comes at the expense of a variety of voices and programming. Coghlan explains the local content laws will get caught-up in the legislation.

Media expert Dr Jo Coghlan is warning that proposed new media laws could threaten the quality of media in regional areas. Last night the federal cabinet approved a plan allowing media companies to own radio and television stations as well as newspapers in a single media market. Media companies are welcoming the Turnbull Government's sweeping changes to ownership laws. Coghlan says there should still be a local content to the region and that an example of that is the role of the ABC in bush fire emergency warnings.
There are concerns that new Australian media laws could threaten the quality of coverage in regional areas. Dr Jo Coghlan, Politics and Media Lecturer, Southern Cross University, says regional content requirements need to be considered.

Dr Jo Coghlan, Politics and Media Lecturer, Southern Cross University, is warning that new Australian media laws could threaten the quality of media in regional areas. Last night the federal cabinet approved a plan allowing media companies to own radio and television stations as well as newspapers in a single media market. Media companies are welcoming the Turnbull Government's sweeping changes to ownership laws.

Dr Jo Coghlan, Politics and Media Lecturer, Southern Cross University, is worrying that new Australian media laws could threaten the quality of media in regional areas.

Program Preview...
- Interview with Dr Jo Coghlan, Political Expert, Southern Cross University, on Senate voting reform bill.
- NSW Opposition using old mechanism to protest against the protest laws.
- Regular Segment: Page The Doctor with Dr Sue Page on sugar tax.
Interview with Dr Jo Coghlan, Political Expert, Southern Cross University, on Senate voting reform bill.

Shoebridge says Senators have had a very long night as a marathon debate continued in Federal Parliament overnight about the Senate voting changes. Coghlan says the debate is about a bill on the abolishment of group voting ticket. He explains what the changes would be on Senate voting if the bill was passed. Shoebridge asks if the bill was designed to lessen the chance of the so-called micro parties like the people who went under the Clive Palmer ticket. Coghlan mentions Labor has supported the amendment and the Coalition is trying to reduce the micro party candidates. He says Ricky Muir, [Australian] Motoring Enthusiast Party, was elected with 0.5% of the vote. He adds there are arguments on how democratic is the Senate. He mentions NSW Labor Senator Sam Dastyari and SA Senator Nick Xenophon were present at marathon sitting. He says the government don't have the numbers to stop the debate in the Senate. He states that the government can bring on a vote but if the government lose their vote, it will a trigger for a double dissolution election. He says [Prime Minister] Malcolm Turnbull is a good political strategist but the issue indicates that the Liberal Senators got it wrong because it has become a mess to the government. He discusses the agreement of Greens Leader Richard Di Natale with Michael Kroger of the Liberal Party on the legislation. He says they had a conversation to deal with Liberal-Green Senate and housing voting preferences in the next election. He adds the Greens will support the Coalition in the amendment.

Audience

N/A ALL, N/A MALE 16+, N/A FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Jo Coghlan, Political Expert, Southern Cross University

Boundaries change adds colour to 'bland' election

Gold Coast Sun - Central, Gold Coast QLD, Regional Changes - South, Bob Anthony

Labor is tipped to hold seat

Daily News, Tweeds Heads NSW, General News, Sue Gardiner
More election delays tipped

Gold Coast Sun - Central, Gold Coast QLD, Regional Changes - South, Denis Doherty

27 Oct 2016

Total change on the cards

Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin, Gold Coast, General News, Lea Emery

29 Oct 2016

A HOT TUB CAN FAST TURN COLD

Gold Coast Bulletin, Gold Coast QLD, General News, Paul Weston

04 Nov 2016

Interview with Jo Coghlan, Lecturer, Southern Cross University. Mascarenhas mentions ...

ABC Coffs Coast, Coffs Harbour, Breakfast, Carla Mascarenhas

04 Nov 2016 7:22 AM

Duration: 7 mins 55 secs • ASR AUD 1,948 • NSW • Australia • Southern Cross University - Radio & TV • ID: X00068178336

Interview with Jo Coghlan, Lecturer, Southern Cross University. Mascarenhas mentions Premier Mike Baird who tweeted about The Bachelor last year. She says Mike Baird has been receiving a lot of flak lately on social media. Coghlan says Mike Baird posted a picture of himself in front of a mural which was painted by Scott Marsh. He says the picture was a reference to the lockout laws in Sydney and it may have put some people off.

Audience

N/A ALL, N/A MALE 16+, N/A FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Jo Coghlan, Lecturer, Southern Cross University

Also broadcast from the following 1 station

ABC Mid North Coast (Taree)
Fresh faces, fresh start

Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin, Gold Coast, General News, Lea Emery

05 Nov 2016

Page 26 • 441 words • ASR AUD 4,227 • Photo: Yes • Type: News Item• Classification: • Size: 529.00 cm² • QLD • Australia •

View original • Full text: 441 word(s), ~1 min

Audience

33,934 CIRCULATION
Boundaries change adds colour to ‘bland’ election

BOB ANTHONY
BOB.ANTHONY@NEWS.COM.AU

A CHANGE in the electoral boundaries in the seat of Richmond will see the injection of an extra 8000 voters, but that will bring a change in representation remains to be seen.

According to Southern Cross University political science lecturer Dr Jo Coghlan, the redistribution has resulted in a change for 13,500 voters with the bulk, 8000, moving into Richmond from Ballina and voters to the west of the seat, including Nimbin, joining the neighbouring seat of Page.

“In the last election, the sitting member Justine Elliot had a four per cent swing against her and there was a sizeable vote for the Palmer United Party candidate who gained about 6000 votes,” Dr Coghlan said.

“This time, I don’t see the turmoil which surrounded the Labor Party as being such a factor and it will be interesting to see just where those PUP voters will now go.

“While there is a feeling in the general electorate about voters being a little disenfranchised with both major parties, they still have to put their preferences somewhere.

“Elections usually see about 40 per cent of voters going conservative (Liberal/National), 40 per cent going Labor about 20 per cent making up their minds on their way to the ballot box.

“It’s that 20 per cent which will decide the outcome of the election.”

Dr Coghlan (pictured) said Richmond would again be a contest between Labor and the Nationals, with the Greens possibly controlling the result.

“Will Liberals supporters vote for a National candidate in Matthew Fraser and will Ballina follow the trend from the NSW state election with a strong Green vote, that could work for Justine Elliot,” Dr Coghlan said.

“From what I have been hearing, negative gearing is an issue in Richmond because you have a lot of investors and retirees who have put their funds into investment properties and they would be vary of any changes to negative gearing which Labor want while you also have a socio — economic class who are renters and low incomes who might think that any change to that might improve their changes of getting into the Pol market.

“Both major candidates look to be playing it safe at the moment — in fact the campaign is a bit bland, but then again bland is safe and keeping to the party lines at this stage doesn’t make you too much of a target.”

Dr Coghlan said the changes could have a major bearing for Page where Janette Saffin is looking to regain the seat against incumbent Kevin Hogan.

“Ms Saffin picking up Nimbin will definitely give her a boost and I think that will be a very tight contest.”

NATIONAL Party leader Barnaby Joyce has a fight on his hands to remain in his seat of New England against independent Tony Windsor according to Doctor Jo Coghlan.

The Southern Cross University political science lecturer said the demands of the Nationals campaign might take a toll on Mr Joyce, who is up against a very experienced campaigner with a proven track record in parliament.

“Tony Windsor is well known and has gained respect for what he has been able to deliver to the electorate as an independent,” Dr Coghlan said. I think people may tend to forget his role in the Gillard — Rudd area of hung parliament and see him as someone who will put his electorate first.”

Elsewhere, Dr Coghlan said the rise of Nick Xenophon as a political force will also be of interest, especially in South Australia and Western Australia.

“I would not be surprised to see his team pick up Senate seats at the expense of PUP," she said.

“This will be another very tight election and I wouldn’t be surprised to see another hung parliament with cross benchers controlling power in the Senate.”
Labor is tipped to hold seat
Fraser says he’s in the race

LABOR’S Justine Elliot is likely to retain the marginal seat of Richmond with a 1-2% increase in her two-party preferred vote, predicts Southern Cross University Australian Government lecturer Jo Coghlan.

That’s if the Roy Morgan Research released on June 15, which had The Greens nearly doubling their support to 29% locally, was inaccurate as Ms Coghlan believes it was.

“It just doesn’t ring true,” she said.

But if the polling was correct, Ms Coghlan said Labor and The Greens would battle it out on a two-party preferred basis with about 1000 votes between them.

She said nationally, support for The Greens had remained steady.

“The Greens should be happy with 15% of the primary vote which would give Elliot a 1-2% increase in her two-party preferred vote,” Ms Coghlan said.

She said this election was likely to see many previously rusted-on Labor voters across the country drift back after experiments with minor parties at previous elections, consolidating Labor-held seats like Richmond.

Ms Coghlan said Nationals’ candidate Matthew Fraser had largely pushed the Federal line of “jobs and growth” during the campaign, which lacked emotional punch and localisation.

“On the ground, what does jobs and growth mean if I live in Tweed Heads?” she said.

She said by contrast, families could relate to Labor’s campaign against Medicare “privatisation”.

“Fraser needed to localise his campaign a bit more,” she said.

“He hasn’t articulated well how the national policies are going to be very beneficial.

“Jobs and growth isn’t emotional. People understand it on a theoretical level, they get it, but it doesn’t resonate.”

Mrs Elliot, who is backed by Sportsbet punters at $1.15, said she was not counting on a win.

“I honestly don’t take anything for granted,” she said this week. She said threats to Medicare under the Coalition had been the main issue this election.

However, some voters were upset by “Medi-scare” with nasty feedback posted on Mrs Elliot’s Facebook page.

Mr Fraser said limited on-the-ground campaigning by Mrs Elliot indicated she expected to win comfortably.

However, he said he was sensing a mood for change, even among previous Greens voters, who realised the Coalition was likely to be returned to office, so were supporting a candidate that would be in government.

Mr Fraser said at the Byron Bay pre-polling, a tough area for conservative candidates, he had sensed far more support than his 2013 tilt at the seat.

He said after Mrs Elliot’s 12 years in office, some thought it was time to give another candidate a go.

“We think we’re in contention to win,” he said.

The battle for the seat, held by just a 1.6% margin, has attracted national and even international attention.

The Tweed has had visits from most of the major political players including Greens leader Richard Di Natale, One Nation’s Pauline Hanson, Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce and Labor...
leader Bill Shorten. On Wednesday, comedian Shaun Micallef featured an amusing parody of Greens candidate Dawn Walker on his program, Mad As Hell, sending up her party's policy to pay artists in between jobs.

Animal Justice Party candidate Angela Pollard was interviewed by a Japanese media outlet this week, while Sky News and 7.30 Report have featured Richmond.
Early poll

12,000 have already made their pick for Richmond

Sue Gardiner
Sue.Gardiner@tweeddailynews.com.au

THE Tweed Shire goes to the polls today after a marathon eight-week federal election campaign.

It’s finally safe to answer your landline again after a raft of electioneering robo-calls have pestered residents for days.

But thousands of us have already cast our votes.

As part of a national trend, more than 12,000 enrolled voters have pre-poll at Tweed Heads, Tweed Heads South and Murwillumbah over the past couple of weeks.

“It is a significant increase (on past years),” said Richmond Divisional Returning Officer Vicki Kapernick.

There’s also been more than 7000 local applications for postal votes.

That means if the result is close tonight, it could take days to count all the votes and until an official result is known.

Pre-poll voting usually favours the incumbent candidate, said Southern Cross University Australian politics lecturer Jo Coghlan.

Nearly 2.2 million Australians had cast their votes before today compared to 1.5 million for the same period at the last election in 2013.

Justine Elliot is the frontrunner to retain the seat of Richmond which takes in the Tweed Shire and in which six candidates are standing.

Voting booths are at most public schools plus Tweed Heads PCYC and Seagulls Club.

Fines of up to $180 apply for failing to vote.

ON CUE TO HAVE THEIR SAY: Tweed Daily News journalist Liana Turner sent this photo of the Aussie ex-pat queue in London to vote this week. PHOTO: LIANA TURNER
SCU expert tips Elliot to win in tight race

Sue Gardiner
sue.gardiner@tweeddailynews.com.au

LABOR’S Justine Elliot is likely to retain the marginal Federal seat of Richmond with a 1-2% increase in her two-party preferred vote, according to Southern Cross University Australian Government lecturer Jo Coghlan.

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More than 12,000 Tweed Shire residents have already pre-polled for this federal election.

However, some voters were upset by “Medi-scare” with nasty feedback posted on Mrs Elliot’s Facebook page.

Mr Fraser said he was sensing a mood for change and limited grassroots campaigning by Mrs Elliot indicated she expected to win.
LNP saw Forde danger

Coalition fears believed to have been behind Turnbull visit to announce M1 funding

ANDREW POTTS

ANDREW.POTTS@NEWS.COM.AU

A TOP political expert believes Malcolm Turnbull’s last-minute visit to the seat of Forde showed the Liberals knew the seat was in danger.

Only 149 votes separate Labor challenger Des Hardman and LNP incumbent Bert van Manen in the seat, with counting due to resume tomorrow.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull visited the electorate in the dying days of the campaign to pledge $115 million towards the upgrade of the congested motorway north of the Gold Coast, including a fifth lane from the Gateway Motorway merge past Robina Road off-ramp in Brisbane.

Mr Turnbull also promised a further $110 million to widen a 5km stretch of the M1 between Mudgeeraba and Reedy Creek.

In contrast, Labor leader Bill Shorten failed to visit, despite committing to putting up $168 million to upgrade the merge.

Southern Cross University political expert Dr Jo Coghlan said the late campaign appearance in Forde by Mr Turnbull showed the Coalition feared for the seat.

“The fact that Turnbull turned up showed that the Coalition felt they needed his presence in the seat because it was in danger,” she said. “Parties make strategic decisions for visits by the leader based on whether they think it would help and a lot of careful thought is put into where these resources are deployed.”

McPherson MP Karen Andrews took aim at Labor for failing to match the Coalition’s promise of funding to improve the southern section of the M1.

“The outcome of the election may not be known for several days but the Coalition has promised $110 million to continue the upgrade to the M1 while federally Labor has not committed any funding,” she said.

State Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey has promised to work with whichever party forms the next government to secure funds for the works.

The Palaszczuk Government is demanding the federal government pay 80 per cent of the cost, as opposed to the 50/50 split proposed by Mr Turnbull.

“I will go in to bat for the Gold Coast no matter who forms government because there are two key upgrades which need doing,” Mr Bailey said.

“The M1 is clearly a big issue at this election and if the Turnbull Government does hold power they must re-assess their attitudes to the Gold Coast and in particular, the funding of their own road by their own rules, just like it is done across the border.”
Labor ahead by just 149 votes as country’s gaze turns to Coast

VOTERS from the northern edge of the Gold Coast may determine our next Prime Minister.

Labor is ahead in the seat of Forde and should the swing play out, along with 10 other seats around the country, it will topple the Turnbull Government.

The stunning turnaround could see Des Hardman replace the LNP’s MP Bert van Manen.

Political experts said late polling may have suggested Forde was a danger, with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull appearing two weeks ago to promise M1 upgrades.

“The fact that Turnbull turned up showed that the Coalition felt they needed his presence in the seat because it was in danger,” Southern Cross University political expert Dr Jo Coghlan said.

Hardman has 50.13 per cent of the vote on a two-party preferred basis. He was 149 votes ahead yesterday.

ELECTION COVERAGE: P9-16
ELLIOT RETAINS RICHMOND: P12
SEAT-BY-SEAT BREAKDOWN: P17
Hanson eyes Coast seat

One Nation plans to run candidates for State Parliament after high federal vote

ANDREW POTTS

POLITICAL experts tip the Gold Coast’s traditionally conservative voting base could be split by a resurgent One Nation as Pauline Hanson plans a polling blitz along the Glitter Strip.

The triumphant Senator-elect is celebrating her return to Parliament after 18 years and now is eyeing up bringing the party back to state politics. One Nation will run candidates for Parliament at the state election, due in 2018, with the Gold Coast set to be a major battleground.

The city’s 10 seats are all held by the LNP but leading conservatives are on edge after One Nation polled better than expected at local federal booths on Saturday.

In the northern seat of Fadden, candidate Brendan Ball raked in 11.3 per cent of the vote to come a surprising third behind incumbent Stuart Robert.

Mr Ball, who spoke with Ms Hanson on Saturday night, is now being courted to contest a state seat at the next poll.

“I need a break now but people are on to me about running at the upcoming election,” he said.

“There is every chance we will keep the momentum going and make a real showing of it. “I think the high vote for One Nation showed strong disillusionment with the major parties.”

One Nation won a shock 11 seats in State Parliament in 1998, a move which left the Borbidge Coalition government devastated and helped deliver government to Labor.

And it could happen again according to leading political expert Professor Steven Stockwell.

“Typically if the conservative vote is split then Labor does rather well out of it so it will be interesting to see what happens,” he said.

“If they run there is the potential for One Nation as a third party to pull a few seats (in State Parliament) in a number of electorates where people are dissatisfied with the economic situation.

“The chances of One Nation in the State Parliament cannot be dismissed.”

Ms Hanson is expected to be joined in the federal Upper House by at least one other One Nation senator, with some experts tipping a third candidate could join them by the time counting is finished.

The former MP for Oxley yesterday fronted the media in Brisbane and called for a royal commission into banking.

The weekend turnaround on the Gold Coast came three years after the party managed to secure just 503 votes in Fadden.

Southern Cross University political expert Dr Jo Coghlan said One Nation’s high Gold Coast vote reflected the departure from the electoral scene of the Palmer United Party as well as a frustration with the major parties.

“There is a lot of support for third-party conservatives here while the other states often favour centrists and Left candidates,” she said.

“This is the Palmer factor in play here and these voters who went with One Nation this time do not have a political home anymore...”

“A little bit of the vote came back to Labor at this election but many went back to Hanson after the end of Clive Palmer.”

Pauline Hanson yesterday.
**Time to fix the M1 mess**

STATE Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey has called on the Federal Government to “reassess their attitudes” to M1 funding if the Coalition retains government.

As the News went to print, the key federal seat of Forde remained on a knife edge, with postal votes set to determine the outcome.

The ALP’s Des Hardman was just pipping LNP MP Bert van Manen, but a final result might not be known for weeks.

“The M1 is clearly a big issue at this election and if the Turnbull Government does hold power, they must reassess their attitudes,” Mr Bailey said.

“In particular, the funding of their own road by their own rules, just like it is done across the border.”

Mr van Manen had held a 4.4 per cent margin in Forde entering the election.

However, Southern Cross University political expert Jo Coghlan said Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s 50-50 M1 funding announcement in Loganholme 10 days from polling day was a sign the seat was in danger.

“Parties make strategic decisions for visits by the leader based on whether they think it would help and a lot of careful thought is put into where these resources are deployed,” she said.

In contrast to the Coalition’s demand for a 50-50 funding split with the State Government, Labor had come to an 80-20 funding agreement to upgrade a 4.5km stretch, southbound, from the Eight Mile Plains merge.

Mr Hardman said the result was “out of my control now” and he had to “sit tight”.

**TO PAGE 4**

**MARSDEN**

**Race for Forde**

**FROM PAGE 1**

Mr van Manen, who was confident postal votes would see him retain the seat he first won in 2010, said voters rewarded Labor for running a negative campaign “which is sad for the country”.

Federal LNP MP for Wright Scott Buchholz and federal Labor MP for Rankin Jim Chalmers were returned comfortably.
DR JO Coghlan, Southern Cross University political science lecturer, was a long way off with her prediction that Tony Windsor would give the seat of New England a real shake against Barnaby Joyce.

One wonders how someone with her credentials could be so far adrift from the mood of the electorate, with Joyce easily retaining the seat.

She also said that on average, 40 per cent of votes go to LNP and 40 per cent to ALP with 20 per cent deciding the election. If one looks at the primary vote after the election, this is also way off the mark with Labor’s primary vote the second lowest since World War II.

PAUL SHEPHERD
Elanora
Tweed's field of dreams

Numbers a signal of discontent

David Carroll
david.carroll@apn.com.au

The size of the field contesting the Tweed Shire Council election on Saturday is a sign residents have had enough of the current situation and are desperate for change.

Australian politics academic Jo Coghlan and former Tweed mayor Max Boyd are among those who believe the number of candidates contesting the October 29 poll is a reflection of the community's discontent.

When voters go to the polls in three days' time, they will be confronted by a ballot paper listing 76 names, including 15 groups and four individuals, all vying for one of the seven positions available.

Dr Coghlan, who lectures in Australian politics at Southern Cross University, said the number of candidates was an indicator of deep unrest in the community.

“A field that size tells us there are a lot of very disaffected voters that want change,” she said.

“I think there has been a fair amount of discontent with a fairly dysfunctional council for quite some time.

“People have said ‘I’ve had enough and I’ll put my hand up’.”

Mr Boyd, who served on the council for more than four decades, including 18 years as mayor, said residents had had enough of the infighting and bickering.

“I think it’s a reflection of a pretty poor performance of the council that was there for the past four years,” he said. “It has been almost dysfunctional.”

A new-look council is guaranteed with current councillors Phil Youngblutt and Michael Armstrong not seeking a return but Dr Coghlan said it was impossible to predict how far-reaching the change would be.

“There’s always going to be change but what that change looks like, we’ll have to wait and see,” she said.

The number of candidates means that preference deals are expected to take on greater import this election.

NSW Electoral Commission spokesman Richard Carroll said candidates would obviously be hoping to secure the required quota of primary votes but it was likely most would have to rely on preferences.

“If you don’t have quota it all comes down to preferences,” Mr Carroll said.

People have said 'I've had enough and I'll put my hand up'.

— Jo Coghlan
HAVING A SAY: A steady stream of Tweed voters has accessed the pre-poll voting centres ahead of election day proper on Saturday.

PHOTO: TREVOR VEALE
More election delays tipped

DENIS DOHERTY
DENIS.DOHERTY@NEWS.COM.AU

TWEED voters not only face a huge ballot paper when they head to the polls for their long-delayed council election on October 29, they could also be in for a long wait to find out who their councillors will be.

The election was scheduled to be held on September 10, but was delayed following the death of 88-year-old retiree candidate Ken ‘Slems’ Nicholson.

Now a staggering 75 people have put their hands up to run as candidates for the election, when voters will also be asked if they wish the number of councillors to be increased from seven to nine.

University of Southern Cross Gold Coast campus political scientist Dr Jo Coghlan said the huge number of candidates could clog up the counting process.

She said it was possible the results could take a couple of weeks to be unravelled.

“Because of the number of candidates, people will be elected on really small margins and it will take some time before it’s sorted out,” she said.

Dr Coghlan also tipped the council could be in for a change and that voter dissatisfaction could see a referendum on increasing the number of councillors from seven to nine have a surprise win.

“Historically referendums aren’t successful in Australia – more lose than win,” she said.

“But I don’t know about this one. My view on the Tweed is that the council has had a fair number of problems over a number of years in term of personalities and, in the past, possible issues of management.

“As an observer and a political scientist I do get a sense people want change.

“I think people have decided there is something fundamentally wrong with their council structurally and politically.”

She said other councils of a comparable size to Tweed had between 10 to 12 councillors, which made Tweed’s seven somewhat surprising.

“I think seven is an unworkable number,” she said.

Dr Coghlan said the council would also benefit from the introduction of a ward system, a point several candidates were campaigning on.

“With the Tweed Shire having such a diverse geographic area, for me to look at that diversity and not see representatives for each borough doesn’t make any sense,” she said.

“To have representatives from distinct communities would be better for people.”
Total change on the cards

Discontent could result in whole new set of faces

LEA EMERY
LEA.EMERY@NEWS.COM.AU

An entirely new group of councillors could be running the Tweed Shire Council in a matter of days, according to one political expert.

The shire will go to the polls today after the original September election was delayed because of the death of one of the candidates.

A total of 76 people have put up their hands to take their places on the seven-seat council — the largest number of candidates for the shire in history.

Southern Cross University political expert Jo Coghlan said the huge number of candidates was a sign the public was not happy with the direction of the council.

“We could be looking at a brand new seven councillors,” she said.

Dr Coghlan said many of the candidates would have put their hands up to take on Greens mayor Katie Milne and the rest of the council because they believed they could do a better job.

“It’s a good thing for democracy because it means people are engaged with their community and want to be involved,” Dr Coghlan said.

Candidates who have put their hands up come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including farming, teaching, science and small business.

Cr Milne is among those running again along with deputy mayor Gary Bagnall and councillors Caroline Byrne, Barry Longland and veteran councillor Warren Polglase.

While voting takes place today, Dr Coghlan said it could be days before a result was known, with the huge volume of candidates expected to make counting complicated. She said this election had been unique, with few signs, how-to-vote cards or doorknocks.

“It’s all about personality and how well you are known in the community,” Dr Coghlan said.

The Tweed Shire takes in a number of small towns which all have candidates vying to represent their communities.

Dr Coghlan said those known in their area for good business practices, or for being a community player, were more likely to do well.

Tweed Heads Chamber of Commerce president Matthew Fraser said there would be significant changes in the council.

“We will likely see a mix with some old councillors and some new councillors,” he said.

“I think some new blood in the council could possibly be a good thing.”

He said businesses had noticed a lack of campaign material and visibility of candidates which he said would favour the candidates running under a party banner.

Mr Fraser said the chamber was looking forward to working with the next council.
Southern Cross University political science lecturer Dr Jo Eoghan says locals want change.
A HOT TUB CAN FAST TURN COLD

The Tweed’s newest councillor has some big ideas for boosting tourism but it’s a precarious balancing act

THE Tweed Shire’s newest councillor is sitting in a hot tub. This is happening before he is sworn into a council renowned for being one of Australia’s most turbulent.

Murringboolah’s Pryce Allsop started a small business eight years ago. He had previously worked for building suppliers, managed the bar and the pokies at Seagulls, and tiled roofs.

“I’m talking through my watch, in the spa. I’m Mr Technology,” he says, before glancing at his wrist to check the count on an election website.

“I like my technology but not for the sake of technology, as a way of communicating.”

The Tweed council has long been like the colour of its river when it regularly floods in February. The mud thrown between Green councillors and their National Party rivals sticks.

Council infighting forced Mr Allsop to show his hand, joining a record 76 candidates last Saturday vying for just seven councillor seats.

“One thing I would really like to do, I’d like to touch base with Tom (Tate), your man. I just think we need to discuss the merits of tourism and how it can flow from one to another (region),” he says.

“Our region is gorgeous, we have the Hinterland, we have the beaches. We need some tourist attractions along the way. We don’t need roller-coasters, we just need some little sanctuaries.”

The Tweed’s villages also need more tourists with cash.

“If we could get 200 people each week with disposable income coming through, the town would thrive,” Mr Allsop says.

His ideas include getting government support to fund improvements to the rugby league ground, enabling Murwillumbah to host City-Country and Titans fixtures, along with visiting rock bands.

As counting continues it seems certain the new council will have Green, National, Liberal and Labor representatives and a sprinkling of business independents.

Dr Jo Coghlan, who lectures in politics at Southern Cross University, describes it as a “business-National Party-pro-development council”.

The 76 candidates who stood last Saturday was double the usual number.

“It ultimately suggests voters are dissatisfied with council,” Dr Coghlan says.

“They’ve formed a view that council is not getting anything done and it’s dysfunctional.”

The councillors get to vote for the new mayor: National Party stalwart Warren Polglase is expected to replace Katie Milne from the Greens.
The real work for the council will be how it manages tourism in a region renowned for providing a “gentler nature-based and family-friendly” experience than the Glitter Strip.

“A pro-development council cannot mimic the Gold Coast model ... people don’t want big highrise and theme parks. They want eco-friendly tourism,” Dr Coghlan says.

“We want jobs and growth to keep with nature on the southern Tweed.

“If (the councillors) do that right, happy days. It’s a bit of a balancing act.”

Is Pryce Allsop moving from one hot tub to another? If so, he is honest and full of humour.

“A good scenario is there will be no new numbers (candidates) if we’ve done a good job. If we’re equal, then we’ve done a crap job,” he says.

If it’s the latter, voters, like at last Saturday’s election, will move quickly and pull the plug.
The Tweed is renowned for its natural attractions and gentle pace, and (left) new councillor Pryce Allsop.

Main picture: TIM MARSDEN
Fresh faces, fresh start

LEA EMERY
LEA.EMERY@NEWS.COM.AU

THE new councillors taking power in the Tweed Shire have pledged to end the infighting and backbiting which has dogged the local government body for the past four years.

Five of the seven positions have gone to new faces, with Mayor Katie Milne and veteran councillor Warren Polglase the only two “survivors” from the old council.

Council watchers are predicting the pair are now likely to fight it out to be mayor.

Cr Polglase has confirmed he will throw his hat into the mayoral ring but Cr Milne did not respond to the Bulletin’s attempts to contact her.

Southern Cross University lecturer in politics Jo Coghan said the final council could be described as a “community-based” one with a slight progressive edge.

Independent Polglase, Liberal James Owen and independent Pryce Allsop are considered to be on the more conservative side of the political aisle. The majority is held by Greens-based Cr Milne, Country Labor’s Reece Byrne and independents Ron Cooper and Chris Cherry, a well-known community advocate.

Dr Coghan tipped councillors Milne and Polglase would be the only two to put their hands up for mayor.

“I didn’t think Cr Milne would be mayor again but with this council, I think it’s a possibility,” she said.

Dr Coghan said it was clear from five new councillors being voted in that the public was not happy with the infighting which had previously marred the council.

Ms Cherry said it was “interesting” so many previous councillors had fallen.

“The most important thing is we work together as a team,” she said.

The newly minted councillor, who is heavily involved in the Poitsville Progress Association, would not reveal who she would support, saying she would wait until she had the chance to talk to those in the running.

“What we need is someone who is good at representing what the Tweed needs as a whole community,” she said.

Mr Byrne said councillors were still talking about who would be mayor.

“I think the current mayor, Katie Milne, has done our economy well and protects our jobs,” he said.

Mr Owen said he would not talk about who would be mayor at this stage.

He said he was positive the new council could overcome the viciousness of the past four years.

“I have already had conversations with a number of the newly elected councillors – people from all sides and we all agree we need to work together to help the community.”

Councillors will vote on the mayoral position ahead of the first council meeting on November 17.
Chris Cherry, a well-known community advocate, is one of five new faces joining the Tweed Shire Council.