

viewpoint

Be prepared to make a stand

After reading the article in The Standard on January 24 highlighting the issues concerning Callington residents' fight to block Alano Water's wastewater treatment I feel it necessary to express my support for their ongoing battle.

This argument highlights the importance of people being prepared to make a stand to ensure that bureaucracy and so-called professional expertise are not given free range to bulldoze citizens into just accepting Development plans forwarded to council for approval by corporate bodies.

An example of bureaucratic bungling is the ongoing saga I, and many people living along the Mannum to Murray Bridge road, are enduring with the approval that was given to T&R Pastoral to build wastewater lagoons on the property previously known as Pahl's farm.

In November 2009, a letter was sent to residents who lived close to the proposed development site advising us that T&R Pastoral had put forward a plan to change the use of the land at Allotments 101 and 102 Temora Lane, from cropping grazing to effluent irrigation which incorporated the construction of four treatment effluent detention ponds.

Residents were given very limited time to object to this proposal.

However, many of us did put in our objections on paper which were sent to our local council and several members of the community took the time to present at the Development Assessment Commission to personally voice our concerns.

The overwhelming concern was odour and its impact on our ongoing quality of life that being psychosocial, health and financial impact.

Research tells us that offensive odour has detrimental affect to health and where mal-odour is omitted headaches, nausea, diarrhoea, palpitations, shortness of breath, stress and alteration of mood are all symptoms and warning signs of indications of potential risks to human health (Shiffman and Williams 2005).

Unfortunately our objections fell on deaf ears and the development commission gave

their approval for T&R's development because the environment and planning gave assurances that odour would not be an issue for residents living close to the ponds.

The water being pumped to the ponds was to be anaerobically treated at the T&R plant and the quality of the water would be B-class, which equated to being equivalent to that being pumped from the river.

Assurances were given and in fact a letter

was sent out by Adrian Pederick, or local member, reiterating this point and reassuring us all that there was no need for concern.

As a consequence the nearby residents believed these assurances and no longer continued to voice their objections.

However, since November 2012, when T&R Pastoral first started to pump their effluent water out to these ponds the reality has proven to be an ongoing nightmare.

Depending on wind direction, local residents can be daily subjected to the foulest odour one could ever imagine.

People having to walk out in the odour complain how it sticks to clothing hours after the odour has dissipated from the air.

No longer can houses be left open to allow breezes to cool our homes because inevitably anyone living south to south west of the ponds gets their homes filled with an odour that is truly unacceptable and makes you want to vomit.

People are regularly being woken at night because of this odour and many of the symptoms previously discussed relating to the consequence of the odour is now regularly being endured by people living along the Mannum to Murray Bridge road.

T&R and the EPA continue to give us regularly reassurances that the ponds are in their commissioning phase and the odours will improve.

My question is how long do we have to endure the consequences of so-called expert opinion that make these decision but do not have to live with the consequences of their opinions?

Ceri Johns,
Murray Bridge.

Time to reconsider

While the Monarto Zoo may be pleased that the drag strip proposed by Santel Racing has been sent back to the Rural City of Murray Bridge Development Assessment Panel (DAP) for re-assessment the council's own position is less reassuring.

The rejection of the proposed drag strip proposal by the ERD Court is welcomed by the many who thought that this location was inappropriate, especially given the proposals currently under consideration at Taillem Bend.

However, reported comments by the council saying that a decision will be made after Santel Racing provides further information raises issue of the fairness of this if the proponent is the only party able to provide new information.

Will the opponents of this proposal also have a right to present new evidence?

The inference from the Court's decision suggests quite strongly that the proposal as approved was too vague to know exactly what the DAP had actually approved.

Given the widespread concern and dismay over the original decision perhaps RCMB council could reconsider its original recommendation to the DAP to approve this ill-positioned proposal and act to support the only truly world class facility it is ever likely to have within its borders.

Harry Seager,
Callington.

Too much campaigning

In my opinion, the Federal ALP Government has well and truly signed its death warrant by inflicting on the population a lengthy "American-style" election campaign.

Eight weeks would be too long, but eight months?

Are they insane?

If the voters are already switched off, they are going to be comatose by September.

I have an awful feeling that if Australia becomes a republic this sort of campaign will become the norm.

What an excruciating thought!

Alex Hodges,
Birdwood.

Help new arrivals thrive

I write to congratulate you on your informed, yet easy to read, editorial column "Were you born to be an Aussie?" (Tuesday,

January 29)

In Murray Bridge, I believe we are indeed fortunate to have among us migrants and refugees, the vast majority of who not only contribute socially, culturally and economically to our region but do so with an appreciative smile, gesture or remark.

In my experience, the overwhelming majority of our new arrivals also work extremely hard, many doing jobs us Aussies would shy away from, while leading spartan lives themselves and sending what money remains after paying their own rent and living expenses, back to their parents, spouses and families to support them while simultaneously attending English language classes to assist in their broader integration into Aussie society.

Sure we will always have rednecks among us who continue to make ill-informed generalisations such as how all

these new arrivals get a host of benefits we Aussies don't receive and of how they will eventually turn our communities into cultural ghettos and the likes.

This is the same type of person who in earlier times in our history referred to our new arrivals with derogatory labels such as wogs and slope heads and even to a lesser, but no less offensive extent, whingeing poms.

Articles such as yours provide much needed balance in the whole immigration debate and when coupled to the many fine examples of civic leadership displayed by others such as a whole range of NGO's, community groups, Rotary International, Regional Development Australia-Murraylands/River-land and the Rural City of Murray Bridge council, that should ensure that our new arrivals will not only survive but thrive in our welcoming and supportive broader community.

Dr Tom Haig,
Settlement coordinator,
Murraylands Migrant Resource Centre.

Time for lessons learned

Planning the Key: Trevor Harden -
January, 29, 2013

Once again I thank Mr Harden for his letter and I agree, "the facts can speak for themselves" but they need to be told in entirety.

Those associated with the "Muddied Waters" believe that when inflows into the Murray Darling Basin, and therefore the River Murray, are low exposing acid sulphate soils and the slumping of riverbanks can all be avoided by allowing seawater to

invade Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert and the Lower River Murray to Lock 1 at Blanchetown.

Yes Mr. Harden, "the facts can speak for themselves" and the facts are all freshwater below Lock 1.

If there is no flow over the lock it will become contaminated with salt water and no one knows how much freshwater or how long it would take and what the enormous costs would be to rectify (if ever) the enormous damage created.

Also, "Let us learn from the past" yes let's do that - in times of drought ensure a management regime that will ensure enough water is pulsed over Lock 1 to avoid the dire consequences or build Lock 0 to become the management restriction with the ability to be the management tool - lesson learned.

Peter R. Smith,
Mannum.