

## **Power politics**

Power politics are in full swing. Who has enough power and money to influence the election outcome? The big guns who carry the most financial and political influence seem to have shifted their support to new candidates in the district and regional council.

What's new? Unfortunately this is how it's done. Who supports who is no big deal except when pre-election promises are made behind the scenes. One mayoral candidate has had the honesty and integrity to disclose who his supporters are. Maybe it would be appropriate for the other big-spending candidates and tickets to do the same, before casting the first stone.

So-called independent regional councillors who have been identified as supporting a mayoral candidate seem to have crossed another line that needs some explaining. If they feel that strongly, why don't they make their concerns known or put their names forward for mayor?

This situation, unfortunately, is where politics have gone. It's all about who has the power, influence and numbers to carry their agendas through. Whangarei has seen first-hand what happens when teams or tickets control council. Council meetings are brief and councillors not on the ticket become marginalised and irrelevant. If this is what we want replaced, let's not fall into the same trap again. What about individual, independent thinking, diversity of opinion and the only vested interest being the community's well-being?

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(Abridged)*