

NEWS

Gales storm brewing

By PETER CATON

ALLEGATIONS of "apparent corruption" in Tweed Shire Council's dealings over whether a new shopping centre should be built on the Tweed Coast have been referred to the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The allegations have been outlined in a flyer mailed to

Tweed Coast households by Gales Holdings and further detailed in information sent to the *Daily News*.

They include a claim that it would be a "remarkable" coincidence that a senior officer "concealed" a study on possible retail centres while a former deputy mayor was negotiating to sell family land to a company associated with Coles

Myer.

The study by Core Economics allegedly indicated land owned by Gales at Chinderah was suitable for a major district shopping centre.

But former mayor and deputy mayor Lynne Beck was involved with family negotiations to sell her mother's land at Cudgen, zoned as protected farmland.

Coles Myer has allegedly offered a \$5 million bonus on top of the sale price if it can later build a shopping centre there.

Yesterday council administrators issued a statement in the form of a letter to the editor to the *Daily News* replying to the accusations. The letter said the allegations had been sent to ICAC.

The administrators accused

Gales Holdings of also breaching an agreement for mediation between the two parties following a string of court cases by making the public accusations.

"As administrators," we are disappointed that Gales Holdings continue to pursue its objectives by making ill-founded and unsubstantiated attacks of council staff," they said.

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