

Renewed hopes for farmer health centre

KIERAN ILES

HOPES of a lifeline for the Hamilton National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) have been renewed after a series of high-level meetings in Canberra this week.

The centre's director, Susan Brumby and board chair, Jim Fletcher, flew to Canberra this week to lobby for urgent funding that would allow the centre and its flagship Sustainable Farming Families Service to continue.

They were joined by Member for Wannan, Dan Tehan, for a series of one-on-one meetings with key government figures, including Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce, Assistant Health Minister, Fiona Nash, and Member for Mallee, Andrew Broad.

The pair also met with the entire seven-member board of the National Farmers Federation, including recently elected president, Brent Finlay.

The NCFH is the centre of a funding stoush between the federal and state governments and urgently needs \$1 million to continue beyond June 2014.

Mr Fletcher said there were no firm commitments on funding forthcoming from the Federal Government, but the delegation was well received.

"It was the most positive response we have received so far from the Federal Government,"

Council endorses changes

REX MARTINICH

SOUTHERN Grampians Shire Council has voted to endorse the suggested changes to the C29 Amendment to the Dunkeld Structure Plan and present it to the Victorian Planning Minister for final approval.

Shire futures director, Michael McCarthy, told councillors that the panel's report had recommended some changes around the C29's "main issue of contention" but had agreed with most of the amendment's aims.

The report's major changes include a minimum subdivision size of two hectares instead of six hectares for some areas outside the township.



DAN TEHAN

Mr Fletcher said.

"I feel as if we have made a bit of progress and it's certainly on the Commonwealth agenda."

"Andrew Broad and Dan Tehan were fantastic

and they will lead the charge for us in Canberra from now on."

Mr Fletcher said the centre was seeking a \$500,000 per year contribution each from the state and federal governments.

The State Coalition Government has pledged \$250,000 in funding, proving the Commonwealth contributes \$500,000.

"What we've said to the Premier (Denis Napthine) and the Health Minister (David Davis) is that the Commonwealth won't come at this," Mr Fletcher said.

"They will only come at a 50-50 arrangement. What we are saying is that the state and federal contributions need to be matched dollar-for-dollar."

Working in the NCFH's favour, Mr Tehan said both Senators Joyce and Nash represented country electorates and were supportive of the centre's valuable work.

"The National Centre for Farmer Health is an important initiative for rural and regional areas and I will continue to give my wholehearted support for the centre," Mr Tehan said.

The centre was officially opened in July 2009 and is a partnership between the Western District Health Service (WDHS) and Deakin University.

Senator Joyce did not respond to The Spectator's request for comment.

**PLUMBING
EMERGENCIES**
After Hours
FINCHETTS
Phone 0439 455 711
135 French St, Hamilton

SGC1123616



grampians accounting services
we're with you all the way.

Our service offer includes:

- Specialist preparation of accounts and tax returns for self managed superannuation funds by an experienced, dedicated CPA qualified accountant
- A personalised service by a dedicated team
- Arrangement of the independent audit of these accounts in line with recent industry recommendations ie: the audit is not completed by another person in the same business
- Efficient and cost effective processing of these financial statements leading to a competitive fee for this compliance work

This work does not need to be completed by the same accountant who handles your business and personal affairs as there is very little crossover in the work and we will work with your other business advisers. Reducing your self managed superannuation fund running costs obviously means more funds in your superannuation to support you in retirement.

For your free, no obligation fee comparison, please call us on 5572 5488.

62 Gray Street, Hamilton
t: 03 5572 5488 f: 03 5572 5433
e: reception@grampiansinvest.com.au

SBEO446173

"Building a better business, not just a bigger one"

o'keeffe lawyers

www.o'keeffe-lawyers.com.au



experience + knowledge + skill = results

Tel: 5572 4822

47 Thompson Street

BI-RITE

CHRISTMAS