



# ILLAWARRA MERCURY

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## Arun Jagatramka quits Gujarat board but insists:

# I won't walk away from the Gong



BREE FULLER

FORMER Gujarat NRE Coking Coal executive chairman Arun Jagatramka has resigned from the company's board of directors, ending his managerial relationship with the company he founded in 2004.

Mr Jagatramka gave a detailed letter to the board and formally resigned on Friday but remains tight-lipped about the move publicly. However, he still holds shares in the company.

The resignation may have little bear-

ing on his ties with the region.

Asked if he would ever return to Wollongong, the colourful mining magnate told the *Mercury*: "Why not? I am not resigning from Wollongong. I love Wollongong."

The resignation marks the end of a tumultuous period for Mr Jagatramka, who captured the heart of the city when he saved the cash-strapped Wollongong Hawks basketball team from certain extinction in 2009.

■ CONTINUED PAGE 2

TODAY Isolated showers 21° TOMORROW Possible showers 22° DETAILS - P37 TV - P36 [illawarramercury.com.au](http://illawarramercury.com.au)

## Jagatramka leaves Gujarat but stays involved with Hawks

FROM PAGE 1

By putting up a \$1 million bank guarantee – and later taking over as the Hawks' naming right sponsor – he cemented the community's affection for the man known simply as "Arun".

His jubilant face became a fixture at games, and he cheered proudly alongside the locals.

Mr Jagatramka told the *Mercury* he plans to continue supporting the Wollongong Hawks.

"I feel we have to work very strongly to keep the Hawks playing," he said.

"So yes, I do plan to remain involved with the Hawks, whether they continue to be sponsored [by Gujarat] or not.

"That [Gujarat sponsorship] is

one thing I cannot control but certainly, from my perspective, I would like to do everything I can to keep the Hawks playing."

Mr Jagatramka provided a much-needed boost to the region's economy when he purchased and revived the old South Bulli colliery in 2004, and then later took over the mines at Wongawilli.

The resignation follows a tumultuous

year for Gujarat NRE in which workers at the company's Russell Vale and Wongawilli mines went without pay for almost two months from September 18 and without superannuation payments for six months.

Jindal Steel took ownership of Gujarat NRE Coking Coal in October. The new managers have since laid off more than 50 workers.