

Council NEWS

Edition 2, 2017

BENALLA
RURAL CITY

MAYOR'S MESSAGE - LANDFILL

The landfill is an issue the new Council is obviously interested in and I believe it's one that needs to be explained as well as can be, because to be honest, until very recently I haven't really grasped the full story myself.

From my point of view and that's all it is, there hasn't been any further Council resolution on this matter. We have had our first meeting of a new Landfill Development Strategy Committee.

Firstly to be fair, anything that went as pear shaped as this project did, there's no one thing or person to blame. It took lots of circumstances to make this unfortunate story.

First, the facts. The cell (or to describe it like most people, just the hole)

The landfill cell and leachate pond construction project was budgeted to cost \$1,651,065. Yep, that's an expensive hole.

The new cell was the largest cell ever constructed by Benalla and was the first cell that had to comply with the EPA's multi layers lining specification.

The cost at the end of the project was \$2,434,826. That's a blow out of \$783,761. Of that blow out, auditing and quality assurance cost \$737,361. Geotechnical inspection testing cost \$385,219 and that wasn't even part of the original budget.

Mistakes were made by the Council in the management of this project no doubt! However, I have read a lot and talked a lot with the people involved. The EPA has control over how Councils and other operators of landfill sites in Victoria operate and the State Government collects a levy set by it on every tonne of waste we collect, but choose not to return any of this money back to landfill operators to help pay for the ever increasing



regulations designed to protect our environment. After all isn't that the point of their job?

This Council has learnt from its mistakes and if you want, there's a report written by the Council's General Manager, Development and Environment that was presented to the Council in August last year that you can look up online that spells out exactly what mistakes were made and what we intend to do about them. But I think it's time the State Government has a serious look at helping (especially) regional Councils deal with this ever changing and continually growing problem.

As for the huge number of \$6.829,000, that went up from \$2,020,000; that is for future rehabilitation

of the whole landfill site that has been operating since 1990. It is an estimated liability cost that has nothing to do with the cost of the last cell or any of the future cells and what that cost will actually be at the end of the landfill's life in 40 years is just that - an estimate.

Yes, rehabilitation is a cost that will be factored into the ongoing costs of operation as is required of any landfill. I'm saying all this because I think there is a lot of unnecessary worry and misunderstanding in the community regarding this issue and I hope this helps clear some of it up.

And remember, if anyone has questions please call me.

Cr Don Firth, Mayor



CAN YOU HELP?

Visitor Information Centre volunteers are ambassadors for our community. If you enjoy meeting people and promoting our region, contact the Visitor Information Centre, located on Mair Street, or call 03 5762 1749.



WALL TO WALL FESTIVAL 7-9 APRIL 2017



The Wall to Wall Festival 2017, presented by Benalla Street Art Committee Inc., brings 25 internationally acclaimed street artists to our Rural City.

For more information go to www.benallastreetart.com.au.



COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

We are still seeking community feedback for the Council Plan 2017-2021. If you haven't been able to make it to one of our open house sessions but would like to have your say, please contact the Council on 03 5762 2600 or send an email to council@benalla.vic.gov.au. Information about the development of the Council Plan is available at www.benalla.vic.gov.au.

ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN COMMUNITY INPUT NEEDED

The Council oversees an extensive range of community assets. Our role is to ensure these assets are responsibly maintained and meet safety, quality and functionality requirements. Local roads within Benalla Rural City are our responsibility. At this time in each Council cycle we ask you to tell us your expectations and priorities regarding our extensive road network within the limitations of our budget.

The consultation period is from 14 March to 10 April 2017. You can drop in and share your views and experiences with us at the following Council Plan meetings:

- **Tuesday 28 March**, 7pm-9pm
Swanpool Memorial Hall
- **Saturday 1 April**, 10am-12pm
CWA Hall - Bridge Street,
Benalla
- **Tuesday 4 April**, 7pm-9pm
Thoona Memorial Hall

For those unable to attend a session, you can submit your comments at www.benalla.vic.gov.au or email council@benalla.vic.gov.au.



OPEN HOURS - EASTER

If your regular bin day falls on Friday April 14 (Good Friday), your bins will be collected on Thursday 13 April 2017.

- **The Benalla Art Gallery** will be closed on Friday 14 April (Good Friday). The Art Gallery is closed on Tuesdays.
- **BPACC** is closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday. It is open for cinema screenings on Saturday and Sunday.
- **The Council's Customer Service Centre** is closed on all public holidays.
- **Homecare and Meals on Wheels** will close on Friday 14 April 2017 and reopen on Tuesday 18 April 2017. Clients have been notified. For queries about public holiday services, please contact Homecare on 03 5761 2252 or Meals on Wheels on 03 5761 2250.
- **Benalla Landfill and Resource Recovery Centre** is closed on Good Friday.
- **The Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop Learning Centre (Benalla Library)** is closed on all public holidays.
- **The Visitor Information Centre** is closed on Good Friday.



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www.benalla.vic.gov.au

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