McCreedy fighting for change

BY NEELIMA CHOAHAN

KEVIN McCreedy may not have gained a seat on the Tweed Shire Council, but he has certainly not lost the faith.

Now remembered by some as the man who was nearly a councillor, Mr McCreedy burst into the lime-light in December 2001 when he used his official role as an interpreter to protest against alleged human rights violations in China.

The incident, which has now become folklore among locals, involved Mr McCreedy holding a placard in Chinese writing to Po Xuia, the governor of Liaoning province, demanding the release of journalist Jiang Weiping.

Born and raised in Sydney's western suburbs, Mr McCreedy credits his passion for social justice to witnessing first hand, the racial abuse experienced by his childhood school friend of Indian background.

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In December 2001, "The community voice really wanted less development. They don't want the place to turn into another Gold Coast." Ever the activist, the defeat has led him to challenge some of the practices surrounding council election. Practices, which, he contends led to the community losing out on their desire to have a Green-led local government.

Mr McCreedy is currently in negotiation with the NSW Election Commissioner to ensure that in future all polling both workers will be verbally briefed instead of just being given an information booklet.

And that the only instructions to be given to voters on how to cast a vote are "Please read the instructions on the ballot paper. I can read them out for you if you wish."

This will prevent incorrect advice being given which, he said, happened on the Tweed, the Blue Mountains and other areas.

Mr McCreedy is also pushing for the commissioner to publish in advance the percentage or number of votes between close candidates that will trigger an automatic recount.

But whether he would be around next council election to enjoy the benefits of the changes depends upon the Greens party mechanisms.

Meanwhile, the 'sceptic' and "terminist", who believes the concept of change is only a comforting thought, still wants to continue trying and shape the world.

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