

Showground overhaul to create jobs

THE Royal Hobart Showground is the jewel in a redevelopment vision worth up to \$100 million. Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania (RAST) chief executive Scott Gadd said 60 new post construction jobs will be created. Redevelopment planned by RAST involves leasing a surplus part of the Showground site for commercial use.

“We plan to redevelop the Showground as a modern, multi-purpose and cost effective indoor and outdoor exhibition, event and function precinct,” Mr Gadd said.

“We will have commercial activity under-pinning ongoing community use every day of the year.”

First stage construction of about \$30 million will be done by commercial developers at their cost.

Mr Gadd said the development will occur in stages and will not affect the staging of the Royal Hobart Show or other events at the Showground. Construction will start after this year's Show.

“RAST intends to transform the Showground by utilising funds from the land lease. It is a more efficient use of space because of the aging infrastructure,” Mr Gadd said.

“A line had to be drawn because there are 18 buildings on site and most have reached the end of their economic life span and require considerable funds to maintain or upgrade. We couldn't keep going the way we were.”

RAST took on the 17.5ha Showground site more than 100 years ago in 1903.

“It has been developed in a haphazard way since.”

RAST has lodged a Planning Application and Master Plan with Glenorchy City Council for the redevelopment of the Hobart Showground.

Mr Gadd said in the past 12 months RAST has consulted widely.

“Glenorchy aldermen, members of state parliament, government agencies, and federal ministers and members of the federal parliament have all visited the Showground for briefings.”

He said the response has been supportive from Showground users, local residents and local businesses.

The Planning Application seeks an amendment to the Planning Scheme to allow the start of a commercial development on a part of the Showground near the corner of the Brooker Highway and Howard Rd. This Application will be assessed by Glenorchy City Council and will then be referred to the Planning Commission with recommendations.

Mr Gadd said negotiations are well advanced with a party interested in developing a commercial activity on the site.

“Until completed, the negotiations with this party remain confidential.”

Planned work includes staged replacement of aged infrastructure, five new multi-use exhibition and event venues, and reconstruction of the main arena to accommodate a commercial precinct on the Howard Rd boundary, enhanced motor home area, perimeter roadway to provide efficient onsite traffic movement for livestock and events transport.

Mr Gadd said the redevelopment will provide the “missing link” between Glenorchy and local residential, arts and recreational precincts east of the Brooker Highway for cyclists, joggers and walkers, via a possible flyover of the Brooker Highway from the Showground.

“Exciting new developments occurring in this area, such as GASP and the Wilkinson's Point developments, will also benefit from improved access provided via the Showground across the busy Brooker highway,” he said.