

# OPINION

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## EDITORIAL

# Shire arts precinct falls foul of parochialism



**A**RTS and culture has a tendency to regularly break down barriers, or even transcend them.

Not so it seems in the Bega Valley, where a community-led project to transform Twyford Hall into a professional theatre doesn't have the full support of the region's industry body.

At its most basic, this "artistic war of words" is another example of Bega v Merimbula parochialism.

There's nothing wrong with going into bat for your home town - in fact it should be expected. But is travelling 20 minutes to see top-class acts in a dedicated performance space a drive too far?

Those closest to Merimbula's Twyford Hall have had a long-held dream to transform it into a professional theatre with raked seating for 200, box office and proper acoustics.

After working in the background to source funding and develop plans over many years, a successful launch party was held on April 8 with star backing and plenty of money donated to the cause.

On the night, the Spectrum Theatre group kicked in with \$40,000 while we understand more than a few people pledged \$1000 each to have their name stamped on a chair in the proposed new theatre.

That \$70,000 goes a long way towards the push for an indication from the community it supports the proposal. Support the Twyford committee can demonstrate when it applies for the state and federal funding needed to complete the work, estimated at between \$6-7million.

However, South East Arts is saying efforts to build a regional arts precinct should be focussed on Bega and its new civic centre -

interestingly also costing around \$6.5m.

South East Arts general manager Andrew Gray said he recognised the Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre was not a performing arts centre, but he saw the potential for it to be used in contemporary theatre productions. He adds that while redeveloping Twyford Hall was not a bad idea, "it would be great if that energy and passion is not wasted on an idea maybe not as well developed as it could be".

Just to throw an additional grenade into this contentious issue is the amount being charged groups hiring out the new space. The Bega-based Women's Resource Centre charity was quoted \$1300 to hold a four-hour fundraiser - only getting a discount by agreeing to clean up the place itself.

Read more on page 7 and tell us your thoughts. Where are efforts best directed?

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TRIVIALISING ISSUE

ABC "Council" Radio was at it again this week. Renewing its headlong charge to irrelevance, ABC could scarcely wait for Easter to be over before assaulting the local community with one of its greatest intellectual offerings: "Tuesday Trivia".

As if to further evidence the ABC's efforts to broadcast rubbish and "trivialise" south-east airwaves, ABC Council News then offered an item wherein it falsely claimed council "had withdrawn its support for the Safe Schools program".

To "fact check" ABC Radio's latest contribution to "fake news", Council DID NOT withdraw support for the Safe Schools program.

The fact of the matter is that council resolved to "note the demise of funding for the Safe Schools Program in 2017 and write to the federal government supporting the retention of a program and requesting continued funding for that school education program aimed at anti bullying measures and support programs for young people, especially those identifying as LGBTIQI."

The association thinks there is plenty to criticise council about without having to make stuff up.

But notwithstanding the difficulty attached to finding good things to say about council, it does not think it fair it should be criticised for things it hasn't done.

Meanwhile, having managed to find someone in the community who knew the name of Canada's capital, Simon switched feet and sensitively challenged the community to think about the pleasures that would accrue if everyone was able to work only four days a week.

Demonstrating his intimate understanding of the local community, Simon seemed blissfully unaware of the fact that almost half of the community is already struggling to get by on part-time work, while as many as 30 per cent of young people and 38 per cent of seniors have no work at all.

If the best that ABC Council Radio can



**COMMUNITY BENEFITS:** Smiles from the successful recipients of 2016 ClubGRANTS funding. Applications for 2017 close on May 1. Read more, Page 11

do is broadcast falsehoods and irrelevant rubbish, perhaps it should do everyone a favour and take its "trivia" on a full-time, permanent holiday?

**John Richardson, BVSRRRA**

### CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

The Australian Dental Association NSW supports fluoridation as a safe, effective, equitable and cost-effective method of preventing dental decay and urges Bega Valley Shire Council to fluoridate the Brogo-Bermagui and the Tantawanglo-Kiah water supplies for the good of all in the community.

Residents without fluoridated water are disadvantaged and should not be denied the benefits that water fluoridation brings.

Water fluoridation has been in the NSW water supply for more than 60 years. Over this time, we have seen considerable improvements in oral health and, in parallel, there has been no documented medical side-effects of water fluoridation.

Water fluoridation benefits everyone

regardless of age, individual motivation, socio-economic status or the availability of dental care. It is one of the few public health measures that transcends socio-economic barriers and benefits the disadvantaged.

No other health measure has been exposed to such scrutiny and been given an ongoing clean bill of health. All adverse claims made by opponents of fluoridation worldwide have been scrupulously investigated by scientists and found to lack any credible scientific evidence.

A testament to this is that water fluoridation has been endorsed and recommended by more than 150 scientific, health and political organisations throughout the world. In fact, water fluoridation to prevent dental decay has been rated as one of the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th Century, alongside the eradication of smallpox and elimination of poliomyelitis, by the prestigious scientific body, the US Centers for Disease Control.

**Dr Sabrina Manickam, President  
Australian Dental Association NSW**

## WEBWORDS

### WAYNE'S WEDGE GETS HOSPITAL ALL-CLEAR

Sometimes things are built with the best intentions and it's not until later on that you realise it's impractical. I'm so glad there's been a solution to this issue even if it's not the best fix.

**Lisa Nowicki**

Wayne for Chief Negotiator with Management and Medical Staff

**Elaine Cozens**

A small victory, but much more needs to be fixed.

**Linda Hayward**

The real thing here is that Wayne helping patients come to dialysis as transport to SERH is a MAJOR issue. Good on you Wayne...the wedge is a minor issue.

**Karen Griffiths**

### MORE GUNS ADDED TO BANNED LIST

This totalitarian approach is a failure and only targets law abiding citizens. Our government is actually banning some rifles because they "look scary". This is an indication of the degree of insanity of our government.

**James Peel**

Will this ban affect criminals, or only law abiding firearms owners? Think we all know the answer!

**Frank Weiss**

### DIGNAMS CREEK UPGRADE

Any project that improves the safety on the national highway is good.

**Michael Long**

This was supposed to begin immediately after Victoria Creek was finished. Two years later and it has just been approved?

**Nick Tetley**

Not before time. Should have been done years ago.

**Gordon Bobbin**

I'm a 30 year resident of Dignams Creek, and while I understand the necessity of the upgrade I am hoping it will be done with sensitivity to the environment and wildlife.

**Kathy Grayson**

I'd really like to see them do something with Brogo bridge! The trucks travelling the road struggle with this bridge and cars travelling and towing also struggle.

**Candi Lynch**

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