

NEWS  
**MASKING THE ISSUE**



NEWS  
**SO POPERA SUCCESS**



SPORT  
**SAYA WINS WITH STYLE**



# MERCURY

ILLAWARRA EST 1855

\$2.00  
INC GST

## SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

Staff at Casey's Toys in Wollongong were amazed when a man walked into the store on the weekend and told them he wanted to pay off everyone's lay-bys for Christmas. Local businessman Michael Freris has no children of his own, but wanted to do his bit to help others after a challenging year.  
**ZOE CARTWRIGHT reports, P5**



Picture: SYLVIA LIBER

# INDEPENDENTS' DAY



Wollongong and Shellharbour will both have independent mayors after the results of elections were declared. Gordon Bradbery has won another term in Wollongong, edging out Labor's Tania Brown. Meantime surfer and environmentalist Chris Homer has ousted Labor incumbent Marianne Saliba in Shellharbour. **Reports, P3**



**NEWS: CONVOY'S CASH INJECTION FOR SICK KIDS, P8**