

De-merger report sparks angry row



MIXED REACTION: Noel Playford, Cr Lew Brennan and mayoral hopeful Cr Debbie Blumel.

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"How did they think councillors would react when we were handed this report after it's been carried out?"

One councillor who wasn't surprised was division 12 councillor Lew Brennan.

Cr Brennan said he had previously spoken with council CEO Mr Knaggs about the report before the brief was issued and defended the move.

"I was the one asking questions because it probably affects me more than any other councillor," Cr Brennan said.

"I'm happy with discussions I had with the CEO.

"I'm sure they're doing some very good, independent, factual research into that issue and I have absolute faith in them.

"When the report is completed it can be presented to the region and it can be seen as an honest, fair and reasonable conclusion rather than a one-sided, half-baked attempt.

"There's nothing untoward going on. What's happening is that the CEO and director of corporate services are very rightly doing some investigation into the potential costs of de-amalgamation.

"If you can keep it away from the political realm you are more likely to get a clear

and independent outcome." However Mr Playford said the findings of any report presented by council would be tarnished if it refused to publicly release the brief.

"I think the mayor and the CEO have a lot to answer for. They need to start telling the public what is going on," Mr Playford said.

"I understand the need to have an independent firm carrying out this work, but why do it in secret?"

"What sort of a budget have they got if an officer can spend large amounts of ratepayer money on a study without council approval? It just goes to show who is in control."

Garry beats odds in karate

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Garry said: "And that's when I read about Aprile in *The Noosa Journal* and decided to give it a go."

Aprile was 62 when she won her black belt after training intensively for three years. She took up the sport to increase her strength in order to ride her new 750cc Yamaha.

With cautious permission from his doctor, Garry put himself in the hands of Sensei Wayne MacDonald at Karate Budokan International in Noosaville.

"Wayne is right up there with the big league. His name is synonymous with karate in Australia," Garry said.

"I went there to get fit but got hooked so I started work-



GRAN STAND: How *The Journal* reported the story.

ing my way up through the grades.

"Wayne was so confident in me that he entered me in the KBI international tour-

nament in Noosa last year and I got a silver medal.

"This year I won another silver at the Queensland karate state titles.

"But when Wayne said I was ready for my black belt I was amazed."

Labelled an inspiration on his Facebook page, Garry hopes his story will see others taking up karate.

"It's wonderful for any age but so good for older people," he said.

"It's made me fitter and sharp of mind and I now have a very positive outlook on life.

"It's worked so well that I lost 14kg and one of my medications has been reduced by half. I'm even doing some part-time teaching with juniors - I'm a bit of a self-appointed ambassador."

Minister backflips on ambulance staffing

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Mr Roberts (pictured) said: "The QAS uses a system of dynamic deployment where the nearest available ambulance is dispatched to an emergency regardless of its station of origin.

"Where an unexpected short-term increase in workload occurs in a given area, resources are moved from less busy areas to provide coverage to meet the demand."

Noosa Ambulance Station had 14 shifts out of approximately 2184 rostered shifts



not filled between October 2010 and October 2011 this year. Mr Elmes said the current rostering system simply wasn't good enough and

called on the minister and senior bureaucrats to axe the current practices.

"Rostered shifts were not being filled when these incidents took place and they are still not being filled today," he said. "This puts our paramedics under increased pressure and endangers the lives of people who need their assistance.

"On the Sunshine Coast, the regional director of operations, Craig Emery, and his assistant, the area director, Neil Reid, must be directed to cease the policy of unfilled rostered shifts."

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