

Rock back to council

by Adem Saban

DISCUSSIONS surrounding Hanging Rock will find their way back into council chambers on Wednesday night, with talk of a long-term plan for the entire precinct returning to the table.

Councillor John Letchford will be proposing that council conduct a precinct plan, which will set out to protect the area immediately surrounding the site, including privately owned properties.

The idea of the plan was brought before council earlier this year, but deferred with the State Government's announcement of ongoing funding for the reserve.

"A precinct plan within the current planning scheme zones, overlays and other tools to assist is sought to provide the higher level thinking and planning to this unique area and surrounds," Cr Letchford said.

The introduction of the plan will, according to Cr Letchford, prevent any future proliferation of unplanned development or change in land use, while ensuring the protection of natural habitat, and the uses of the East Paddock for leisure activities, and ensuring the bio security of the area that has been vitally important to wildlife corridors to and from the reserve.

Cr Letchford said comment from

members of the community and from a state level about the uses of the state-owned reserve and the council-owned East Paddock led him to reintroduce discussion of a precinct plan.

"The paddock is renowned both nationally and internationally for our great partnership to present outdoor concerts with a breathtaking backdrop of Hanging Rock," Cr Letchford said.

"One can only wonder as to the true agenda of some who would like our outdoor events to shutdown, which is in conflict with the majority who supply, provide accommodation, and even attend these great concerts."

Cr Letchford also criticised local politicians and candidates for turning the discussion into a political campaign, without consulting with or speaking to council.

He also raised his concerns regarding the Labor party's plans to cap council rates, suggesting it would put council in a difficult position where they would be unable to fund maintenance at Hanging Rock.

"Fortunately for the remainder of the citizens of the shire, the current State Government has had such briefings and is aware of the issues, consequently the agreement with the current funding," he said.

"The motion that I am putting forward seeks to have clarity to the immediate area, presenting an informed position on the bio security and links, as well as securing the future for our well run and respected events.

Cr Letchford said he would also be tabling documents in the council meeting, to clarify a number of "untruths and misrepresentations" presented on the topic of Hanging Rock.

The notice of motion will be brought before council in Wednesday night's ordinary council meeting at 7pm at the council offices in Gisborne.

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