



Letters to the Editor

Balanced debate needed

SIR - The Hanging Rock debate and angst continues unabated in the local papers and on social media, in spite of council's unanimous decision in February to undertake a full consultation process with the local community.

Council have listened and are consulting with the community, as we have done in the past, and with the many user groups who make up the Hanging Rock Development Advisory Committee.

We all want to 'Save the Rock' and, as with everything in life, it has a cost.

Whether the solution is a proposed private investment concept plan or an increase in our council rates or other alternatives, these decisions are not taken lightly.

It is heartening to see so many recently make their very first visit to this national icon.

It has been in our backyard for an estimated six million years, so we have a responsibility to maintain it and its surrounds.

I'm certain that all have now seen the state of disrepair of the tennis courts, the Hanging Rock Racing Club, the 80-year-old barbecues, dilapidated picnic tables, inadequate public conveniences, and other facilities in urgent need of upgrade.

Additionally the ongoing eradication programs required for weed and pest control is to the benefit of all current and future user groups.

Are the current decaying facilities in the precinct of this icon what we, the residents, are willing to accept and want to showcase to the rest of Australia or indeed the world?

I think not.

To maintain any asset, let alone improve it due to increasing

demands, is not dissimilar to managing a growing family's budget.

Supplying necessary daily needs and services is a challenge in itself considering the increase in costs of living, but ongoing maintenance and planning for the future are far greater ones.

I, like most, value The Rock - its sustainability is the key issue for the present, but more importantly, for future generations.

Scurrilous behaviour, non-factual statements, and misleading remarks are counterproductive to say the least particularly when no alternate solution is contributed.

I would hate to see this as yet another example of - "how easy for some to say why things should not happen while they forever enjoy their lament".

Personally, I find it far more satisfying to be part of a team who are willing to be constructive with their comment and contribute to solutions, knowing the good of all is represented and taken into account.

This initiative gives all stakeholders a number of months to lodge constructive comments and solutions for the future financial and environmental sustainability of Hanging Rock and the surrounding precinct as part of the community consultation process.

To do nothing for this treasured icon - is unacceptable!

- Cr Russell Mowatt,
New Gisborne